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*The role of emotional abilities in elite sports coaching*

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# **The Role of Emotional Abilities in Elite Sports Coaching**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Sheffield Hallam University for  
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June, 2018

This thesis is dedicated to

Matthew Bailey

## *Abstract*

The overall purpose of this thesis was to explore the psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness at the elite level and identify factors related to attribute development. As a result, this thesis provided an in-depth study into the emotional abilities of elite sports coaches. A secondary purpose was to use the information gained from elite coaches to help bridge the gap between theory and practice by designing an Emotional Ability Development (EAD) programme, to help support the development of coaches. The aim of study one was to explore in-depth the psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness at the elite level and factors related to attribute development. Specifically, 12 elite coaches participated in semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006) identified nine psychological attributes (e.g., confidence, focus, resilience, attitude, emotional awareness, and emotional management) perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness. In addition, three factors perceived to influence attribute development were identified (i.e., education, experience, and conscious self-improvement). Findings indicated that several attributes perceived to be essential to coaching effectiveness related to the emotional nature of coaching, highlighting the importance of coaches' abilities to identify, understand and manage emotions in both themselves and others. Subsequently, this finding enabled a further study to examine coaches' emotional abilities in more detail to gain a comprehensive understanding into how coaches use their emotional abilities in relation to coaching effectiveness. Specifically, study two explored elite coaches perceptions by interviewing the same 12 coaches from study one. Findings presented three higher-order themes related to coaches' emotional abilities (i.e., emotional awareness, emotional understanding, and emotional management), positive outcomes (i.e., psychological well-being, coach-athlete relationships, and influence on athlete) and moderating factors (i.e., coaches' knowledge, coaches' beliefs, and past experiences). Taken together, the findings from studies one and two highlighted the need for the design and implementation of an EAD intervention for sports coaches. Therefore, the next investigation comprised a two-phased EAD intervention with sports coaches (i.e., Pilot Study and Study Three). Phase one involved a pilot study which aimed to investigate the perceived value and practicality of delivering an EAD programme to sports coaches. The pilot study was conducted with two male pathway level coaches from two sports (i.e., swimming and diving). The measures employed assessed coaches' self-reported effectiveness of the programme. Findings indicated that the intervention was well received and perceived to lead to improvements in coaches own coaching practice. Building on these findings, phase two involved the delivery and evaluation of a full-scale EAD programme whereby a pretest, post-test, with retention follow-up design was employed with 6 pathway level coaches (4 male, 2 female) from various sports (i.e., archery, triathlon, and netball). Measures employed were informed by the findings of studies one and two, and, the pilot study, and therefore assessed coaches' emotional intelligence, coach efficacy, coach-athlete relationship and athletes' perceptions of coach behaviours. Findings indicated positive trends on all of the observed variables however significant difference was only observed on a small number of the variables. The perceived effectiveness of the programme was highlighted by the coaches involved. Specifically, coaches reported that the programme was relevant to their coaching, provided new considerations, increased coaches' use of emotional skills, and, coaches reported positive changes in their coaching practice as a result of the programme. In conclusion, this thesis has enabled a detailed understanding into the role of coaches' emotional abilities in perceived coaching effectiveness, how coaches' emotional abilities can be developed, and the potential benefits it can have in facilitating coach development.

## ***Acknowledgements***

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## *Peer Reviewed Work Related to the Thesis*

### **Peer-Reviewed Journal Article Publications**

**Hodgson, L.,** Butt, J., & Maynard, I. (under review). Coaching from the inside out:

Understanding the use of emotional abilities in elite sports coaching.

**Hodgson, L.,** Butt, J., & Maynard, I. (2017). Exploring the psychological attributes

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**Hodgson, L.,** Butt, J., & Maynard, I. (2016). Coaching from the inside out: Understanding the

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**Hodgson, L.,** Butt, J., & Maynard, I. (2015). Exploring the psychological attributes

underpinning elite sports coaching. *Proceedings of the British Psychological Society*

*Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology Annual Conference. Leeds, UK.*

# Chapter I

## *Introduction*

### **1.1 Performance Excellence in Sport**

With the increasing professionalisation of sport and the slightest of margins that separate performance success at the highest of levels, it is not surprising that research conducted across sport disciplines continually strive toward identifying and understanding the factors that underpin sporting excellence (e.g., Gould, Diffenbach, & Moffett, 2002; Jones, Hanton, & Connaughton, 2002). When mentioning the names of great sporting legends such as Roger Federer, Serena Williams, Alistair Brownlee and Jessica-Ennis-Hill to name but a few, even those unaccustomed to sport spectatorship are aware of such athletes' prestigious sporting achievements. As noted by Jones (2012), it is not just the inconceivable talent of these individuals that make them world renowned but also their ability to consistently perform at their peak time and time again. Sport provides a highly visible arena that attracts much debate over what is required beyond sheer talent for athletes to consistently excel within their sporting domain (Jones, 2012).

In sport psychology, it is well recognised that in the pursuit of performance excellence a variety of factors are necessary for an athlete to reach the pinnacle of their sport. Such research has predominantly focused on identifying and understanding the physical, technical, tactical and psychological factors that underpin performance excellence (see Gould & Maynard, 2009, for a review). One area in particular that has received increasing interest concerns the investigation of psychological attributes that are suggested to underpin performance excellence (e.g., Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002; Greenleaf, Gould, & Dieffenbach, 2001; MacNamara, Button, & Collins,

2010), with an aim of influencing athlete talent and performance. Collectively, this line of literature has consistently demonstrated psychological attributes pertinent to successful athletic performance (e.g., confidence, focus, drive, control, motivation, resilience and commitment).

It is important to note, within the sport psychology literature various terms have been used alongside *attributes* to describe psychological factors that underpin performance excellence. For example, studies have also used terms such as *characteristics* (e.g., Gould & Diefenbach, 2002) and, *qualities* (e.g., Woodcock, Holland, Duda, & Cumming, 2011). These terms are often used interchangeably within studies to describe and label the phenomenon of interest.

Considering the term *psychological attributes* has been used within this thesis it is important to state how this term has been understood within this context. Thus, *psychological attributes* has been defined as, positive psychological characteristics and qualities that an individual possesses which facilitate optimal performance. This definition has been adapted from Hollands, Woodcock, Cumming, and Duda (2010) in their definition of *mental qualities* defined as, “psychological characteristics displayed by athletes that facilitate optimal performance” (p. 20).

To further understanding of performance excellence, scholars have moved beyond athletic excellence and have investigated other sporting personnel, such as coaches (e.g., Gould, Guinan, Greenleaf, & Chung, 2002; Olusoga, Butt, Maynard, & Hays, 2012) and sports officials (e.g., Slack, Maynard, Butt, & Olusoga, 2013; Slack, Butt, Maynard, & Olusoga, 2014). In particular, coaches’ have received growing research attention given that the coach contributes to the performance and development of teams and athletes (e.g., Côté, Bruner, Erickson, Strachan, & Fraiser-Thomas, 2010; Greenleaf, Gould, & Diefenbach, 2001; Horn, 2008). Tharp and Gillimore’s (1976) seminal research on legendary college basketball coach John Wooden is one of the earliest studies of coach effectiveness in action. Since that time, many studies have been



conducted in the pursuit of the understanding of coaching excellence (e.g., Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Nash & Sproule, 2009). Just like athletes, coaches' are considered to be performers in their own right (e.g., Olusoga, Butt, Maynard, & Hays, 2010; Thelwell, Weston, Greenlees, & Hutchings, 2008a) with assertions that as much attention should be given to coaches' preparations and performance as has been given to that of athletes (Giges, Petipas, & Vernacchia, 2004).

In summary, and discussed in greater detail in Chapter II of this thesis, the current coaching psychology literature has provided insight into a broad range of factors underpinning coaching expertise and effectiveness. To this end, research has investigated key areas such as coaches' behaviours (e.g., Becker & Wrisberg, 2008; Horton, Baker, & Deakin, 2005), coaches' knowledge (e.g., Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell, 1995; Nash, Sproule, & Horton, 2011), coach efficacy (e.g., Feltz, Chase, Moritz, & Sullivan, 1999; Sullivan & Kent, 2003), and coaches' personal characteristics (e.g., Bloom & Salmela, 2000). However, despite the increased research in identifying key factors underpinning coaching effectiveness, little attention has been directed toward exploring coaches' psychological attributes that can contribute towards coaches' performing their roles. Given the large body of research recognising the importance of athletes' psychological attributes in athlete performance and success it is anticipated that exploring coaches' psychological attributes and how these attributes are developed has the potential to provide a more comprehensive understanding into the key factors that underpin coaching effectiveness.

## **1.2 Purpose of this Thesis**

The primary purpose of this research thesis was to explore, in-depth, the psychological attributes underpinning effective coaching practice. A plethora of research within the sport psychology domain has used elite athlete samples to explore and understand factors that

influence athletic excellence and development (e.g., Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002; Jones, Hanton, & Connaughton, 2007, Mills, Butt, Maynard, & Harwood, 2012; Swan, Crust, Jackman, Vella, Allen, & Keegan, 2017). Such research has been used to inform the development of applied sport psychology programmes that aim to support athletic development and performance (Gould & Eklund, 2007; Thelwell, Greenlees, & Weston, 2006). Therefore, in line with the athletic context, it is anticipated that gaining an in-depth insight into the perceptions of elite sports coaches may have the potential to advance understandings of the psychological attributes needed to excel within the coaching context. A further aim of the thesis is to help bridge the gap between theory and practice by using the information gained from elite sports coaches to design and develop an intervention programme that may be of value in supporting and enhancing the development of sports coaches.

### **1.3 Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis consists of five further chapters, and brief summaries of each chapter are provided below. Chapter II provides a review of the existing literature focused on the psychology of excellence, and provides a theoretical basis for the remainder of the thesis. The thesis is then presented in two phases, phase one outlines two qualitative research studies (Chapter III and Chapter IV) conducted with elite level sports coaches. Phase II presents the design, implementation and evaluation of an Emotional Ability Development programme for sports coaches. Specifically, Chapter V outlines a small scale pilot study and full-scale intervention study aimed at facilitating the growth of sports coaches. Finally, Chapter VI reviews the findings of the thesis, provides an overview of applied implications, directions for future research, and provides some concluding remarks.

### **1.3.1 Chapter II (Review of Literature)**

Chapter two provides a comprehensive overview of the performance excellence literature conducted within the sport psychology domain. Firstly, this chapter presents a review of research pertaining to the factors underpinning athletic excellence. Subsequently, the chapter goes on to provide an overview of the sports coaching research by focusing on factors found to influence coaching expertise and effectiveness. The chapter critically reviews research in this area while outlining areas for future research and the rationale for exploring the psychological attributes of sports coaches. This chapter also provides an overview of the methodological approaches that have both guided the development of the thesis and the research conducted throughout.

### **1.3.2 Chapter III (Study One)**

Study one of the thesis, was concerned with gaining an in-depth understanding of the psychological attributes underpinning coaching effectiveness, and factors related to attribute development. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, a qualitative approach was undertaken, where 12 elite level coaches were interviewed. Among the attributes identified within the study (e.g., confidence, resilience, and focus), several were found to relate to the emotional nature of coaching practice (i.e., 9 lower-order themes). Specifically, three key emotional abilities (i.e., emotional awareness, emotional understanding, and emotional management) were perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness at the elite level. Subsequently, this finding enabled a further study to explore the role of emotional abilities in perceived coaching effectiveness in greater depth.

### **1.3.3 Chapter IV (Study Two)**

Chapter IV describes the second study of the thesis. Based on the findings of study one, the purpose of study two was to explore how coaches use their emotional abilities in relation to perceived coaching effectiveness. Thus, this study used in-depth interviews with the same 12 elite level coaches that were interviewed in study one. Findings presented three higher-order themes that demonstrated how coaches use emotional abilities (e.g., emotional awareness) within their coaching practice, moderating factors (e.g., coaches' knowledge) that can influence the use of such abilities and also several positive outcomes (e.g., coach-athlete relationships) related to emotional ability use. Findings from studies one and two of the thesis consequently informed study three involving the design, delivery and evaluation of an Emotional Ability Development intervention specifically designed for sports coaches (i.e., chapter V).

### **1.3.4 Chapter V (Pilot Study and Study Three)**

Chapter V is presented in two phases. Phase one provides an overview of a small-scale pilot study designed to investigate the practicality and perceived value of delivering an Emotional Ability Development (EAD) programme to sports coaches. Specifically, 2 pathway level coaches participated in two two-hour workshops over a four week period. Qualitative data was gained to evaluate coaches' perceived satisfaction with the workshops, and identify potential areas for programme development. Based on the qualitative feedback, several changes were made to the content of the workshops and the overall delivery of the intervention. Phase two provides a comprehensive overview of the design, delivery and evaluation of a full-scale EAD programme. Specifically, for this research study, a pre-test, post-test, with retention follow-up design was used to evaluate the effectiveness of an EAD programme specifically designed for sports coaches. In overview, 6 pathway level coaches participated in five workshops designed to

enhance coaches' emotional abilities and promote positive outcomes. None of the coaches recruited to the full-scale EAD programme were involved in the small-scale pilot study. Initially, 9 coaches were recruited and started the programme, however, 3 failed to complete the full programme and thus, were removed from the investigation.

### **1.3.5 Chapter VI (Summery, Discussion, and Conclusions)**

Chapter VI of this thesis is comprised of three main sections. Firstly, a summary of the thesis is presented which details the purpose of the thesis and the key findings generated from the three studies included. Secondly, a general discussion highlights the theoretical and applied implications, directions for future research and the strengths and limitations of the thesis. Finally, the last section outlines the overall conclusions of the thesis (see Figure 1.1 for overview of thesis content).

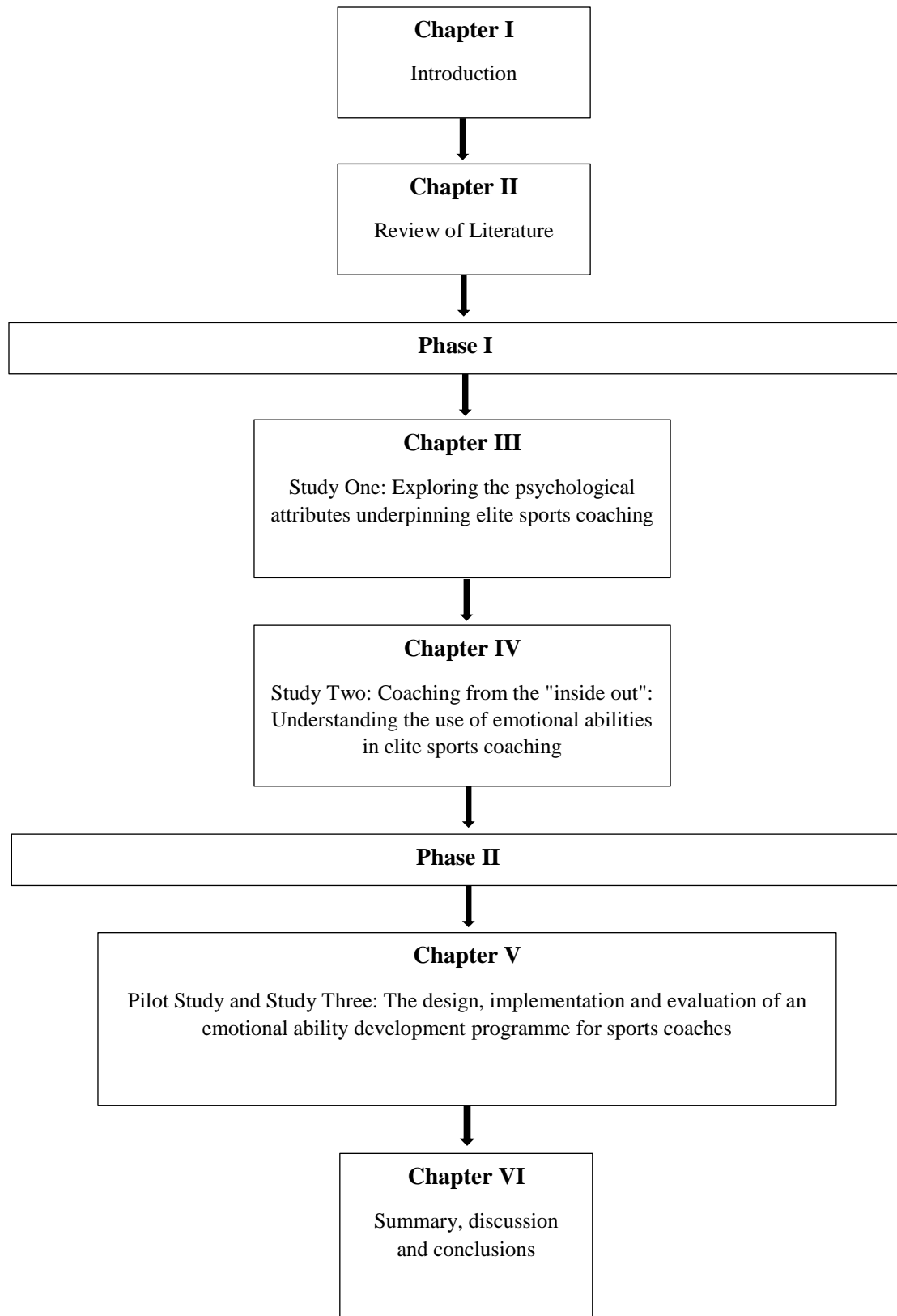


Figure 1.1: Diagrammatic representation of the contents of the thesis

# Chapter II

## *Review of literature*

### **2.1 Introduction**

This review of literature provides a comprehensive overview of the performance excellence literature conducted within the sport psychology domain. Firstly, a broad overview of research pertaining to factors underpinning athletic excellence is presented. A specific focus is then directed toward the psychological factors that have been found to underpin athletic performance. This review will then provide an overview of literature related to the psychology of coaching. Specifically, an introduction into coaching expertise and effectiveness is provided, followed by an overview of research related to key factors (e.g., behaviour, knowledge, and personal characteristics) that are perceived to relate to coaching expertise and effectiveness. Subsequently, a rationale for investigating the psychological attributes of coaches is presented. Finally, this chapter provides an overview of the methodological approaches that have guided the development of the thesis and research conducted throughout.

### **2.2 Factors underpinning Athletic Excellence**

A review of the sport psychology literature encompassing various types of studies on performance excellence suggests that a multitude of factors play a vital role in athletic excellence. Common factors that are often cited include, training (e.g., Baker & Cobley, 2008; Hopwood, Macmahon, Farrow, & Baker, 2015), coaches (e.g., Côté et al., 1995; Horn, 2008), psychological skills and attributes (e.g., Gould et al., 2002; Gould, Guinan, Greenleaf, Medberry, & Peterson, 1999; Swan et al., 2017), and parental support (e.g., Côté, 1999; Holt & Knight, 2014; Knight, Little, Harwood, & Goodger, 2015).

Given the quest to understand athletic excellence, it is not surprising that much of the research in this area has focused on investigating athletes who have reached the pinnacle of their respective sports. In one of the earliest studies, Orlick and Partington (1988) interviewed 75 Canadian athletes who had participated in the 1984 summer and winter Olympic Games. In-depth interviews revealed a variety of factors perceived to contribute toward performance success. Examples of some of the factors highlighted included, quality training, having clear daily goals, using imagery, simulation training, mental preparation, and distraction control. Conversely, Olympic athletes who did not perform up to their potential reported not being prepared to deal with distractions, changing things that worked, and not being able to refocus after distractions.

In a similar line of inquiry, Gould and colleagues (Gould, Eklund, & Jackson, 1992a; Gould, Eklund, & Jackson, 1992b) conducted a two-part investigation into psychological factors and preparation techniques associated with Olympic wrestling excellence. Specifically, 20 Olympians from the 1988 US Olympic wrestling teams were individually interviewed and asked to reflect on their all-time best international performance, their worst performance at the 1988 Olympic Games, and also, their most crucial match at the 1988 Olympic Games. Findings from this line of research found that positive expectancies, optimal arousal states, heightened effort and commitment, and the use of systematic mental preparation strategies were associated with US Olympic wrestling success. Conversely, during their worst Olympic performance, the wrestlers reported experiences of negative feeling states, non-adherence to preparation routines, and negative, irrelevant, or irregular patterns of thought.

To further explore why some athletes perform successfully under the unique conditions of the Olympics, while others do not, Gould and colleagues (e.g., Greenleaf et al., 2001; Gould et



al., 1999; Gould, Greenleaf, Chung, & Guinan, 2002) conducted a series of studies examining positive and negative factors perceived to have influenced performances in the Atlanta and Nagano Olympics. In the first study, Gould and colleagues (1999) conducted a qualitative study involving focus groups with eight Atlanta U.S. Olympic teams to identify physical, psychological, environmental, and social factors that positively or negatively affected athletes' performances at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. Specifically, four of the teams involved in the study had met or exceeded performance expectations while the other four teams failed to perform up to performance predictions. Findings highlighted a number of differences when comparing the teams that met expectations versus the teams that failed to meet performance expectations. That is, successful teams were found to be more committed and focused, and spent more time on mental preparation. Conversely, unsuccessful teams lacked experience and team cohesion and reported several problems with planning for competition, travel issues, and coaching issues.

In addition, to provide a comprehensive understanding into factors perceived to have positively and negatively influenced Olympic performance, Greenleaf and colleagues (2001) individually interviewed 15 U.S. Olympic athletes. Several themes were generated from the interviews reflecting the factors that had positively influenced athletes' Olympic performance, such as, psychological factors, physical preparation, coaching, and Olympic excitement. In relation to negative factors influencing performance, athletes reported media distractions, coach issues, overtraining, and a lack of support, among others. When comparing athletes' accounts, it was evident that few differences emerged between athletes who met or exceeded and failed to meet performance expectations in relation to physical factors. However, differences were observed in athletes' attitudes towards the Games, with successful athletes viewing the Olympic Games as their "time to shine". Overall, findings revealed that many of the factors perceived to

influence Olympic performance were in fact, psychological in nature. In a similar study investigating the perceptions of World and Olympic champions, Durand-Bush and Salmela (2002) identified personal characteristics, among other factors (e.g., contextual factors, training, and competition) perceived to be important in the development and maintenance of expert athletic performance. The main personal characteristics identified related to athletes' self-confidence and motivation, offering further support for self-confidence and motivation significantly contributing to the development of expertise in sport.

From a talent development perspective, MacNamara, Button and Collins (2010) investigated elite athletes' perceptions regarding factors that facilitated their successful development from initial involvement in sport to achieving and maintaining a world-class level. Through content analysis findings demonstrated a consistent emphasis placed on psychological attributes perceived to underpin successful development. Specifically, the authors identified a variety of attributes they termed 'Psychological Characteristics of Developing Excellence'. Such attributes included the mental skills, attitudes, emotions and desires athletes required throughout their athletic development (MacNamara, Button, & Collins, 2010). Research in this area has also taken a more sport specific focus in attempts to identify factors related to athlete performance and development (e.g., Gledhill & Harwood, 2014; Hayman, Borkoles, Taylor, Hemmings, & Polman, 2014; Huxley, O'Connor, & Larkin, 2017; Mills, Butt, Maynard, & Harwood, 2012; Vernacchia, McGuire, Reardon, & Templin, 2000). For example, Mills and colleagues (2012) interviewed 10 expert development level coaches regarding their perceptions of factors influencing elite youth football players' development. Findings presented six higher-order categories that represented the factors perceived to either positively or negatively influence player development, including: awareness (e.g., self-awareness, awareness of others), resilience

(e.g., optimistic attitude, coping with setbacks), goal-directed attributes (e.g., passion, work-ethic), intelligence (e.g., sport intelligence, emotional competence), sport-specific attributes (e.g., coachability, athleticism), and, environmental elements (e.g., culture of the game, significant others). These findings offered a unique sport-specific insight into the key factors that influence player development at a critical stage in player progression to the professional level and how such factors work together to promote effective development.

In overview of the above research considerable knowledge has been accumulated in relation to the multitude of factors that have been found to underpin athletic excellence (e.g., social support, attitude, experience, training, competitiveness, education, and perseverance). As noted by Gould and colleagues (2001), it is important to recognise that such factors are complex and diverse and work together in connected ways to influence athletic performance. Amongst the factors identified within the literature psychological factors have consistently been reported to play an integral role in athletic excellence. Therefore, it is not surprising that a notable body of research has been conducted in attempts to further knowledge and understanding of the psychological factors that influence athletic performance and success.

### **2.3 Psychological Factors underpinning Athletic Excellence**

A number of approaches have been taken to examine the psychological characteristics of elite athletes (Gould et al., 2002), and there is now considerable research evidence that attests to the role of psychological factors as determinants of elite performance (MacNamara, Button, & Collins, 2010). To investigate the psychological characteristics of Olympic champions, Gould and colleagues (2002) used in-depth qualitative interviews with ten U.S. Olympic champions from various sports to explore athletes' psychological characteristics and their development. To provide a more detailed insight into athletes' psychological characteristics, interviews were also

conducted with coaches, parents, and siblings. In addition, a collection of psychological inventories were also administered to the athletes. Findings indicated that athletes were characterised by various psychological factors such as, the ability to cope with and control anxiety, high confidence, resilience/mental toughness, high dispositional hope, optimism and adaptive perfectionism, the ability to focus and block out distractions, competitiveness and work ethic, sport intelligence, and the ability to set and achieve goals. Similarly, in reviewing the research literature on psychological preparation for Olympic Games performance, Gould and Maynard (2009) identified several psychological factors commonly associated with Olympic success. Specifically, the authors highlighted several psychological attributes (e.g., confidence, self-awareness, concentration, and determination), cognitive and behavioural strategies (e.g., self-talk, imagery, goal-setting, mistake management plans, and, competitive simulations) and personal dispositions (e.g., optimism, goal orientation, sport intelligence, and competitiveness) commonly reported, providing a list of key psychological attributes and skills associated with performance success.

It is evident that the plethora of research investigating psychological factors influencing athletic excellence has encompassed in-depth exploration into a multitude of psychological attributes. For instance, a vast array of research has been conducted in areas such as sport confidence (e.g., Hays, Maynard, Thomas, & Bawden, 2007; Hays, Thomas, Maynard, & Bawden, 2009; Thomas, Lane, & Kingston, 2011; Vealey, 1986), mental toughness (e.g., Jones, Hanton, & Connaughton, 2002; Gucciardi, Gordan, & Dimmock, 2008; Bull, Shambrook, James, & Brooks, 2005), concentration and attentional focus (e.g., Bell & Hardy, 2009; Tedesqui & Orlick, 2015), resilience (e.g., Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Galli & Vealey, 2008; Gucciardi, Jackson, Coulter, & Mallett, 2011), emotional intelligence (e.g., Barlow & Banks, 2014;

Crombie, Lombard, & Noakes, 2009; Crombie, Lombard, & Noaks, 2011; Zizzi, Deaner, & Hirschhorn, 2003), and motivation (e.g., Keegan, Harwood, Spray, & Lavalley, 2014; Mallett & Hanrahan, 2004) . Collectively, this body of research has contributed toward a comprehensive understanding of the psychological attributes pertinent to athletic excellence. For example, the athlete mental toughness literature has consistently demonstrated key attributes that relate to successful athletic performance across various team and individual sports (e.g., Bull et al., 2005; Gucciardi, Gordan, & Dimmock, 2008; Jones et al., 2002; Jones, Hanton, & Connaughton, 2007; Thelwell, Weston, & Greenlees, 2005). Such research indicates that the core psychological attributes pertinent to successful athletic performance tend not to vary significantly across sports (Coulter, Mallett, & Gucciardi, 2010). The mental toughness attributes identified within the literature include, but are not limited to, coping effectively with pressure and adversity, recovering or rebounding from setbacks and failures, persevering, thriving on pressure, and having a tough attitude. The most significant attribute repeatedly reported within the mental toughness literature is having an unshakable self-belief (e.g., Clough, Earle, & Sewell, 2002; Jones et al., 2002; Jones et al., 2007; Thelwell, Weston, & Greenlees, 2005). Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that the study of self-confidence has also featured prominently in the sport psychology literature (Feltz, 2007). Ample research has demonstrated that self-confidence is an essential component of superior athletic performance (e.g., Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002; Gould et al., 2002; Hanton, Mellalieu, & Hall, 2004; Hays et al., 2009). For example, in interviewing 14 athletes that had competed in major sporting championships (i.e., Olympic Games, World Championships), Hays and colleagues (2009) found that high sport confidence facilitated performance through its positive effects on athletes' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

As an attribute often cited in the athlete literature to positively influence athletic performance (e.g., Gould et al., 2002; Weinberg, Butt, & Culp, 2011) the construct of psychological resilience has also received increased investigation (e.g., Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Galli & Vealey, 2008; Gucciardi et al., 2011; Morgan, Fletcher, & Sarkar, 2013; Sarkar, Fletcher, & Brown, 2015). Specifically, recent research has tended to adopt more holistic approaches incorporating qualitative designs, to explore the processes that influence an athlete's ability to manage adversity and stressors (e.g., Galli & Vealey, 2008), and how such processes relate to optimal sport performance (e.g., Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). Research has also been conducted from a team sport perspective to further examine psychological resilience within sport. For example, Morgan, Fletcher, and Sarkar (2013), developed a definition of team resilience and identified the resilient characteristics of elite sports teams to explore how a team's collective resources can be harnessed to positively adapt to adversity. In addition, the construct of emotional intelligence has also emerged within the athlete literature (e.g., Crombie et al., 2009; Perlini & Halverson, 2006; Zizzi et al., 2003). This is, in part, due to the fact that several of the discrete components of emotional intelligence (e.g., perceiving emotions, managing emotions) have been identified as important for maximising sport performance (e.g., Hanin, 2000; Jones, 2003). Existing knowledge from such studies indicates that successful sporting performance is enhanced with optimum emotions and mood states (Hanin, 2003). Therefore, in attempts to extend research focusing on the relationship between emotions and sport performance research scholars have begun to utilise existing models of emotional intelligence (cf. Mayer & Salovey, 1997) to explore whether an individual's capacity to recognise and utilise emotional states relates to athletic performance. Within this research, higher emotional intelligence has been linked to higher performance in team sports, such as cricket (Crombie et

al., 2009), hockey (Perlini & Halverson, 2006), and baseball (Zizzi et al., 2003). At an individual level, higher emotional intelligence has been found to be positively related to the use of psychological skills, such as, imagery and self-talk (Lane, Thelwell, Lowther, & Devonport, 2009). However, it should be noted that research in this area has been criticised due to inconsistencies found in the fundamental materials (e.g., theoretical paradigm, definition, assessment) used within studies investigating emotional intelligence in sport (Meyer & Fletcher, 2007).

Collectively, the broad overview of the research literature outlined above demonstrates how important athletes' psychological attributes have become when viewing the excellence literature. It is evident that such research has provided an important contribution to the psychology of performance literature in sport. In addition to identifying and understanding the psychological factors that underpin successful athletic performance, research has also been interested in understanding how such factors develop (e.g., Connaughton, Wadey, Hanton, & Jones, 2008; Gould et al., 2002; Gucciardi, Gordon, Dimmock, & Mallett, 2009). In one of the first studies related to this topic, Hanton and Jones (1999a) interviewed 10 elite swimmers to examine the perceived cognitive skills used to maintain facilitative interpretations of anxiety-related symptoms. Findings indicated that these athletes believed that the development of their psychological skills was, in part, due to natural learning experiences and various educational methods. Athletes also reported that parents, coaches, and more experienced swimmers all played a key role in helping them learn how to perceive anxiety as facilitative rather than debilitating. In their study examining the psychological characteristics of Olympic champions, Gould and colleagues (2002) also investigated how U.S. Olympic champions developed their psychological strengths and characteristics. Overall, the findings demonstrated that various

individuals and institutions (e.g., community, family, individual development, and the sport process) were perceived to influence the development of these performers. In addition, the various methods of development were found to be both direct (e.g., teaching) and indirect (e.g., unknowingly creating certain psychological environments). These results highlighted that the psychological development of outstanding athletes is a long-term process involving both the talented athlete themselves and the strong support system around them. Further research investigating the psychological development of elite athletes has also suggested that experiential and structured stressful encounters, and learning how to cope with those encounters are valuable for psychological development (e.g., Bell, Hardy, & Beattie, 2013; Sarkar, Fletcher, & Brown, 2015). Within a youth sport setting, Pierce, Gould, Cowburn, and Driska (2016), investigated the effects of an intensive wrestling camp on the psychological development of youth athletes. Findings indicated that a coach-created adverse environment was considered critical in the development of athletes' psychological qualities. Specifically, planned and structured opportunities that engaged athletes in both physical and psychological challenges which embedded the need to use taught psychological skills to overcome such challenges were found to enhance athletes' psychological development.

In overview, this broad review of the athlete excellence literature demonstrates the various factors that are involved in the pursuit to athletic excellence (e.g., Gould et al., 1999; Greenleef et al., 2001; Jones et al., 2007; Orlick & Partington, 1988). Further, such research provides evidence that the psychological development of athletes takes place over time and is influenced by a variety of individuals and factors (e.g., Connaughton et al., 2008; Gould et al., 2002; Thelwell, Such, Weston, Such, & Greenlees, 2010). Such extensive research has provided a strong theoretical basis for the development of educational and performance-based



interventions aimed at influencing athlete talent and development (Bell et al., 2013; Gould & Eklund, 2007; Hanton & Jones, 1999b; Pierce et al., 2016; Sherd & Golby, 2006; Thelwell, Greenlees, & Weston, 2006). In a recent meta-analysis into the effects of psychological and psychosocial interventions on sport performance, Brown and Fletcher (2017) concluded that such interventions appear to have a substantial effect on athletic performance and may provide the critical marginal gain that is often sought after in sport.

In addition to the notable body of research dedicated to athletic excellence, research interest has also been directed towards understanding performance excellence in various other sporting personnel. For example, studies have investigated sports coaches (e.g., Bloom & Salmela, 2000; Carter & Bloom, 2009), and sports officials (e.g., Hill, Matthews, & Senior, 2016; Slack, Maynard, Butt, & Olusoga, 2013). In relation to coaching, it is well recognised in the sporting literature that the coach plays an integral role in athletes' lives and can influence athletes' performance, development and psychological well-being (e.g., Côté et al., 2010; Gould et al., 1999; Gould et al., 2002; Horn, 2008). With the increasing importance placed on the role of coaches in athletes' development and successes, and coaches now considered as performers in their own right (e.g., Gould et al., 2002; Olusoga, Butt, Hays, & Maynard, 2009; Thelwell et al., 2008a) there has been an influx in coaching excellence research. Accordingly, research has been directed towards identifying and understanding the key factors that contribute toward coaching excellence and coaching effectiveness.

## **2.4 Coaching Excellence and Effectiveness in Sport**

The increased professionalisation of sport, and in turn coaching, has resulted in an associated increase in research on sports coaching (Gilbert & Rangeon, 2011). Much of this research has been guided by the ongoing quest to understand coaching expertise and coaching

effectiveness (e.g., Bloom & Salmela, 2000; Horton, Baker, & Deakin, 2005). Yet, despite the increasing rise in coaching literature, there still remains “a lack of precision in terminology... and a failure to relate effectiveness literature to any conceptual understanding of the coaching process” (Lyle, 2002, p. 251). This lack of clarity is reflected in the numerous terms used within the literature to define “effective” coaching samples. For example, studies have used the following labels to describe their samples of coaches: effective (e.g., Becker & Wrisberg, 2008), excellent (e.g., Nash, Sproule, & Horton, 2011), expert (e.g., Nash & Collins, 2006; Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002), great (e.g., Becker, 2009), good (e.g., Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004), and successful (e.g., Tharp & Gallimore, 1976). In addition, such studies have used differing criteria to identify their samples. For instance, Côté and Gilbert (2009) highlighted that coaching samples have been defined by athletes’ level of achievement (e.g., win/loss record), athletes’ personal attributes (e.g., satisfaction, enjoyment), or a coach’s years of experience. With this in mind, the definition of an excellent coach is difficult to define due to the lack of a clearly articulated and shared conceptual understanding of coaching expertise and effectiveness. Therefore, it is important for this thesis that a brief narrative is provided on “coaching effectiveness” before moving on to reviewing the literature on factors that can influence coaching practice.

In addition to a lack of conceptual understanding, several scholars (e.g., Lyle, 2002; Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004) have highlighted important conceptual issues with the term coaching effectiveness. For instance, in reviewing the coaching effectiveness literature, Lyle (2002) outlined several conceptual matters that need to be considered. In particular, Lyle (2002) highlighted that there is no evidence on the elements of coaching practice that are most important, and therefore judgement between effective and ineffective practice is problematic. In

addition, questions were raised around whether effectiveness should be assessed differently in participation and performance coaching given the inherent differences found between these coaching contexts. In relation to measuring effectiveness, it was then questioned whether adopting a goal achievement approach provides a useful analytical tool, and later concluded that there are difficulties in applying the concept that effective coaching means achieving the goals set by athlete and coach. For example, issues concerning variation in goals, outcome goals, multiple goals being set and the achievability of goals were all highlighted as factors that make it difficult to evaluate effectiveness through goal attainment. Further, Lyle (2002) highlighted that the emphasis within the literature on athlete satisfaction needs to be recognised as only one measure of effectiveness and consequently suggested that investigating why athletes were satisfied would provide a more valuable line of enquiry.

In an attempt to enhance conceptual understandings of coaching effectiveness and expertise, Côté and Gilbert (2009) presented an integrative definition, conceptually grounded in the coaching, teaching, positive psychology, and athletes' development literature. Specifically, these authors postulate the following three components in the definition of coaching effectiveness: coaches' knowledge, athletes' outcomes, and coaching contexts. In detail, firstly Côté and Gilbert (2009) propose that effective coaches require high levels of professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge. Professional knowledge was used to accurately define the large body of specialised knowledge required by a coach (e.g., declarative knowledge, sport-specific knowledge, procedural knowledge). Interpersonal knowledge reflects the socially interactive nature of coaching and defines coaches' abilities to communicate appropriately and effectively with athletes and others. Finally, intrapersonal knowledge is used to define the importance of coaches' openness to continued learning and self-reflection. The second

component, athletes' outcomes, is described as measurable indicators that can serve to identify and evaluate coaching effectiveness. Specifically, drawing on a review of the athlete development literature (see Côté et al., 2010), Côté and Gilbert (2009) contend that coaching effectiveness should result in positive changes in four types of athlete outcomes (i.e., competence, confidence, connection, and character). Finally, Côté and Gilbert (2009) present the importance of the coaching context in defining coaching effectiveness. Specifically, they suggest that coaching effectiveness should be defined according to how coaches meet their athletes' needs and help them fulfil their goals, as defined by the specific coaching context. Specifically, the authors use Côté, Young, North, and Duffy's (2007) typologies of coaches to present four generic coaching contexts (i.e., participation coaches for children, participation coaches for adolescents and adults, performance coaches for young adolescents, and performance coaches for older adolescents and adults).

In review of the above literature, Côté and Gilbert (2009) suggested that coaching effectiveness should be based on the evaluation of three integrative components (i.e., coaches' knowledge, athlete outcomes, and the coaching context). Therefore, they presented a definition of coaching effectiveness as:

The consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes' competence, confidence, connection, and character in specific coaching contexts [p. 316].

The proposed definition enabled the distinction between coaching expertise, coaching effectiveness, and an expert coach. Firstly, coaching expertise refers to specific knowledge in particular contexts. Secondly, effective coaches are those that demonstrate the ability to apply and align their coaching expertise to particular athletes and situations in order to maximise

athlete learning and outcomes. Finally, coaches who demonstrate coaching effectiveness over an extended period of time may then be considered expert coaches.

In summary, Côté and Gilbert's (2009) definition aimed to reflect the complex nature of coaching by recognising the importance of interactions between coaches, athletes, and the coaching context. For the purpose of this thesis, Côté and Gilbert's (2009) definition of coaching effectiveness has been used to provide a suitable conceptual foundation. Although no attempts have been made to objectively measure coaching effectiveness throughout this thesis, perceived coaching effectiveness has been explored.

## **2.5 Factors underpinning Coaching Effectiveness**

It is now widely accepted within the sporting literature that the coach contributes significantly to the performance and development of teams and athletes (e.g., Côté et al., 2010; Greenleaf et al., 2001; Gould et al., 1999; Horn, 2008). Despite the issues in defining coaching expertise and coaching effectiveness a number of factors have been identified in the sports coaching literature that are suggested to influence coaching effectiveness. Therefore, the intension of this section is to provide an overview of several key factors that have been identified within the literature.

### **2.5.1 Coaches' Behaviour**

Early research in this area predominately focused on identifying and describing the behaviours that relate to effective coaching practice. For example, in an extensive review of the coaching literature, Gilbert and Trudel (2004) highlighted that 50.7% of the coaching literature conducted between 1970 and 2001 was centered on coaches' behaviours. Common areas of interest that have dominated much of this coaching literature include, but are not limited to,

coaches' leadership styles (e.g., Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Dwyer & Fischer, 1990; Westre & Weiss, 1991), and type of instruction and feedback (e.g., Becker & Wrisberg, 2008; Bloom, Crumpton, & Anderson, 1999; Gallimore & Tharp, 2004). For example, Horton, Baker, and Deakin (2005) observed five expert national team coaches during practice sessions and rated coaches' behaviours using a modified version of the Coaching Behaviour Recording Form (CBRF; Tharp & Gallimore, 1976). Results indicated that the expert coaches emphasised tactical instruction, followed by general instruction, and then technical instruction. In addition, praise and encouragement were also used quite frequently, although of a shorter duration in comparison to instruction. Scolds, criticism, and nonverbal punishment were the least frequently observed behaviours. Further, qualitative data derived from interviews with the coaches and athletes confirmed that tactical instruction was the dominant form of coach instruction.

In a case study, Becker and Wrisberg (2008) observed women's college basketball coach Pat Summitt across six practices. Findings indicated that nearly half of her behaviours were represented by instructional action, followed by praise, hustle management, and scolding statements. Such research has been useful in enhancing understandings into how expert coaches construct practice in a manner that maximises the transfer of information to athletes. However, it should be noted that much of the research directed toward coaches' behaviours has focused on practice situations where much less attention has investigated coaches' behaviours during competition. Research has also been directed toward examining the types of behaviours and leadership styles that athletes prefer their coaches to display (e.g., Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Crust & Azadi, 2009). One study in particular (Horn, Bloom, Berglund, & Packard, 2011), investigated whether athletes preferred coaching behaviours would vary as a function of athletes own psychological characteristics. Findings indicated that athletes reporting high levels of self-

determined forms of motivation and somatic trait anxiety had a preference for their coaches to exhibit a democratic leadership style. Such athletes also preferred high amounts of training, social support, and, positive and informational feedback. Conversely, athletes high in amotivation indicated a preference for coaches who exhibited an autocratic style and who provided high amounts of punishment-orientated feedback. Such findings indicate a link between athletes' psychological characteristics and preferred coaching behaviours demonstrating that individual athletes require different behaviours from their coaches.

In an attempt to summarise the coach behaviour literature, Becker (2013) analysed over 300 research articles, in order to provide an insight into the key qualities that appear to make certain behaviours more effective than others. In sum, seven key qualities were identified where coaches' behaviours were described as positive, supportive, individualised, fair, appropriate, clear and consistent. Becker (2013) concluded that although there is no formula for effective coaching it is possible that great coaches exhibit behaviors that consist of some of these underlying qualities. A well recognised limitation to the large body of research on coaching behaviours is the overwhelming reliance on quantitative methods of investigation (i.e., questionnaires and observational analysis). Cushion (2010) outlined that rather than embracing the complexity of the coaching process, a considerable amount of the coaching research has simply described how coaches behave. Becker (2009) has argued that although utilising a behavioural approach to psychological inquiry conforms to the assumptions of traditional scientific methods (e.g., phenomenon must be observable, measurable, and replicable) it fails to address aspects of the coaching process that cannot be directly observed. Becker (2009) noted that it would appear that the use of experiential approaches to enhance understandings of the coaching process is underrepresented when compared to the vast use of quantifiable approaches

found in the behavioural literature. However, as highlighted by Gilbert and Rangeon (2011) more current trends in the sport coaching literature are moving beyond simple descriptive accounts of coaches' behaviours to provide more in-depth case studies in the pursuit to help explain the *how*, *why*, and *when*, of the behaviour.

### **2.5.2 Coaches' Knowledge**

In addition to the research investigating coaches' behaviours, research in the area of coaching psychology is increasingly studying the factors that can influence coaches' behaviours. One area in particular that has received attention relates to coaches' knowledge (e.g., Carter & Bloom, 2009; Côté et al., 1995; Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2003). Specifically, research has focused on investigating the important knowledge domains required by coaches and also how coaches acquire and develop their knowledge. In relation to knowledge domains, Abraham, Collins and Martindale (2006) proposed that expert knowledge for coaches includes declarative knowledge (i.e., factual knowledge and information a person knows) and procedural knowledge (i.e., knowing how to perform certain tasks). More specifically, they presented a schematic that included three sources of knowledge essential to coaching, including, coaches sport specific knowledge, pedagogy, and the sciences of coaching knowledge (i.e., professional knowledge). In reviewing the coaching, teaching and athlete development literature, Côté and Gilbert (2009) proposed that coaches' interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge is equally as important as coaches' professional knowledge. That is, effective coaching also requires the ability to create and maintain relationships (i.e., interpersonal knowledge) and the ability to learn from one's own practice (i.e., intrapersonal knowledge) (Gilbert & Côté, 2013).

Research scholars have also been interested in understanding how coaches acquire and develop their knowledge. For example, Carter and Bloom (2009) explored the development and



acquisition of coaching knowledge by interviewing 6 successful University team sports coaches. Findings highlighted that these coaches acquired knowledge through various sources such as, prior athletic experience, education, observation of other coaches, and early coaching experiences. In a similar vein, Jones, Armour and Potrac (2003) interviewed an elite soccer coach to explore how he constructed his own professional knowledge. Findings highlighted that learning from other coaches and mentors were key to the construction of knowledge. However, it was believed that experience provided the basic material for constructing knowledge. That is, although mentors and other coaches provided examples of what was considered “good practice” their effectiveness could only be judged through experience. In addition, formal coach education programmes were considered to provide some useful information however such knowledge was viewed as narrow focused with little depth. The value of formal coach education for adequately supporting coaches’ needs and development has been questioned in various other studies (e.g., Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006; Sherwin, Campbell, & Macintyre, 2017). However, such findings do not appear to be consistent across research within this area as formal coach education courses have also been reported by coaches as a valuable source of knowledge development (e.g., Irwin, Hanton, & Kerwin, 2004; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2017). In addition, research has repeatedly demonstrated that coaches utilise various informal methods of acquiring new knowledge (e.g., Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006; Sherwin et al., 2017). Further, research has reported that coaches prefer to acquire knowledge through informal and self-directed learning activities that involve social interaction (e.g., Stoszkowski & Collins, 2016). Collectively, this line of research has identified key sources that promote coach learning and the acquisition of knowledge while also identifying the domains of knowledge that are required by coaches.

### **2.5.3 Coaches' Personal Characteristics**

Coaches' personal characteristics have also been identified within the literature as a factor that can contribute toward coaching effectiveness and expertise. This body of research has fundamentally used qualitative research methods of inquiry from the perspectives of both coaches (e.g., Bloom & Salmela, 2000; Currie & Oats-Wilding, 2012) and athletes (e.g., Becker, 2009). In one of the earliest studies, Bloom and Salmela (2000) interviewed 16 expert Canadian coaches from various team sports in an attempt to identify the personal characteristics of expert coaches. The coaches who took part in the study were selected based on their recognition by National Sports Organisations, win/loss records and quantity of national and international elite athletes produced. In reporting the findings it was identified that the coaches involved in the study had a common desire for learning by being open-minded to new knowledge with constant attempts made to evaluate one's own progress. In addition, having a strong work ethic and being able to communicate effectively and empathise with athletes were found to be common characteristics of the coaches interviewed.

In a similar study, Vallée and Bloom (2005) attempted to determine how expert university coaches of team sports built their successful programs. Specifically, in interviewing 5 expert Canadian female coaches, several factors were perceived to have enabled the coaches to achieve success (i.e., individual growth, organisational skills, coaches' attributes, and, vision). Among the findings coaches' attributes were found to be a key contributing factor to building a successful university program. That is, two themes were found to relate to coaches' attributes: commitment to learning and personal characteristics. As found by Bloom and Salmela (2000), coaches' commitment to learning illustrated the common desire coaches had for acquiring knowledge. The coaches' characteristics included the personality traits and leadership styles that

the coaches displayed. It was highlighted that these coaches were open-minded, balanced, composed, caring, and genuinely interested in their athletes. Building on this literature, in a study concerned with the definition and development of coaching expertise, Wiman, Salmoni and Hall (2010), identified coaches' personal characteristics as an important factor in both defining and developing coaching expertise. Specifically, through in-depth interviews with 8 Canadian university head coaches, it was found that drive, passion, dedication, commitment, and open-mindedness were perceived as necessary characteristics for the development of coaching expertise.

In addition to exploring factors perceived to influence coaching effectiveness from coaches' own perspectives, research has also explored the perceptions of athletes. For example, in an attempt to provide a more complete picture of the coaching process, Becker (2009) investigated athletes' experiences of great coaching. Specifically, through in-depth interviews with 18 elite level athletes, six major dimensions were identified that characterised athletes experiences of great coaching (i.e., coach attributes, the environment, the system, relationships, coaching actions, and influences). The dimension of coaches' attributes included athletes' descriptions of their coaches' core qualities and included six themes: more than just a coach, personality characteristics, abilities, knowledge, experience, and imperfections. In one respect, athletes provided descriptions of their coaches' core qualities in relation to their personality characteristics, found to be cognitive, emotional, social, and psychological, in nature. Within the emotional domain, athletes viewed great coaches as passionate, inspirational, and enthusiastic. In addition, Becker (2009) highlighted that great coaches appeared to use emotion to regulate athletes' energy during competition. Specifically, coaches were described as having control over their own emotions and athletes viewed their coaches as emotionally stable. However, some

athletes did note that their coaches sometimes lacked interpersonal and emotional skills. In relation to the psychological domain, athletes described their coaches as being highly committed and disciplined being driven by their competitive attitude. Overall, the findings demonstrated a variety of personal attributes that elite athletes perceived their greatest coaches to have possessed.

Research investigating the perceptions of both Olympic athletes and Olympic coaches has also identified various characteristics associated with coaching effectiveness and success. For example, in a series of studies investigating factors perceived to have positively and negatively influenced athlete performances at the Olympic Games (i.e., Gould et al., 1999; Gould, Greanleaf, Chung, & Guinan, 2002), Gould and colleagues found coaches to be an important influence on athlete performance. For example, through interviewing athletes that had failed to meet performance expectations at the Atlanta Olympic Games, Gould and colleagues (1999) indicated that several athletes reported coaching problems to have influenced their performance at the Games. Several of the problems highlighted by the athletes related to their coaches inability to handle pressure and avoid distractions, loss of focus, and being indecisive. One athlete in particular stated that “there were probably a few of us [athletes] that were better prepared for the distractions and handled the situation better than some of the coaching staff” (p. 388). In addition, Gould and colleagues (2002) highlighted similar findings when U.S athletes were required to rate how they perceived specific variables to have influenced their Olympic performance. In relation to coaching variables, findings indicated that athletes who felt that their coach was effectively able to deal with crisis situations and make decisive but fair decisions had a positive effect on their performance. Conversely, for athletes who indicated that this was not true of their coach perceived it had a major negative effect on their performance. The authors

concluded that such results demonstrate that coaches are performers in their own ways, and like athletes, need the ability to handle psychological issues such as stress and distraction.

In a related study, Gould, Guinan, Greenleaf, and Chung (2002) explored coaches' perceptions of factors perceived to influence athlete performance at the Olympic Games. This study also reported coaches' perceptions of factors believed to have influenced their own ability to coach effectively at the Olympic Games. Specifically, 65 U.S coaches who were involved in either the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games or the 1998 Nagano Olympic Games participated in the study. All coaches completed a survey that was based on a list of variables identified as influencing athlete and coach performance derived from pilot interviews. In relation to coaches own effectiveness, findings from the survey results indicated that having the ability to remain calm under pressure and make decisive decisions positively influenced coaching effectiveness. Coaches also perceived that keeping things simple, having realistic expectations for their athletes, and following a performance plan facilitated coaching effectiveness. Conversely, the inability to handle crisis situations, manage stress between athletes and coaching staff, and markedly changing coaching behaviours were perceived to negatively impact coaching effectiveness. Findings also highlighted that coaches' interactions with sport psychology consultants was perceived to enhance coaching effectiveness. Such findings highlighted the importance of providing psychological support and education for coaches. It is important to note that one limitation to the aforementioned study relates to the survey-based design. That is, coaches were required to respond to a list of preconceived variables. As such, it is possible that other factors perceived to relate to coaches effectiveness at the Olympic Games may not have been identified.

To further this line of enquiry and in recognition that coaches are performers in their own right, Olusoga and colleagues (2012) examined the factors that 8 Olympic coaches perceived to influence their ability to perform successfully under pressure (i.e., Olympic environment). Findings presented a variety of factors such as life style factors, strategic planning, team and athlete preparation, taking time out, and team support. In addition, coaches also identified a number of psychological attributes (e.g., communication, passion, emotional control, and fun) and skills (e.g., rationalisation, routine) that were perceived to enable them to perform successfully in the highly demanding environment of the Olympic Games. Emotional control was presented as one of the largest lower-order themes related to coaches' psychological attributes. For example, one coach reported that staying "completely calm in a crisis" (p.232) was an important factor in Olympic coaching success. Such findings offered some support for Gould and colleagues (2002) in identifying more dominant psychological factors perceived to influence coach performance at the Olympic Games. Indeed, Olusoga and colleagues (2012) concluded that it appears important that coaches are mentally prepared for high-pressure competition and would also benefit from psychological support before significant events. The authors warranted the need for future research to further investigate the psychological factors perceived to influence coaching performance. Although such findings offered a novel insight into the factors required by coaches to perform under pressure, it is important to take into account the limitations of the study. Firstly, the narrow sample used within the study may restrict the generalisability of the findings. That is, as only male coaches from one sport participated in the study, this may have influenced the factors perceived to be important. Secondly, the factors identified by the coaches involved in the study were directly in relation to coping with pressure at the Olympic Games and not necessarily specific to psychological aspects. The Olympic

Games provides a very unique environment for both coaches and athletes and therefore findings may only be representative to that particular context.

In the broader sport psychology literature, the importance of the personal characteristics of other specialist that work within sporting environments has also been acknowledged. For example, there is a body of research that has been directed toward exploring and understanding the personal characteristics and qualities of sport psychology practitioners (e.g., Anderson, Miles, Robinson, & Mahoney, 2004; Chandler, Eubank, Nesti, & Cable, 2014; Chandler, Eubank, Nesti, Tod, & Cable, 2016; Lubker, Visek, Geer, & Watson, 2008). Such research has identified a variety of characteristics and qualities perceived to be essential to effective practice. Some of the key qualities repeatedly reported within this literature include empathy, trustworthiness, authenticity and approachability. In addition, qualities such as confidence and resilience have also been reported given the highly pressurised nature of sport (e.g., Chandler et al., 2014; Chandler et al., 2016). Specifically, effective sports psychologists have been described as having a sense of security in one's role and being able to manage the day-to-day challenges of high-level sport. Chandler and colleagues (2014) also reported that sport physicians believed that a 'blend of characteristics' was required in order for sport psychology practitioners to be effective. Such a blend included practitioners' personal qualities but also included other characteristics such as having strong theoretical knowledge and good professional skills.

More recently, Woolway and Harwood (2018) conducted a review of studies that have investigated the preferred characteristics of sport psychology practitioners. The outcomes of the review presented twelve characteristics that influence consumers (e.g., athletes, coaches) perceptions of practitioner effectiveness (e.g., gender, race, sport-specific knowledge, age, interpersonal skills). The characteristic repeatedly reported as one of the most important

characteristics was high interpersonal skills (e.g., empathy, respectful, trustworthiness, confidence, and acceptance). From an applied perspective, Woolway and Harwood (2018) concluded that this finding highlights the importance for sport psychology practitioners to consider interpersonal skill development. However, due to the wide range of skills considered ‘interpersonal’ it makes it difficult to identify the key skills required to consult effectively. Collectively, research has identified a variety of personal characteristics and qualities that are perceived to be important for specialists that work within sporting environments (e.g., coaches, sport psychology practitioners, strength and conditioning coaches). Such research has demonstrated some commonalities in the characteristics that are perceived to be important for professionals within sport but has also helped to establish qualities and characteristics that are perhaps more unique to certain professions.

In review of the above literature, it is evident that a variety of factors are suggested to contribute toward coaching effectiveness and expertise (e.g., behaviour, knowledge, and personal characteristics). In particular, research has identified a variety of characteristics and attributes that are perceived to relate to coaching effectiveness and expertise. Interestingly, among those identified within these studies, several appear to be psychological in nature. That is, although not studied directly, numerous psychological characteristics (e.g., commitment, dedication, drive, passion, emotional composure, discipline, and open-mindedness) have been reported within the literature in relation to coaching effectiveness and expertise. In addition, research focused on coaches own experiences at the Olympic Games (e.g., Gould et al., 2002; Olusoga et al., 2012), has begun to demonstrate that psychological factors can influence a coach’s ability to coach effectively. However, such research has only provided an initial insight into the importance of psychological attributes in relation to coaching in highly pressurised environments (i.e., Olympic



Games). Although previous research has begun to recognise the importance of psychological attributes in coaching, it is clear that, at the elite level, further research is warranted to explore the psychological attributes that are perceived to underpin elite coaching. Drawing on the athlete literature (e.g., Gould et al., 2002; MacNamara, Button, & Collins, 2010), it is anticipated that such research has the potential to enhance current knowledge and provide a theoretical basis for the development of educational and performance-based programmes aimed at influencing coach development.

## **2.6 Summary and Aims of the Thesis**

Investigating performance excellence in the sport domain has been an area of research interest across many sports disciplines. While much of the research in the sport psychology literature has been directed toward athletic excellence, scholars have also been interested in investigating other sporting personnel to further understandings into performance excellence in the sport domain. In particular, coaches have received growing research attention given their integral role in athlete performance and development (e.g., Becker, 2009; Nash & Sproule, 2009). More specifically, coaches are viewed as performers in their own right (e.g., Gould et al., 2002; Olusoga et al., 2012). The aforementioned research provides evidence that, alongside athletes, coaches are also subject to psychological and performance related demands and benefit from psychological support in terms of their coaching effectiveness and psychological well-being. While the majority of sport psychology research has focused on developing effective psychological principles for athletes (e.g., Anderson, Hanrahan, & Mallett, 2014; Gould, Dieffenbach, & Moffett, 2002), Olusoga and colleagues (2012) propose it is vital to explore the psychological factors influencing coaching performance at the elite level for the education,

personal and professional development of coaches. Yet, to date, scant research has investigated coaches' psychological attributes and how such attributes may be developed.

When considering factors that underpin excellence, whether in sports officials, coaches, or athletes, literature consistently demonstrates that elite performers display stronger attributes that contribute to their success (e.g., Weissensteiner, Abernethy, Farrow, & Gross, 2012). Further, with the asserted lack of research focused on identifying the factors that coaches attribute to their own success (Currie & Oats-Wilding, 2012), investigating the psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness at the elite level could broaden the breadth and depth of research in this area. Therefore, on drawing on the athlete literature (e.g., Gould et al., 2002), it is anticipated that gaining an in-depth insight into the perceptions of elite sports coaches may have the potential to advance understandings of the pertinent psychological attributes needed to excel in the coaching context. Taking this into consideration, the primary purpose of this thesis was to explore the psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness at the elite level and how such attributes were perceived to have developed. Secondly, a further aim of the thesis was to bridge the gap between theory and practice by developing an intervention programme based on the experiences of elite coaches to help in the support of future development within coaching.

## **2.7 Methodological Approach**

In social science there is a concern for the truth in terms of how far we can say that our knowledge of a phenomenon corresponds to or is the same as reality of the phenomenon itself (Saunders, 2009). This then raises the question of the nature of reality (ontology) and what there is about it that can be known (epistemology). According to Saunders (2009) there are different positions or stances on the claims that can be made about the knowledge gained from studying

social phenomena. Such positions hold different assumptions, which influence the way a research process is identified and provide a route for understanding the way to approach research (Saunders, 2009). Therefore, to give context to the reader, an overview of the philosophical assumptions underpinning the research design process of this thesis is presented.

The research contained within this thesis was underpinned by the philosophical assumptions of critical realism. While the position was not used rigidly, the ideas of Roy Bhaskar (2008 [1975]) in his early workings of ‘basic critical realism’ and Andrew Sayer’s (2000) work were drawn upon. Historically, critical realism was developed as an alternative to two significant and opposing philosophical developments of the twentieth century; positivism (e.g., human behaviour is governed by law-like regularities and it is possible to carry out independent, object, and value-free social research), and, interpretivism (e.g., the social world is not governed by regularities and law-like properties because access to reality is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, and shared meaning) (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2015). Critical realism is theoretically positioned between positivism and interpretivism and adopts tenants from both philosophical perspectives.

In relation to ontology, critical realism upholds a realist philosophy indicating that reality exists independently of our knowledge or perception of it (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie, 1998; Bhaskar, 2008). Central to critical realism ontology is a proposed stratified reality (i.e., layered) that is divided into three domains: ‘the real’, ‘the actual’, and ‘the empirical’. The real refers to ‘deep’ structures and mechanisms or tendencies that generate phenomena. Consequently, the actual is a subset of the real and refers to aspects of reality that occur but may not necessarily be experienced. Finally, the empirical is defined as aspects of reality that can be experienced and observed directly or indirectly (Jones, K. 2011; Sayer, 2000). Such an

illustration suggests that even though there is one reality it does not permit that immediate access to such reality is possible or that every aspect is observable. Critical realism therefore does not commit one to an absolute knowledge of that reality (cf. Bhaskar, 2008). In terms of epistemology, critical realism supports the view of ‘epistemic relativism’ that suggests the generation of knowledge is a human activity and can only be understood through descriptions and discourse (Sayer, 2000), therefore accepting the socially constructed nature of knowledge (Potter & Lopez, 2001). Any attempts at describing or explaining reality are viewed to be fallible and always open to critique because any knowledge claims are arrived at via a critical dialogue with alternative theories, rather than some attempt to mirror reality (Cruickshank, 2002). However, even though these limitations signify the fallibility of knowledge production it does not necessarily mean that all knowledge is equally fallible. Rather, critical realism contests that one may have valid explanations or theories that provide an account of reality with more probabilistic accuracy than others (Potter & Lopez, 2001). Critical realism therefore puts forward epistemological caution with respect to scientific knowledge:

Human beings produce knowledge and human beings can be mistaken. Science is not pure and can contain an ideologically distorted element in both explanations and the methods used to arrive at them. There are sociological determinants in the process of knowledge production whether in the natural or social sciences. The production of knowledge is itself a social process and one in which language is deeply embedded. However, knowledge cannot be reduced to its sociological determinants of production. Truth is relative to be sure but there is still both truth and error (Potter & Lopez, 2001, p. 9).

A key feature of critical realism is the requirement of researchers to engage with prior theory during the initial stages of research. For instance, Bhaskar (2008) advocated the use of existing theory as a starting point for empirical research. This occurred within the present thesis as existing literature informed the aims of the thesis and the development of the interview guide used in study one to shape the qualitative interviews. Secondly, in line with a critical realist viewpoint, the research conducted within this thesis was based on the assumption that the relationship between the researcher, study participants, and the phenomena under investigation is interactive. Specifically, it is noted that the primary researcher cannot provide completely objective observations as such observations are mediated through the primary researcher herself. Therefore, a position that recognises that research cannot be value-free was fostered, while methods were put in place to promote a neutral and non-judgmental approach, throughout the thesis.

Unlike positivism and interpretivism, critical realism does not commit to a single type of research but rather is compatible with a variety of research methods. What critical realism does imply is that the choice of such methods should be dependent on “the nature of the object of study and what one wants to learn about it” (Sayer, 2000, p. 19). The main aim of this thesis was to enhance knowledge and understanding of the psychological attributes that are perceived to underpin elite coaching and how this knowledge can be used to inform coach education and development programmes and provide practical recommendations for sport psychology practitioners. Thus, a mixed-method approach (i.e., qualitative and quantitative methods) was chosen in attempts to best achieve the research aims and advance knowledge in the best possible way.

Firstly, qualitative methods were deemed most appropriate initially to explore the psychological attributes perceived to underpin elite coaching and also inform the development of the intervention programme. Qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, case studies, ethnography) are more profound within critical realism as they are viewed as more capable of describing phenomena and constructing propositions (Sayer, 2000). Following the qualitative investigation, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention programme. Specifically, quantitative methods were used to examine the relationship between the independent variable (i.e., intervention) and dependent variables (i.e., outcome measures) under investigation. As noted by Jones. K (2011), it was recognised that obtaining statistically significant results via the use of quantitative methods says nothing about the magnitude or importance of the effect. Therefore, qualitative methods were also used to obtain social validation information from that participants involved in the intervention programme. It is believed that the mixed-method approach enabled a more complete understanding of the effectiveness of the intervention than could be gained from either method alone.

## Chapter III

### Study One

#### *Exploring the psychological attributes underpinning elite sports coaching*

##### 3.1 Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that coaches have an important role in athletes' lives and can influence athletes' performance, behaviour, and psychological well-being (e.g., Côté et al., 2010). In comparison to athletes, much less consideration has been directed towards identifying and supporting the psychological needs of coaches. Since Giges, Petipas and Vernacchia (2004) argued that as much attention should be given to coaches' preparation and performance as has been given to athletes, research has increasingly recognised that coaches are indeed performers in their own right (Olusoga et al., 2009; Thelwell et al., 2008a). Coaches, like athletes, are often required to coach in highly pressurised environments, make critical decisions, deal with adversity, and are held to incredibly high expectations (Giges et al., 2004). To this end research conducted with coaches has increased and provided insights into key performance areas such as coaches' stress and coping (Olusoga et al., 2009, Olusoga et al., 2010), coaches' efficacy (Feltz et al., 1999), and coaches' leadership (Chelladurai, 1990; Chelladurai, 2007). However, little attention has been directed towards exploring the psychological attributes that are perceived to underpin coaches' abilities to perform effectively.

In the seminal research conducted by Gould and colleagues (Gould et al., 2002; Gould et al., 1999) a series of studies examined factors affecting Olympic performance from the perspective of

both athletes and coaches. Findings from this research have demonstrated both the positive and negative influences coaches can have on athlete performance at major competitions. In particular, athletes' perceptions of how coaches can negatively influence performance included the coach's inability to handle pressure and avoid distractions, poor coach-athlete communication, coaches changing behaviour, over-coaching, and setting unrealistic expectations. Athletes' perceptions of how coaches can positively influence performance included coach trust and friendship, coach planning, making fair decisions, and receiving coach feedback (Greenleaf et al., 2001). Gould and colleagues (2002) also reported coaches' perceptions of factors that influenced their own coaching performance at the Olympic Games. Specifically, coaches indicated that having the ability to remain calm under pressure and make decisive decisions positively influenced their coaching effectiveness, whereas the inability to deal with crisis situations, and manage stress between athletes and coaching staff were perceived as ineffective.

More recently, research has identified several key factors that Olympic coaches attributed to their success (Currie & Oats-Wilding, 2012; Olusoga et al., 2012). For example, Olusoga and colleagues (2012) explored the factors that enabled coaches to perform under pressure (i.e., Olympic environment). A variety of factors emerged such as lifestyle choices, strategic planning, team and athlete preparation, taking time out, and team support. Coaches also identified a number of psychological attributes (e.g., communication, passion, emotional control, perception) and skills (e.g., rationalisation, routines) highlighting the notion that psychological attributes are important for coach performance. Indeed the authors pointed towards the need to enhance coaches' own psychological skills to develop these attributes.

Athlete talent development literature has consistently demonstrated that athletes' psychological attributes are malleable and capable of being trained and developed over time (e.g.,



Connaughton et al., 2008; Connaughton, Hanton, & Jones, 2010; Gould, Diffenbach, & Moffett, 2002; Thelwell, Greenlees, & Weston, 2006). Such research has informed intervention-based studies concerning the application of psychological skills training to enhance athlete development and performance (e.g., Thelwell, Greenlees, & Weston 2006). To date, scant research has attempted to understand how the psychological attributes of coaches are developed, which is not surprising considering the current lack of research concerning coaches' psychological attributes. Based on athlete talent development research, investigating factors perceived to influence the development of psychological attributes in coaches could hold important implications for the design and implementation of intervention studies aimed to enhance coach development.

Collectively, existing literature provides insight into a broad range of factors perceived to influence coach effectiveness and success. This research highlights the importance of understanding the psychological attributes of coaches and how such attributes are developed. However, to date, little research has been conducted in this area. Taking into account the paucity of research regarding the factors expert coaches attribute to their own success (Currie & Oats-Wilding, 2012), a detailed investigation into the psychological attributes of elite coaches and related developmental factors will broaden the breadth and depth of existing literature. This form of investigation has the potential to expose and explain some of the unobservable cognitive contexts that drive coaches' behaviours and positively influence coaching effectiveness. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to explore the psychological attributes elite coaches perceived to underpin their ability to coach most effectively, and how such attributes were perceived to have developed.

## 3.2 Method

### 3.2.1 Participants

For this study, elite sports coaches were purposely recruited. That is, persons known to meet the required inclusion criteria were intentionally sought to enhance the potential of information rich participants being included (Patton, 2002). As defined in previous research investigating elite sports coaches (Thelwell et al., 2008a), elite coaches were defined as “those who work with performers on a regular basis who are current national squad members and perform at the highest level in their sport (e.g., World Championships, Olympics)” (p. 41). In line with previous research, inclusion criteria required coaches to have worked, or currently work, with “elite level” athletes (cf. Hanton, Fletcher, & Coughlan, 2005) for a sustained period of time and to have been or currently be employed by their respective governing bodies (e.g., Thelwell et al., 2008a; Thelwell, Weston, Greenlees & Hutchings, 2008b; Thelwell, Weston, & Greenlees, 2010). In addition, coaches were required to have a minimum of 10 years coaching experience ( $M_{\text{years}} = 19.2$ ,  $SD = 7.0$ ) and to have coached athletes to medal success at major sporting competitions (i.e., Olympic Games, World Championships). In total, 12 elite coaches (eight male, four female) aged between 29 and 56 years ( $M_{\text{years}} = 44.3$ ,  $SD = 9.4$ ) volunteered to participate in semi-structured interviews representing a variety of both individual and team sports including: gymnastics, track and field, rowing, lacrosse, disability table tennis, trampolining, judo, canoe slalom and hockey. Coaches were purposely selected from a variety of sports to ensure that a wide range of sporting organisations were represented. 11 coaches involved in the study were from the UK while one coach was from Australia. At the time of the study, 10 coaches were actively coaching at the elite level, while two coaches had recently retired.

### **3.2.2 Procedure**

Following institutional ethics approval (see appendix A), all participants were initially contacted via e-mail outlining the aims of the research and the procedure for data collection. Informed consent was gained from all participants before data collection. Given the exploratory nature of the study, in-depth interviews were considered the most appropriate method of data collection (Patton, 2002). A semi-structured interview approach was applied where all participants were asked the same major open-ended questions, but with further elaboration questions that varied according to the participant's initial responses to opening questions. The interview guide (see appendix B) contained three sections, section one comprised of demographic and coaching background information. Section two focused on psychological attributes where participants were encouraged to discuss their own psychological attributes (e.g., What do you think are your psychological strengths when coaching? How do you display these in your behaviour?), and related developmental factors (e.g., Have you always had these attributes, or have they been developed? How do you think they have been developed?). Section three focused on coaching strategies (e.g., Is there anything in particular you do to manage your thoughts, feelings and behaviours?). The majority of interviews were conducted face-to-face, with one phone interview. The principle investigator who had previous experience in qualitative research procedures conducted all interviews. All interviews were digitally audio recorded in their entirety and transcribed verbatim.

### **3.2.3 Data Analysis**

The primary purpose of the study was to understand the psychological attributes of coaches through their own experiences and perspectives; thus, an inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was adopted to analyse the data. In phase one of the analysis all data

underwent a process of initial open coding where data were analysed on a line-by-line basis. Raw data responses (quotes or paraphrased quotes) were organised into patterns of like ideas representing lower-order themes. Lower-order themes were grouped together based on similarities to form higher-order themes.

The second phase of analysis involved several measures to enhance the authenticity and trustworthiness of data analysis including analyst triangulation, use of a critical friend and the presentation of thick descriptive quotes (cf. Faulkner & Sparkes, 1999). Analyst triangulation involved three researchers independently reading transcripts and making suggestions for the placement and removal of raw data extracts into themes. Categorisation of the data continued until consensus was reached between all three researchers. Following researcher agreement, an additional colleague with experience in sport psychology research but independent to the research study was used to confirm, or otherwise, the placement of raw data extracts into lower and higher-order themes. The presentation of results includes descriptive quotes, to share the views of the participants and provide context for the reader.

### **3.3 Results**

The data analysis procedures resulted in the generation of 122 raw data extracts that were categorised into 30 lower-order themes, 12 higher-order themes and 2 general dimensions. Results are presented in two sections to demonstrate firstly the psychological attributes identified and secondly, factors relating to attribute development.

#### **3.3.1 Psychological Attributes**

The higher-order themes characterising specific psychological attributes included: (a) attitude, (b) confidence, (c) resilience, (d) focus, (e), drive for personal development, (f) being

athlete-centered, (g) emotional awareness, (h) emotional understanding, and (i) emotional management (see Figure 3.1).

### **3.3.1.1 Attitude**

Within this higher-order theme two lower-order themes captured the attitudes displayed by coaches: (a) tough attitude, and (b) focus on the positives. Having a tough attitude was described as being able to “make tough decisions” and being “directive”. Several coaches also demonstrated their tough demeanour towards others, as one coach stated “I’ve always followed the definition of a coach that coaches someone to achieve what they want to achieve by making them do what they don’t always want to do”. Several coaches also referred to how they “always focus on the positives”, which applied to their own personal performance and that of their athletes. The ability to maintain a positive attitude in imperfect situations was demonstrated by not dwelling on mistakes and refocusing attention, as one coach discussed,

The athletes will make mistakes, usually there will be a reason why they have made that mistake. You could say ‘you didn’t do that very well’ when they [athlete] know it already, so there’s no point. We reinforce the bits they’ve done well and then you address it with your angle... So really keeping things positive and not looking too much at massive mistakes.

### **3.3.1.2 Confidence**

Coaches were also characterised by their high level of confidence which was categorised into three lower-order themes: (a) confident communication, (b) acting confident, and (c) confidence in ability and knowledge. Being able to communicate with confidence was regarded as a critical attribute affecting coach effectiveness. For example, “clear and confident

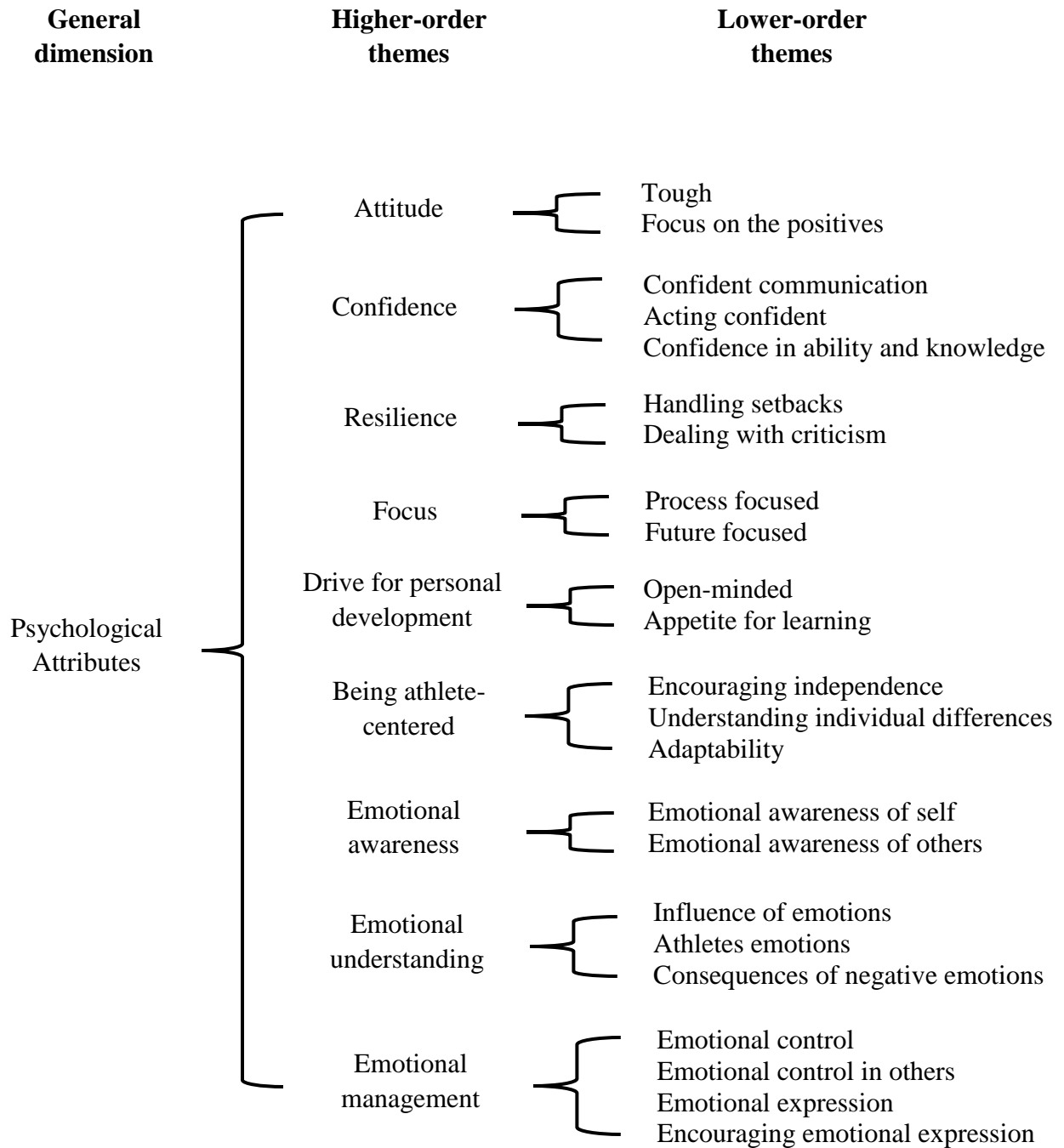


Figure 3.1: Psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness at the elite level

communication with athletes” and “not being afraid to make decisions” were perceived to positively influence athlete behaviour and performance, as illustrated by the following quote:

In the World Championships there was a lot of choices on the course and it was just being clear with the athlete why they should take on this particular choice. I’ve got a good idea it might be the fastest but I couldn’t tell you it would be. So I was very clear... You’ve just got to be clear and confident in what you are saying to them, and it was good to see them [athlete] committing to the moves.

Another aspect of confidence found to influence coaching effectiveness was a coach’s ability to act confidently both in practice and competitive environments. This lower-order theme demonstrated how coaches felt the need to display confidence in their behaviour by “exuding as much confidence as possible”. Coaches were mindful that their behaviour could influence athletes both positively and negatively. Acting confidently was perceived to have a positive effect therefore coaches consciously attempted to appear confident for the benefit of others. Several coaches also referred to how their “skills and abilities gave them confidence”, which gave coaches self-belief, “you believe that you can do it”. Such confidence in one’s skills was demonstrated by one coach being very self-assured regarding his ability to positively affect athlete development, “I could take anybody [athlete] on and adapt to meet their needs”.

### **3.3.1.3 Resilience**

Several coaches identified resilience as a personal psychological attribute, being categorised into two lower-order themes: (a) handling setbacks and (b) dealing with criticism. Encapsulating a coach’s ability to handle setbacks, coaches described being able to “come out the other side”. In particular, when discussing their ability to come back from setbacks, one

coach said “I just have that song in my head, you get knocked down but you get up again”. The following quote illustrates one coach’s ability to persist despite setbacks by continuing to search for solutions:

Because of either my nationality or my gender I’ve not actually been able to access some environments, and I would never access them because I wouldn’t be allowed to. But that doesn’t stop me [from] working hard and applying for things... I’m given information back that I’m lacking because I haven’t got ‘x’ for example, then I will work harder and I’ll learn ‘x’ because that makes me a better coach.

The lower-order theme ‘dealing with criticism’ demonstrated how several coaches emphasised their ability to deal with negative comments directed towards them by others involved in their sport (e.g., other coaches, parents, governing body members). It was made apparent that having “broad shoulders”, “thick skin” and “trying not to take things personally” enabled coaches to handle such comments in a positive manner without having detrimental effects on their coaching effectiveness or psychological well-being.

#### **3.3.1.4 Focus**

Several coaches discussed how their ability to remain focused influenced their coaching effectiveness. In this higher-order theme coaches highlighted the importance of being both process focused and future-focused. Having the ability to apply oneself to the task at hand and keeping things simple and process focused was perceived integral, as demonstrated by the following quote:

“It’s just getting on with the job at hand and focusing on what I need to do, I try and think about it logically and identify all the steps I need to take. If I’m distracted I’m not athlete



centric anymore, and if I'm not athlete centric then I'm not doing the best job by my [team]".

Being able to stay focused on future events and focusing on what needed to be done to achieve intended goals was also considered important by several coaches, as demonstrated by the following quotes, "I'm very goal focused, so there's always three or four things I want to improve on", and "The times I've coached well is when I'm really focused on the job... I'm only thinking about preparing the athlete for competition.

### **3.3.1.5 Drive for Personal Development**

A clear desire to utilise learning opportunities and continue to strive for personal development was evident. This higher-order theme was categorised into two lower-order themes: (a) open-minded, and (b) appetite for learning. Being open-minded was characterised by embracing learning experiences and opportunities such as having the perspective of "I'm not a finished article" as oppose to being "stuck in their ways". Having an appetite for learning was also identified and several coaches highlighted their constant need for self-improvement by "trying to improve all the time" and "having a hunger for knowledge". Coaches discussed using a range of resources to enhance their professional development, as illustrated in the following quote:

I've learnt a lot from talking to other coaches from other sports. In terms of learning and seeing what's out there it's about looking at business, looking at other sports, looking at other team managers, performance directors...trying to put in what then relates to my sport.

### 3.3.1.6 Being Athlete-centered

Being athlete-centered comprised of three lower-order themes: (a) encouraging independence, (b) understanding individual differences, and (c) adaptability. Several coaches in their attitudes toward developing “self-sufficient” athletes illustrated how they encourage independence:

The times when I have coached well I don't coach a lot, which in fairness means you have coached well. So everything has been done before and the athlete is self-sufficient...it's not about you, what you are trying to do is build independence...you're trying to make yourself redundant.

To promote athlete independence, coaches reported, “asking open questions” and encouraging “athlete directed discussions” to assist athletes in taking ownership over their training and development. One coach referred to using what he termed “the nudge principle” to assist athletes in their decision-making, by guiding rather than directing them towards intended outcomes. Several coaches highlighted the importance of being able to understand the individual needs of their athletes, acknowledging that athlete development and performance is largely influenced by being able to “understand an athlete's personality”, “taking the time to understand their moods, their habits” and “using that in a way that gets the best out of them”. Having an individualised understanding of athletes needs influenced some coaches' ability to adapt. More specifically, coaches described being able to change coaching behaviours and coaching styles to suit the needs of the athletes. Being aware that certain coaching styles may not be beneficial for all athletes enabled coaches to change their approach to what was considered most facilitative, as one coach stated, “I'm a chameleon... I really try and adapt my colour so to speak to mould myself to the personality traits of the performers that I'm working with”.

### 3.3.1.7 Emotional Awareness

This higher-order theme was governed by coaches' abilities to not only demonstrate emotional awareness within themselves but also an awareness of others' emotions, thus the lower-order themes included: (a) emotional awareness of self and (b) emotional awareness of others. Having an awareness of one's own emotions was illustrated in the ability to accurately appraise different emotions and also recognise physiological and behavioural changes related to specific emotions, as one coach demonstrated:

It's being able to say what are you feeling right now, because the feeling ultimately will control how you think. To describe your emotion, and it's not I feel great or I feel [profanity] it's to actually go into what it is that you are actually feeling... My feelings are that I normally get sweaty palms, I get this feeling in my stomach and I know that I'm going to explode.

The acknowledgement and recognition of others' emotions provided key information that coaches utilised to inform their decisions and behaviours, to be most effective. Emotional recognition was demonstrated in various ways, such as paying attention to body language, communication style, and behaviours. This recognition allowed coaches to assess an athlete's emotions without gaining explicit information. One coach demonstrated the ability to evaluate an athlete's emotional state through means of communication:

Depending on when you debrief depends on what they will get out of it... more than the distance from competing to the debrief it was more around when I felt they [athlete] were in the right state to actually be reflective. So we would watch other people and I would say 'they are good at this' and if they are able to critically analyse somebody else without

reflecting back on themselves or whatever it shows that they are starting to think logically and not emotionally. So it's almost how emotional are they? How raw is it?

### **3.3.1.8 Emotional Understanding**

The higher-order theme of emotional understanding captured how coaches were able to comprehend how emotions related to one another, how they progress and change over time, and foreseeing the potential implications of various emotions. Lower-order themes included: (a) influence of emotions, (b) athletes' emotions, and (c) consequence of negative emotions. The lower-order theme 'influence of emotions' was characterised by coaches' abilities to understand how their own emotions can change over time and influence not only themselves but also others around them, both positively and negatively. Such an understanding informed coaches' decisions on how and when to act (or perhaps not to act) depending on what was perceived to be most facilitative within a given context:

It's just understanding how I am feeling...what value can that add to the situation, can it help, will it add to the situation? Do I show it, do I not show it? It's that kind of thing, knowing what you will do in the moment... If somebody's had a poor performance [identifies sport] do you debrief straight away or do you wait? What influence am I going to have when both people are potentially disappointed?

Being able to understand the emotions of others, particularly athletes' emotions, and how such emotions can affect an athlete's performance, was also considered an integral part of coaching effectively by the majority of coaches, as demonstrated by the following quote:

When I've coached the best it's again linked to me understanding what's going on, so I'm not just being too focused on tactics and trying to see where the opponent is making

mistakes. Because you can give the player, your player, all the tactical advice in the world but if they're not in control of what they are doing, their emotional control, they're not going to take any notice of it anyway.

In addition, understanding how certain emotions could affect an athlete's performance allowed coaches to behave in certain ways to purposely trigger an anticipated emotional response from their athletes, as one coach stated "I can be quite matter of fact or I can ball them out, it's whatever has an impact". Several coaches also demonstrated the ability to reason about the consequences of negative emotions. Preempting how specific emotions would have a negative impact on a given situation allowed coaches to engage in specific behaviours to purposely avoid triggering such emotions in either themselves or others. In particular, one coach highlighted how this was important to avoid unwanted emotions at competitive events:

One [athlete] that went to the Olympic Games...he'd developed his own sort of style for doing his warm up and I knew very clearly that this particular [athlete] didn't want any involvement from me...during the competition I'd leave him to do his stuff because I knew interfering would be detrimental...It's an understanding on the coaches part that every [athlete] is different and will all want different behaviours and responses in competition...so I think recognising that is an important quality to have.

### **3.1.1.9 Emotional Management**

The higher order theme of emotional management was discussed by all coaches, which exemplified how coaches perceived the ability to manage their own emotions and those of their athletes to be integral aspects of their coaching. The lower-order themes included: (a) emotional control, (b) emotional control in others, (c) emotional expression, and (d) encouraging emotional

expression. All coaches demonstrated their ability to remain “in control of their emotions”, particularly in situations governed by pressure and ambiguity. Having the ability to remain calm and address the situation logically rather than emotionally was perceived to have positive effects on coaching effectiveness in terms of athlete performance:

I remember talking to my assistant coach on the radio and he just said ‘I’ve got nothing to say’ and considering the intensity of the game and it being extra time I felt very isolated... I wasn’t getting any external information and I remember then asking someone for some stats...I had some good instincts with what I needed to do but I knew it was a bit of a risk and a gamble, so I asked for the stats to confirm. And in the second half of extra time I had changed the tactical play and we had scored a goal, and we won. So that was a time where I kept calm, I didn’t get stressed and I knew I could solve it... In the heat of the moment and decision-making under pressure I coped well with that.

The majority of coaches reported the ability to aid athletes in their emotional control by knowing "how to help someone emotionally". The following quote demonstrates how one coach intentionally removed an athlete from an emotionally laden situation to avoid triggering a host of emotions that were deemed debilitating to performance.

When she got to the final she was mobbed by 100 people backstage... it was not won at all but all these people were celebrating like it was a carnival, and you’re [athlete] just about to [compete] and try and win the biggest [competition] of your life. I went in and I pulled her out, took her to the other side 'forget about all these people' and I talked her through it 'it's just exactly the same as practice'...and by the time she went on she did a good job in getting her head back in the right place, so it worked.

Emotional expression was found to be an effective management technique utilised by the majority of coaches. Being able to express both positive and negative emotions were perceived to have a positive impact on coaching effectiveness as it allowed coaches to handle situations coherently without being overly emotional. On most occasions this involved coaches physically removing themselves from an emotional situation, as one coach stated, “I think coaching is emotional and sometimes it can override logical thoughts. Sometimes you need to take the emotion out of it, and you can’t take the emotion out of it while you are still in the environment”. The following quote illustrates how one coach expressed their emotions away from their athlete to be able to handle the given situation most effectively:

I try not to get particularly angry with athletes, I go and do my anger management in the corner somewhere...If you’ve got frustration, fair enough ‘I’m just going to the toilet’ which is usually a complete fabrication. I take the long walk round... I’ll go round the whole loop going ‘[profanity], argh’, ‘Okay, I feel better so lets try and have a sensible conversation’. So I try and take the emotion out of myself.

Social support systems were also identified as key resources used to express emotions; such support networks were evident both within and outside of the sporting environment “It’s just using the people around you, don’t keep it bottled up, don’t let it get worse, be open with someone”. This expression of emotion and being open and honest to others appeared to help coaches manage the evidently stressful nature of coaching by preventing the accumulation or prolongation of negative emotions. Several coaches also referred to the importance of being able to encourage emotional expression within their athletes, which was depicted as an important aspect of being able to aid athletes in their emotional management. Telling athletes “not to fight their anxieties” and “getting their [athlete] view on what’s happening if it is something

emotional” were described as useful strategies to help athletes express their emotions. In particular, one coach referred to the Chimp Paradox analogy (Peters, 2012) when discussing the importance of letting athletes express negative emotions “it’s just their chimp bouncing around, fair enough let their chimp bounce around a bit... go and just vent your frustration. I suppose it’s a tactical thing in knowing, is there something that I need to do today that means when we come back tomorrow we are going to be cleansed of this”.

### **3.3.2 Attribute Development**

In addition to the nine psychological attributes identified, coaches also identified factors they believed had influenced the development of their attributes throughout their professional coaching careers. The three higher-order themes representing developmental factors included: (a) education, (b) experience, and (c) conscious self-improvement. These higher-order themes were coalesced under the general dimension of *attribute development* (see Figure 3.2).

#### **3.3.2.1 Education**

Several coaches discussed how coach education had positively influenced the development of their psychological attributes in two discrete manners: (a) professional coach development courses, and (b) mentors. Many coaches discussed the importance of professional coach development courses where greater emphasis was placed on courses that coaches were either currently involved in or had more recently completed in terms of the length of their professional career. Such courses were discussed in relation to addressing coaching needs and helping coaches to identify areas of personal development, as noted by one coach “It was the UK Sport elite coach programme... a lot of the focus was also looking at ourselves. So what do we need? How do we see ourselves? What are our strengths and weaknesses? What should



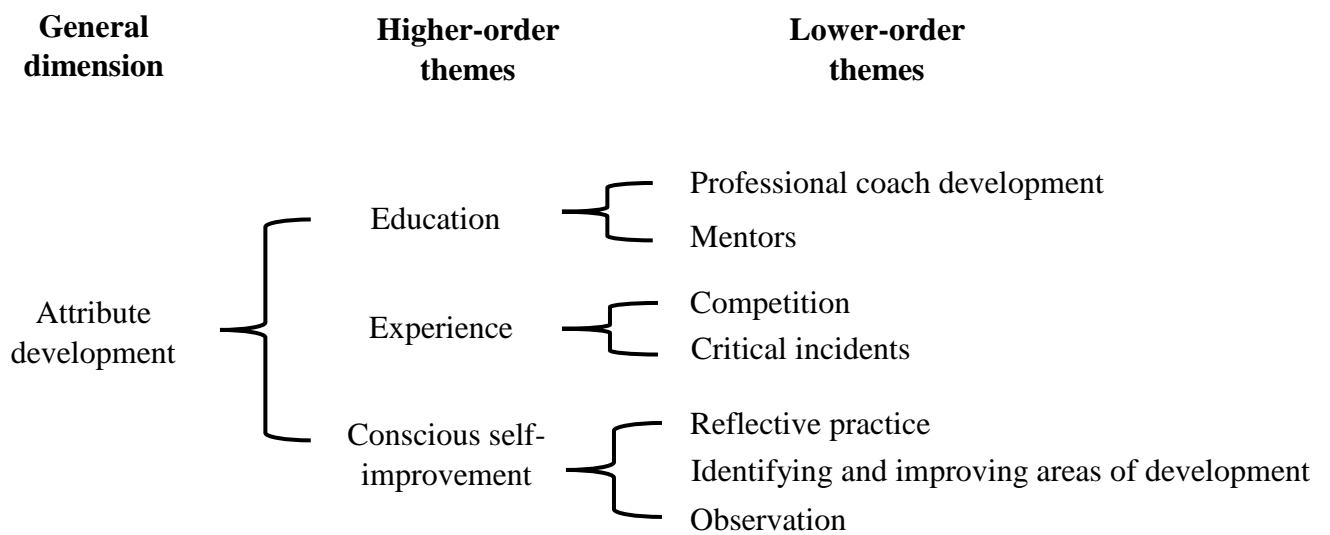


Figure 3.2: Factors perceived to influence psychological attribute development at the elite level

professional coaches look like?” These courses were regarded as highly beneficial considering the main focus was directed towards assisting coaches in their own personal development:

We did some psychology courses and I thought it was going to be mental imagery and that kind of stuff but it was actually quite a lot of self-reflection stuff and mindfulness.

So I think I try and use that on myself... what can I do to improve myself?

Having a mentor to direct, advise and provide support was also considered a key factor in developing psychological attributes by several coaches. In particular, it was apparent that having regular meetings with mentors provided coaches with opportunities to discuss coaching issues and formulate potential solutions. This form of discussion provided confidence in the coaches’ ability to effectively deal with such issues.

### **3.3.2.2 Experience**

The higher-order theme of experience revealed, ways in which, coaches believed that their psychological attributes had developed over time, through a multitude of experiences. Such experiences were categorised into two lower-order themes: (a) competition, and (b) critical incidents. Many coaches believed that their psychological attributes had developed through experiences within competition environments. In one respect, gaining repeated experience at high profile competitions caused a “desensitisation” to the status associated with the event, which in turn affected how coaches’ appraised and behaved in competitive environments, “I’ve learnt very well that when I’m standing there there’s actually absolutely nothing that I can do, it really is down to the athlete”. In another respect coaches felt that they learned a lot about themselves when in highly pressurised environments in terms of their psychological strengths

and areas of development. This then provided the foundations for actively developing specific areas such as emotional control, confidence, and focus.

Several coaches discussed the importance of critical incidents that instigated a change in coaching practice and caused a “catalyst” for personal development. Such incidents tended to be eye-opening experiences that resulted in the conscious development of specific psychological attributes that developed over a prolonged period of time. For example, one coach described how one situation in a competitive environment resonated with him for causing him to learn how to effectively manage and display his own emotions in front of his athletes:

In terms of being on the competition floor I’m completely calm, your heart does race a little but you learn to mask it. I remember he [athlete] looked scared and I looked scared and I think I learnt from that. It was a bit of a catalyst of change really because I thought ‘actually he’s completely read me’. My mentor coach said ‘you look terrified out there, your athlete will pick up on that’ and that was the best piece of information I was given.

### **3.3.2.3 Conscious Self-improvement**

The majority of coaches emphasised the importance of conscious self-improvement when discussing how they had developed their psychological attributes over the course of their coaching careers. This higher-order theme was categorised into three lower-order themes: (a) reflective practice, (b) identifying and improving areas of development, and (c) observation.

Nearly all coaches identified regularly utilising reflective practice within their coaching which was perceived to have a positive effect on the development of psychological attributes. Having “self-reflection moments”, “being really receptive to thoughts” and “being critical of yourself” allowed coaches to accurately and honestly identify and appraise both their strengths

and areas of development. Being able to identify areas of development and put in place action plans was considered highly important as it allowed coaches to engage in constant self-progression and, over time, gain increased self-understanding. Three coaches referred to using video analysis to observe their own coaching performance to identify what was perceived as effective coaching behaviour and potential areas of improvement that could enhance coaching effectiveness if addressed:

I watched a video back and I thought that I was not really showing that I was nervous but when I watched the video back and the camera kept on going to me... I can see that I'm trying not to look nervous... I'm not a serious person whereas my face was so serious and that's a sign that I'm nervous because I wasn't my normal self. So that was an issue I wanted to address.

Regularly observing other coaches' behaviours particularly in competition environments, enabled coaches to distinguish between what was considered effective coaching and that considered detrimental to athlete performance and wellbeing. Such observations enabled coaches to assess their own coaching practice and evaluate ways in which they felt they could be most facilitative to athlete performance and development.

I will watch them [other coaches] and I'll think 'that's really poor coaching behaviour'... So I think by watching other coaches' behaviour that enabled me to see, to step away and think 'actually what is good coaching behaviour and what is going to help people succeed?' And by watching what didn't succeed and what I perceived as poor coaching helped me sort of learn that's how I need to approach it on the competition floor.

### 3.4 Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to provide a comprehensive insight into the psychological attributes elite coaches perceived to underpin their ability to coach effectively and how such attributes were considered to have developed. Overall, findings from the data presented nine key psychological attributes and three primary factors related to the development of the identified attributes.

While knowledge on coaches' own psychological attributes for performance and effectiveness are still relatively thin compared to athletes, research is now starting to build a body of knowledge in this area. To date, previous findings have indicated that psychological attributes such as confidence, focus, communication and emotional control (Gould et al., 2002; Olusoga et al., 2012) are important for coaches to perform in pressured situations (e.g., Olympic Games). Findings from the present study identified psychological attributes such as confidence, resilience, focus, emotional awareness, and emotional management demonstrating some consistency and contribution to existing research. These findings also support the notion that coaching is more than the simple transmission of knowledge and extends beyond the teaching of skills and tactics (Mallett & Côté, 2006).

Coaches in the present study advocated the importance of being resilient, and thus, possessing the ability to handle setbacks and deal with negative criticism. The construct of psychological resilience in sport has received increasing investigation in recent years (e.g., Galli & Vealey, 2008; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2014) but has primarily focused on athletes. Research to date is yet to investigate the construct of psychological resilience in relation to sports coaching. As highlighted by Galli and Gonzalez (2015) sport is a particularly unique domain to study resilience given the fact that athletes (and coaches) often willingly subject themselves to highly

evaluative situations where the consequences of winning and losing (being successful and unsuccessful) are clear. The findings of the present study suggest that elite coaches possess resilient qualities that are perceived to influence their ability to coach effectively. Such findings offer an initial insight into the resilient qualities of elite coaches and support recent calls for the need of resilience research in elite coaching (e.g., Sarkar & Fletcher, 2016).

Unique to the findings of the present study, a large proportion of psychological attributes identified by coaches (i.e., 9 lower-order themes) related to the emotional nature of coaching. More specifically, having the ability to recognise, understand and manage emotions in oneself and others, influenced how coaches both perceived and responded to various situations in training and competition environments. Such findings provide an insight into the emotion related cognitive mechanisms coaches utilise, to consciously act in a manner perceived to be most effective. The emotional abilities identified (i.e., emotional awareness, emotional understanding, and emotional management) demonstrate similarities and overlap with Mayer and Salovey's (1997) ability model of emotional intelligence (EI). Salovey and Mayer (1990) proposed a definition of EI as "the ability to monitor one's own and others feelings, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (p.189). This definition was later refined to a hierarchy of four distinct yet related abilities, including the ability to: (a) accurately perceive emotions in one-self and others, (b) use emotions to facilitate thinking, (c) understand emotions, and (d) manage emotions as to attain specific goals (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). It has been argued (Potrac & Marshall, 2011), "the challenges, tensions, and dilemmas faced by coaches are not just cognitive or social in nature, but are emotional phenomena and need to be understood as such" (p. 66). Yet, emotionality research within the coaching domain is

scarce, with recent calls for research investigating emotions in sports coaching (Sports Coaching Review, 2014).

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of emotions in sporting performance, the construct of EI has received increasing research interest. To date, this limited existing literature has primarily focused on the relationship between EI and athlete performance (e.g., Crombie, Lombard, & Noakes, 2009; Laborde, Lautenbach, Allen, 2014). In relation to coaching, Thelwell, Lane, Weston and Greenlees (2008) investigated the relationships between EI and coaching efficacy. Results demonstrated significant relationships between the two constructs and provided an initial insight into how EI may relate to coaching efficacy. Taking into account the findings of the present study, it is apparent that coaches at the elite level are very much attuned to the emotional nature of coaching. Specifically, it appears that coaches use a distinct set of emotional abilities to help them comprehend and manage the emotional aspects of the sporting environment.

In this study, coaches identified three primary factors (i.e., experience, education and conscious self-improvement) perceived to have contributed to the development of their psychological attributes. Such attributes were reported to have developed over time, and were not considered to be present (or as refined) within the earlier stages of their careers. The present findings are consistent with previous literature demonstrating the significant role psychological attributes play in talent development within sport (e.g., Abbott & Collins, 2004; Connaughton et al., 2008; Gould et al., 2002). In relation to the development of emotional abilities, several coaches specifically noted that their ability to attune to the emotional side of coaching had developed throughout the later stages of their careers. Only in recollection could coaches recognise and understand the importance of such abilities in relation to coaching effectiveness. In

retrospect, coaches believed that educational and developmental opportunities addressing the emotional side of coaching in the earlier stages of their careers would have been highly beneficial. This finding further aligns with Mayer and Saloveys' (1997) conceptualisation of EI, which states that EI is a dynamic and malleable capacity (i.e., state) that people can learn and develop over time.

More specifically, findings lend support to Olusoga and colleagues (2012) identifying developmental factors (e.g., coach interaction, structured career professional development, personal coaching experience) Olympic coaches perceived to influence their ability to perform within the Olympic environment. Coaches in the present study specifically highlighted that experience within competitive environments, using video feedback to observe coaching performance, and being reflective on a regular basis all contributed to the development of their psychological attributes. Research (e.g., Thelwell et al., 2008a) has demonstrated that the competitive sporting environment can be just as pressurised and demanding for the coach as it is for the athlete. Thus, combining planned pressurised situations with opportunities to incorporate video feedback into debriefing sessions could provide a safe environment to expose coaches to relevant pressurised environments and positively influence psychological attribute development.

Regarding the findings on reflective practice, the majority of coaches in this study referred to using cognitive processes of self-reflection (e.g., self-talk, memory recall, self-appraisal) and reflective conversations with others. Despite the fact that coach education programmes typically utilise structured forms of reflective practice, such as, reflective journals (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014), findings of the present study offer support for Dixon, Lee and Ghaye (2013) in their call for a more expansive view of reflective practice that moves beyond traditional techniques. Accordingly, it has been advocated that there is a need for innovative



approaches (e.g., critical analysis, shared reflection, emotional reflection) that can better equip coaches to deal with the problematic and dynamic nature of their role (Morgan, Jones, Gilbourne, & Llewellyn, 2013).

### **3.4.1 Strengths and Limitations**

A strength of this study was the sample of elite coaches investigated. In particular, 10 of the participants were actively coaching at the elite level, and thus, reducing potential memory bias limitations often associated with retrospective studies (Brewer, Vose, Van Raalte, & Petitpas, 2011). The sample in this study included coaches from a variety of different sports to enhance the generalisability of findings. However, future research may wish to examine the psychological attributes of coaches from individual sports to gain more detailed evaluation of the psychological attributes required in particular sports. Further, while the sample consisted of 4 female coaches, it is important to note that an equal representation of male and female coaches was unable to be obtained. It is well recognised that elite coaching networks tend to be male dominated with higher representation of females coaches found at grass roots, club and regional levels. Reports from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) database (2012) demonstrated that only 11% of the 3225 coaches at the 2012 London Olympic Games were female. This provides some explanation to the difficulties presented when recruiting the sample for the present study.

### **3.4.2 Future Research and Applied Implications**

Based on the findings of the present study, future research is warranted to further explore the emotional abilities of coaches. It has been recognised (e.g., Potrac, Jones, Purdy, Nelson, & Marshall, 2013; Potrac, Smith, & Nelson, 2017) that there is a paucity of research addressing the

role of emotion in sports coaching. Therefore, gaining a detailed understanding of how and why coaches use their emotional abilities within their coaching practice may further enhance knowledge in this area and contribute to the small body of existing research.

The present study has provided useful information for researchers and practitioners on how they can work with coaches to impact their own performance and development. Sport psychology practitioners designing effective coach development programmes should consider the development of specific psychological attributes (e.g., confidence, resilience, focus, emotional awareness, emotional management). Providing development for coaches' psychological attributes in the earlier stages of their professional career, particularly the development of emotional abilities, is encouraged. The present findings demonstrate that being aware of, and utilising emotional information within coaching environments is perceived to influence coaching effectiveness. From a practical perspective, coaches of all levels are encouraged to consider how emotions influence their coaching practice. Addressing personal abilities to recognise, understand and manage emotions through self-assessment could provide coaches with information regarding personal strengths and outline potential areas of development, which, if addressed, could support coach development.

### **3.4.3 Concluding Remarks**

This study has both supported and extended existing literature by providing a detailed understanding into the key psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaches' abilities to coach effectively at the elite level. These attributes were found to have developed throughout coaches' professional careers through education, previous experience and conscious self-improvement. Findings suggest that coaches would benefit from coach education and development programmes specifically tailored toward their own development of psychological

attributes in the earlier stages of their professional careers. Existing literature in sport psychology offers limited understanding on the role of coaches' emotional abilities, yet clearly, based on the findings in this study, they are important for coaches to develop. Further research aimed at providing a more comprehensive understanding into the emotional abilities of sports coaches could hold implications for coach education programmes and coach development. With this in mind, study two of this thesis will focus on exploring the role of coaches' emotional abilities and how they facilitate perceived coaching effectiveness.

## Chapter IV

### Study Two

#### *Coaching from the "inside out": Understanding the use of emotional abilities in elite sports coaching*

##### 4.1 Introduction

Taking into consideration the findings of study one, and the dominant themes that emerged on coaches' emotional abilities, this study aims to enhance current knowledge on the emotional nature of coaching by providing a more comprehensive understanding into elite coaches' emotional abilities. To date, the available literature on sports coaching has provided little consideration toward the study of emotion, with the exception of a few notable examples (e.g., Allen & Côté, 2016; Jones, 2006; Nelson, Allanson, Potrac, Gale, Gilborne, & Marshall, 2013). To inform the reader, a review of the sport literature related to emotion and coaching is presented before providing a rationale for the present study.

The notion of the coaching process is that coaches, in various ways, attempt to encourage the learning and development of athletes and positively influence their performance. To achieve this, coaches have to interact and form connections with their athletes (Jones, R. 2011). Coaching practice, therefore, not only includes explicit practices (e.g., language, roles, tools), but also implicit practices (e.g., relationships, social interactions, perceptions etc.). While the majority of the latter are often unobservable, they have been identified as undeniable aspects of coaching practice (Cushion, 2007). In light of this, the technical rationality that often underpins the coaching literature is becoming increasingly challenged (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Jones, R. 2011), as researchers now

strive to determine more realistic and accurate evaluations of the coaching process. One area in particular that has begun to receive growing interest relates to emotion in sports coaching. Only more recently have researchers propositioned the need for addressing emotion in coaching as one way to further knowledge and understanding into what has been referred to as an inherently complex social cognitive coaching process (e.g., Potrac et al., 2013).

In recognition of the paucity of research concerned with emotion in coaching, Nelson and colleagues (2013) examined the relationship between emotion, cognition, and behaviour in the coaching context. Specifically, this investigation used a single-case design to explore the emotional nature of coaching practice through the narrative of a semi-professional soccer coach. Over a series of qualitative interviews, data analysis revealed two distinct categories. The first category illustrated the calculated nature of the coach's practices where he often displayed emotions and engaged in behaviours that did not reflect his true thoughts and feelings. In one respect, the coach reported frequently concealing his real feelings in order to obtain the desired outcome of optimising team performance. The second, demonstrated more of an empathetic mindset, whereby the participant attempted to understand the emotional experiences of his athletes by reflecting on personal sporting experiences. Nelson and colleagues (2013) concluded that the coach's coaching practice was not exclusively an emotional endeavour, but instead, appeared to be "always irretrievably emotional in character, in a good way or a bad way, by design or default" (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 812). In recognition of single-case design limitations, the authors postulated that the findings should not be generalised to wider coaching populations. Nonetheless, taking into account the findings of their study, it was suggested, "if we are to better prepare coaches for the complex, day-to-day realities of practice we need to better understand the role of emotions" (Nelson et al., 2013, p.482). In addition, research investigating coaches' experiences at the

Olympic Games has also highlighted the perceived importance of coaches' emotional control (e.g., Gould et al., 2002; Olusoga et al., 2012). For instance, Gould and colleagues (2002) identified that having the ability to remain calm under pressure was perceived to influence coaches' effectiveness at the Olympic Games. Similarly, Olusoga and colleagues (2012) identified emotional control as an important factor perceived to influence coach success at the Olympic Games. Such findings were supported by the findings of study one of this thesis. Specifically, several coaches reported that being able to remain calm and address a situation logically rather than emotionally was perceived to influence their ability to coach effectively.

In addition to the above research, an emerging area of inquiry relates to investigating the construct of emotional intelligence (EI) in sports coaching. Specifically, EI has been identified and discussed in relation to its potential use in supporting more critical understandings of sports coaching (e.g., Chan & Mallett, 2011; MacNamara & Stoszowski, 2015). However, empirical research investigating the value of EI in sports coaching is scarce. The construct of EI aims to bring together the fields of emotion and intelligence by viewing emotions as useful sources of information that help one to make sense of and navigate the social environment (Salovey & Grewal, 2005). In general, EI proposes that individuals differ in the extent to which they attend to, process, and utilise emotion-laden information of an intrapersonal (e.g., managing one's own emotions) or interpersonal (e.g., managing others emotions) nature (Petrides & Furnham, 2003). It is important to note that two distinct theoretical approaches have largely informed the application of EI research across various disciplines. Firstly, the ability model approach conceptualises EI as a dynamic set of mental abilities or skills that an individual needs to identify and understand emotional information in order to direct subsequent cognition and behaviour (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Specifically, Salovey and Mayer (1990, p. 189) proposed a formal definition of EI as "the ability to monitor one's own and others'

feelings, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action". Later this definition was refined and broken down into four distinct yet related abilities, referring to a hierarchy of mental abilities (Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008). A brief summary of the four integrated branches of the ability model of EI follows; more detailed presentations can be found elsewhere (cf. Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2016):

- *Perceiving emotions*: The ability to identify emotions in one's own physical states, feelings and thoughts. The ability to perceive emotions in others through their vocal cues, facial expression, language, and behaviour.
- *Facilitating thought by using emotion*: The ability to generate emotions as an aid to judgement and memory. The ability to prioritise thinking by directing attention according to present feeling.
- *Understanding emotions*: The ability to label emotions, recognise relations among them, and understand complex and mixed emotions. The ability to determine the antecedents, meanings, and consequences of emotions. The ability to understand how a person might feel in the future or under certain conditions.
- *Managing emotions*: The ability to effectively manage one's own and others emotions to achieve desired outcomes. The ability to monitor emotional reactions and evaluate strategies to maintain, reduce or intensify an emotional response.

Conversely, the trait-based approach conceptualises EI as a constellation of emotion-related self-perceived abilities and dispositions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). That is, trait EI measures an individual's perceptions of their typical emotional ability such as identifying and regulating emotions in specific situations.

The construct of EI has attracted considerable research attention across various disciplines (e.g., leadership, management, marketing, healthcare and education) since its emergence in the early 1990s (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). EI as a concept has gained interest, in part, because of its potential contributions to day-to-day functioning in various applied domains (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2012). As one example, a wealth of research has investigated EI in the workplace. Meta-analysis research in this area has indicated that EI is a predictor of job performance and job satisfaction (e.g., Joseph & Newman, 2010; Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2017a; Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2017b; O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, & Story, 2011). Specifically, such research indicates that employees with higher EI report more positive attitudes and behaviours in the workplace compared to employees with lower EI. Research has also demonstrated that EI positively relates to work performance and job satisfaction when the influence of cognitive ability and personality traits are controlled for (e.g., Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2017a; Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2017b; O'Boyle et al., 2011). In addition, researchers have also been interested in exploring the relationship between EI, health, and well-being. Meta-analyses in this area have demonstrated reliable associations between EI and health and well-being (e.g., Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010; Schutte, Malouff, Thorsteinsson, Bhullar, & Rooke, 2007; Zeidner et al., 2012). For example, Martens and colleagues (2010) meta-analysis reported significant associations of EI with mental health, psychosomatic health, and physical health. Collectively, the findings of these meta-analyses suggest that health outcomes are more strongly correlated with trait measures of EI than with ability measures of EI. Thus, the magnitude of the relationship between EI and health and well-being is measure dependent (Zeidner et al., 2012).



Although the above research suggests that measures of EI are positively associated with a range of outcomes (e.g., job performance, job satisfaction, and health) there are limitations that should be considered when interpreting such findings. Firstly, the lack of agreement on the definition and measurement of EI makes it difficult to compare and contrast findings across studies. EI measures have failed to converge on a common construct (Conte, 2005), in particular, trait and ability measures of EI are typically poorly intercorrelated, suggesting they measure separate constructs (Joseph & Newman, 2010). Secondly, the available EI literature has predominately relied on self-report measures of EI which have often been criticised for social desirability concerns (e.g., Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2009).

In line with the broader EI literature, the small body of research investigating EI within the sport domain has predominately employed the trait conceptualisation of EI (e.g., Lane, Devonport, Soos, Karsai, Leibinger, & Hamar, 2010; Lane, Thelwell, Lowther, & Devonport, 2009; Lane & Wilson, 2011; Thelwell et al., 2008), but only a small number of studies have viewed EI as an ability (i.e., state) (e.g., Crombie, Lombard, & Noakes, 2011; Wagstaff, Fletcher, & Hanton, 2012). In review of the EI research in sport, Meyer and Fletcher (2007) discussed that the inconsistencies in the foundational materials of EI (i.e., theoretical paradigm, definition, and assessment) make it difficult to advance research in the area. In conclusion, the authors postulated that future research in the sport domain should consider the ability model of EI as it is conceptualised as a mental skill that can be developed and improved over time.

Specific to sports coaching, research scholars have begun to discuss the potential value of EI for sports coaches from a conceptual viewpoint (e.g., Chan & Mallett, 2011; MacNamara & Stoszowski, 2015). However, empirical research examining EI in sports coaching is scant. For instance, in review of the sporting literature, Laborde, Dosseville, and Allen (2015) identified three

research studies exploring EI in sports coaches/leaders (i.e., Hwang, Feltz, & Lee, 2013; Magyar et al., 2007; Thelwell et al., 2008). In one of the first studies to explore EI within sports coaching, Thelwell and colleagues (2008) supported a link between EI and coaching efficacy. Specifically, in their study, 99 coaches from various sports completed the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS; Schutte et al., 1998) and the Coaching Efficacy Scale (CES; Feltz et al., 1999) in order to examine potential relationships between the two constructs. A key finding illustrated that coach appraisals of their own emotions and regulation of emotions were significantly correlated with all CES subscales and overall CES. The authors indicated that such findings reinforce the need for EI within coaches. More recently, Lee and Chelladurai (2016) examined the moderating effect of EI in the relationship between emotional labour and emotional exhaustion. Findings indicated that coaches with high trait EI were less likely to experience emotional exhaustion as a function of surface acting (i.e., modifying outward expression of emotion without changing one's inner feelings). The authors postulated that a coach's level of trait EI and the type of emotional labour strategy they engage in is likely to influence emotional exhaustion. Therefore, acknowledging how coaches attempt to deal with their experienced emotions appears to be an important consideration for coaches and sport psychology practitioners. Indeed, Potrac, Smith and Nelson (2017) recently highlighted that at present, very little is known about how coaches manage their own emotions and attempt to influence the emotional experiences of others. In support of this notion, findings from study one of this thesis highlighted the integral role of coaches abilities to manage emotions both in themselves and their athletes. Specifically, emotional control and emotional expression were deemed integral aspects of perceived coaching effectiveness.

In study one of this thesis, the psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness at the elite level were explored. Among the attributes identified, several were found to

relate to the emotional nature of coaching, where coaches discussed specific emotional abilities (i.e., emotional awareness, emotional understanding, and emotional management) perceived to underpin their ability to coach effectively. It was found that the emotional abilities identified demonstrated clear similarities and overlap with the ability model of EI (cf. Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Further, it was highlighted that the ability to recognise, understand, and, manage the emotional side of coaching had developed throughout the later stages of the coaches' careers. Several coaches highlighted that educational and developmental opportunities addressing the emotional side of coaching would have been beneficial in the early stages of their careers. The findings of study one highlighted the perceived importance of coaches' emotional abilities, yet existing literature in sport psychology is yet to offer a comprehensive understanding of such abilities and how they are perceived to influence coaching effectiveness. Therefore, based on the findings of study one of this thesis and the general paucity of research investigating emotion in sports coaching, further investigation into coaches' emotional abilities is warranted. It is anticipated that gaining a more in-depth understanding into how coaches use their emotional abilities may provide a foundation for developing intervention-based programmes aimed at enhancing coaches' emotional abilities. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to interview the same 12 coaches from study one to gain a detailed understanding into how elite coaches use emotional abilities within their coaching practice.

## **4.2 Method**

In support of the philosophical assumptions of critical realism, qualitative methods were deemed most appropriate for the present study, due to the exploratory nature of the topic. Specifically, it was believed that such methods would be more capable of providing a detailed account of elite coaches' emotional abilities through dialogue with coaches' themselves. Thus,

the focus of this study was upon discovery and interpretation of the lived experiences and perceptions of elite coaches.

#### **4.2.1 Participants and Sampling**

For this study elite sports coaches were purposely recruited. That is, persons known to meet the required inclusion criteria were intentionally sought to enhance the potential of information rich participants being included (Patton, 2002). Specifically, the 12 elite coaches that participated in study one of this thesis participated in the present study. As defined in previous research investigating elite sports coaches (Thelwell et al., 2008a), elite coaches were defined as “those who work with performers on a regular basis who are current national squad members and perform at the highest level in their sport (e.g., World Championships, Olympics)” (p. 41). In line with previous research, inclusion criteria required coaches to have worked, or currently work, with “elite level” athletes (cf. Hanton, Fletcher, & Coughlan, 2005) for a sustained period of time and to have been or currently be employed by their respective governing bodies (e.g., Thelwell et al., 2008a; Thelwell et al., 2008b; Thelwell, Weston, & Greenlees, 2010). In addition, coaches were required to have a minimum of 10 years coaching experience ( $M_{\text{years}} = 19.2$ ,  $SD = 7.0$ ) and to have coached athletes to medal success at major sporting competitions (i.e., Olympic Games, World Championships). In total, 12 elite coaches (eight male, four female) aged between 29 and 56 years ( $M_{\text{years}} = 44.3$ ,  $SD = 9.4$ ) volunteered to participate in semi-structured interviews representing a variety of both individual and team sports including: gymnastics, track and field, rowing, lacrosse, disability table tennis, trampolining, judo, canoe slalom and hockey. Coaches were purposely selected from a variety of sports to ensure that a wide range of sporting organisations were represented. 11 coaches involved in the study were

from the UK while one coach was from Australia. At the time of the study, 10 coaches were actively coaching at the elite level, while two coaches had recently retired.

#### **4.2.2 Procedure**

Following institutional ethics approval (see appendix A), all participants were originally contacted via email to explain the nature of the research and gauge interest. Those who expressed interest were contacted again via email to discuss participation details and further information regarding the interview was provided. Finally, interviews were arranged and informed consent was gained from all participants. To capture coaches' experiences, in-depth interviews were considered the most appropriate method of data collection (Patton, 2002). A semi-structured interview approach was applied comprising a set of specific questions that were asked to all participants, but facilitated open discussion with elaboration questions allowing the participants to drive the conversation when necessary. Questions were constructed such as, "If you think about emotions and successful coaching, what comes to mind?" and "Can you talk me through a time you coached really well, what were you thinking and feeling at this time?" Elaboration questions were then used, such as "How did you manage those emotions?" "How did those thoughts/emotions affect your behaviour?" and "How did that impact on your coaching?" At the beginning of the interview, all participants were asked to consider how they felt emotions (both in themselves and others) influenced their coaching. Participants were encouraged to think about this when discussing the questions (see appendix B for interview guide). All interviews were conducted by the principle investigator, recorded in their entirety and transcribed verbatim.

### **4.2.3 Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis was adopted to analyse the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process was inductive in nature using a latent approach when identifying and interpreting themes (cf. Braun & Clarke, 2006). This specific method of data analysis was employed due to the exploratory nature of the investigation and the lack of existing knowledge relating to sports coaches' emotional abilities. This analysis was deemed most appropriate to capture the patterns of responses emerging from the transcripts (i.e., displaying the main themes representing participants' perceptions) but also to understand the meaning of participants' responses as the organised thematic structure evolved (cf. Braun & Clarke, 2006). To begin the process of data analysis, the principle investigator became immersed in the data by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts and making general comments that could be referred to later. All data underwent a process of initial open coding where data was analysed on a line-by-line basis. Raw data responses (quotes and paraphrased quotes) were organised into patterns of like ideas representing lower order themes. Lower-order themes were then grouped together based on similarities to form higher-order themes.

#### **4.2.3.1 Trustworthiness**

In line with criteria for conducting rigorous qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002), specific procedures were implemented (e.g., member reflections, analyst triangulation, use of descriptive quotes) in order to enhance the credibility, trustworthiness, and authenticity of the data analysis process. Member reflections (cf. Tracy, 2010) were used to provide participants with the opportunity to review their transcripts and respond to researcher accounts. Specifically, interview transcripts were returned to participants with an additional preliminary overview of the study findings. Participants were encouraged to provide feedback relating to the accuracy of accounts

where three participants responded via email to add a small elaboration to the findings. After initial coding of the data and the generation of preliminary themes, a process of analyst triangulation was implemented. This process involved two additional researchers receiving copies of the interview transcripts and the raw data extracts organised into themes. These researchers independently read through the transcripts and made suggestions for the placement of raw data into themes. Collaboration between the three researchers continued until consensus on the placement of raw data into themes was reached. Throughout the presentation of results, descriptive quotes were used to show the views of the participants and provide context for the reader.

### **4.3 Results**

The findings from the data analysis process generated 47 raw data themes, categorised into nine lower-order themes, and three higher-order themes (see Figure 4.1). Results are presented in three sections to reflect the higher-order themes of the study. The first section includes data relating to the emotional abilities coaches used within their coaching practice. The second section outlines several positive outcomes coaches' related to the use of their emotional abilities. Finally, the third section concerns data related to moderating factors that appeared to influence coaches' use of their emotional abilities.

#### **4.3.1 Emotional Abilities**

The higher-order theme that encapsulated coaches' emotional abilities included three lower-order themes (a) emotional awareness, (b) emotional understanding, and, (c) emotional management. The emotional abilities identified by coaches were found to encompass specific skills and strategies perceived to positively influence coaching effectiveness.

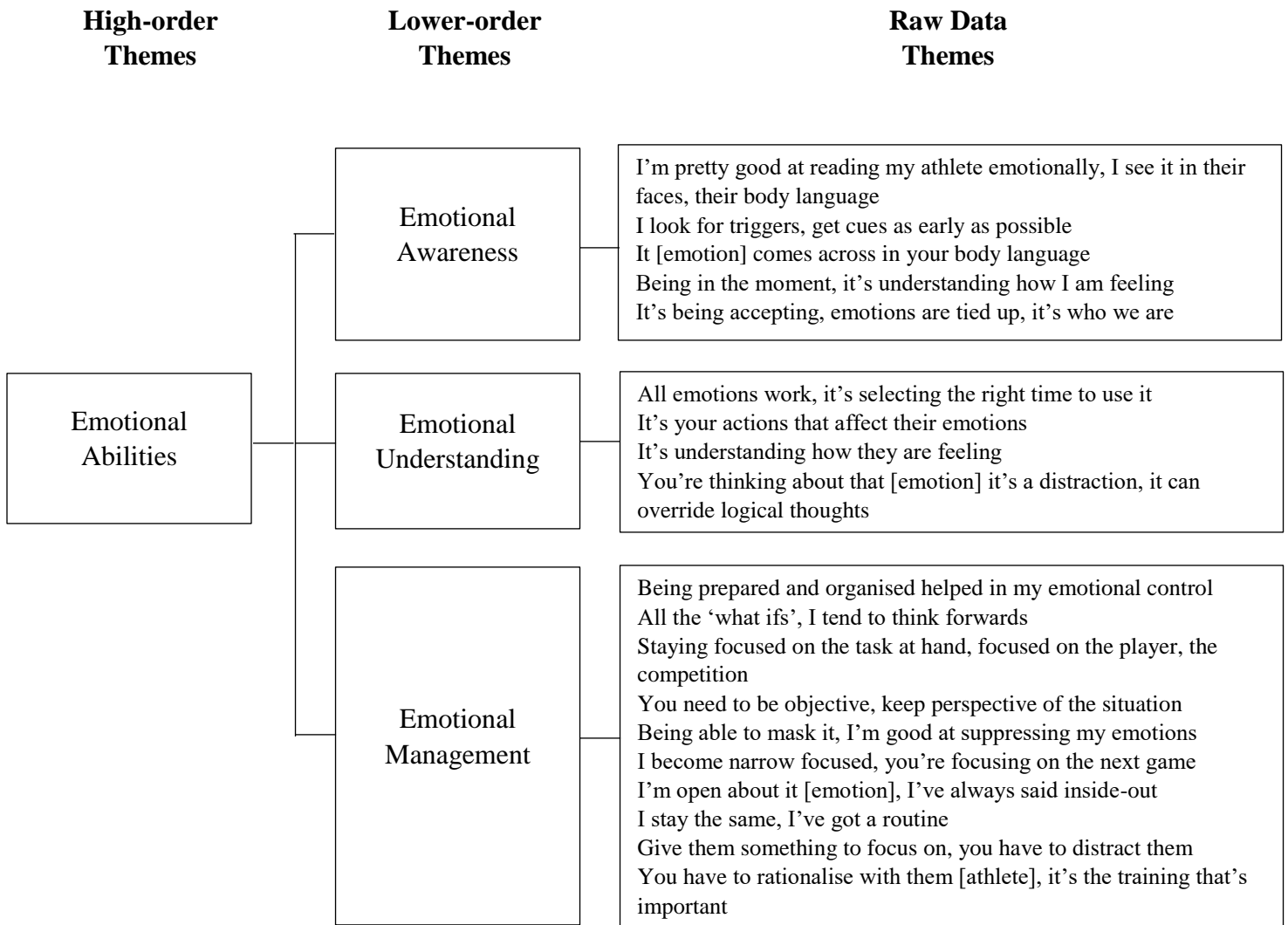


Figure 4.1: Higher-order, lower-order, and raw data themes concerning coaches' emotional abilities, positive outcomes, and moderating factors.



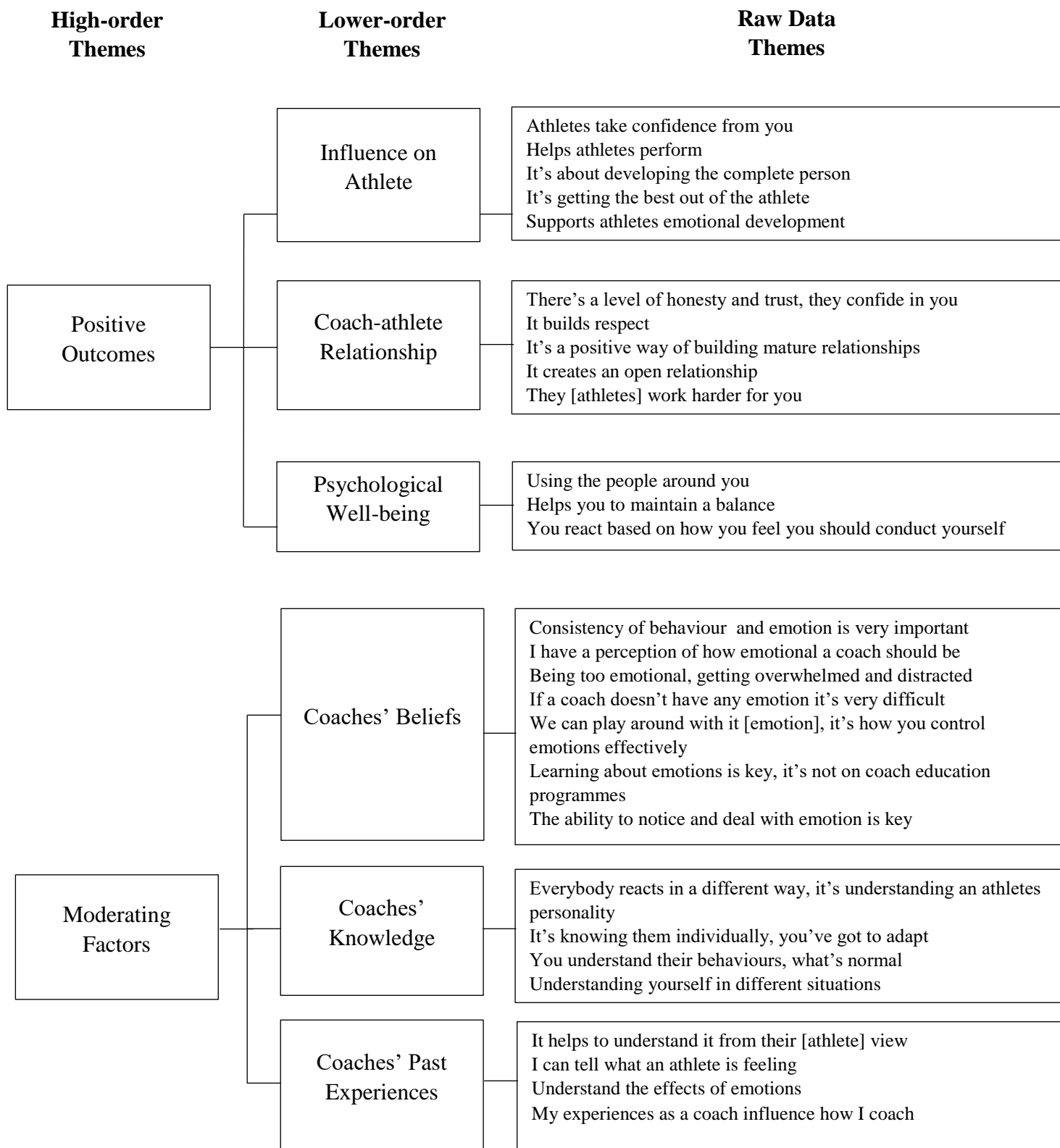


Figure 4.1: Higher-order, lower-order, and raw data themes concerning coaches' emotional abilities, positive outcomes, and moderating factors.

#### 4.3.1.1 Emotional Awareness

Emotional awareness described the skills coaches used to recognise and interpret emotional information within their coaching environment. In relation to coaches' themselves, being aware of how their emotions can be displayed through body language and communication style was perceived to influence coaching effectiveness. For instance, one coach in particular stated:

If something is not going right in a game and you are kind of screwing your face up or shaking your head... that's the last thing that the [athletes] want to see... When you are a little bit more calm and collected... I think they take confidence from that...from the way that you portray yourself... I try to use positive body language and emotions like lots of support. If in my head I'm thinking 'this is really not going to plan' then I'll try and get a lot of encouragement come through... rather than getting frustrated.

In addition, being able to stay in the moment and being accepting of experienced emotions was also related to coaches' ability to recognise their own emotions accurately. Being consciously aware of emotions in the present moment allowed coaches to determine whether their emotional state was facilitative to a situation, as one coach stated, "I can stop myself doing that [expressing anger] when I'm in the moment because I would be able to recognise those feelings that I was having".

In relation to athletes, several coaches reported being able to read behavioural cues to interpret emotional responses, "You can see it in their [athlete] face and their body language and the way that they are". One coach reported that her ability to read the emotional climate by being sensitive to the collective mood, helped to inform her decisions and actions:

I could give you a really good rough idea of whether I thought it was going to be a win, lose, or draw, just by looking at the team... That helps me [know] emotionally how to play things, both at a team level and an individual level. When sometimes nothing needs to be said and other times when something does need to be said.

In addition, several coaches reported that their ability to recognise emotional triggers early (e.g., behavioural cues, situational changes) enabled them to act or modify their behaviour before the onset of an intense emotional response, as one coach stated:

I would try to look for the triggers earlier on... when I feel that things aren't quite fitting together and aren't quite right I guess as a coach I have already learnt the markers and the triggers that cause that to actually happen [emotional response], so as soon as I start to get a bit of a feel for those... I'll try to address the issues that are starting to cause concern rather than not being aware of them and then it impacts on the game.

#### **4.3.1.2 Emotional Understanding**

The lower-order theme of emotional understanding encapsulated the cognitive processes that coaches used to comprehend emotional information which appeared to guide coaches' actions and behaviour. The majority of coaches reported the importance of being able to understand the situational relevance of emotions. Such an understanding appeared to help coaches evaluate whether an emotional response (in themselves or others) was facilitative to the situation, as one coach illustrated:

I think any emotion can be successful. It goes back to which emotions you use at the right time... You can talk about being angry as an emotion but actually being angry might

work at a particular time...It's more about understanding what emotions, at a particular time, with a particular athlete.

Numerous coaches also demonstrated their understanding of the impact a coach's behaviour could have on an athlete in relation to the athlete's emotional and behavioural responses. Such an understanding appeared to influence how a coach would behave or respond in a situation, as the following quotes illustrate:

The performer went wrong and the coach literally threw the mat across the floor and stormed off. And I think that for me, how does a performer come back from that? They know that they've, did they mean to go wrong? Nobody wants to mess up, nobody wants to go wrong so by you [coach] doing that that makes it even worse for them [athlete] because they've not only gone wrong and have got to deal with all that themselves they now know that you're also disappointed with them... So it's an additional thing to deal with so I think that's really poor coaching.

I've seen coaches, no process, so it's just completely out of emotions... And the biggest one for me is that they are not athlete centered at all, so they have no thought what so ever about how their behaviours impact on their athlete. So yeah for me I think pretty much every conversation I would have if there is an athlete in the room I would be conscious of what I'm saying and how it will impact on them.

Coaches also discussed how their ability to understand a situation from their athletes' perspective, and not just their own, influenced their ability to handle various situations in a manner perceived to be effective, as one coach demonstrated:

One of your players might have a really good win, they are ranked number 9 in the world and they have just beat number one. Another player that you coach is world number one and has just lost to world number nine and they are feeling shocking and you are absolutely buzzing from [the other game] and now you need to have a bit of empathy. You need to be able to go and talk to that athlete and try and build them up for that next match... having that understanding, especially in competition, that's one of the most important things.

#### **4.3.1.3 Emotional Management**

The lower-order theme of emotional management described the various strategies coaches used to manage their own emotions and assist athletes in their ability to manage their emotions. In relation to coaches' themselves, emotional management strategies were predominately discussed in reference to competition (e.g., before, during, after). The key emotional management strategies identified by coaches included realistic situation evaluation, redirecting focus, emotional suppression, preparation, and routine. Several coaches described how their ability to maintain realistic evaluations of a situation (e.g., major competition, athlete performance outcome) helped to prevent the accumulation of emotions considered detrimental to coaching effectiveness:

There's not much a coach can do, apart from get there athletes in the best possible shape. And once you get to the Games, yeah there is a large amount of pressure on the sport [but] there isn't really much you can do about it...I'm the only coach that has been through, I don't know 5 Olympic Games...and if I was going to stress any advice to any coach going [to the Olympic Games] it's that you don't see it as, although it is massive, it's huge, as soon as you start thinking that you'll panic, which will make you over

analyse, do something different. The athletes will not respond well to that. It's only another competition.

Coaches also demonstrated being able to redirect their focus after critical instances that could cause an emotional response deemed unhelpful. As an example, one coach discussed his ability to refocus his attention to the needs of his athletes after one athlete's performance:

You want the players to win as much as they want to win. But when you've got 14 players in the squad not every player wins... How can you be effective for each player and you're not going to be able to do that if you're on an emotional roller-coaster... It's not to get bogged down by one player's performance and then let that affect me for another player's performance... That particular day the player that I had lost in the semi-final, but it was keeping perspective and keeping focused for everybody else. It's easy for something to go wrong and then your head to drop and you find that if you're a bit sour towards what happened then you're not being effective for everyone else. It's a case of 'that's it done, can't change that, and help with the rest of the team'... For me that was a memorable day, just the way that it all, and not just because everything was perfect because it wasn't, it was up and down throughout the day but it was a case of 'okay that's happened, it's in the past now' and just keeping a rhythm.

In addition, several coaches reported purposely suppressing their true emotions when considered uncondusive to a situation. Emotional suppression was predominantly discussed in relation to emotions that could potentially have undesirable effects on athlete performance and development, as the following quotes illustrates:

I remember in between the [contests] at the Olympics, [athlete] beat three world champions back to back and when she beat the first one I can remember almost sprinting back for her so you know by the time she came through the media I was there. And I remember almost being like a little kid in terms of sprinting and thinking ‘oh my god this is going to happen today, I knew it’ but then by the time I got back to her, exactly the same, crack on, and the mask goes back on or whatever.

In terms of their athletes, coaches reported various strategies used in attempts to influence athletes’ emotional responses and help prevent athletes experiencing emotions considered unhelpful. The key emotional management strategies identified included creating an emotionally supportive environment, encouraging emotional reflection, positive reinforcement, situation modification and reappraisal, refocus and distraction, feeding forwards, and, coach routine and preparation. Several coaches reported using distraction and refocusing techniques in order to influence an athletes emotional responses, as one coach stated:

[Athlete] lines up to walk out for the final the following day, turns to me and said ‘I’m not ready’ literally a minute before. And I was like... ‘You’ve had experiences where actually you thought this was going to go wrong, and actually its gone wrong because that’s all you’ve been focused on. So what can you focus on?’ ‘Technical cues’, ‘ok yeah, technical cues, so what are your technical cues?’...and then suddenly her focus became sort of completely on the routine as oppose to her position going into it.

Several coaches also outlined the importance of creating an emotionally supportive environment that ‘normalised’ emotions by encouraging open and honest communication about experienced emotions. One coach in particular had the philosophy of “coaching from the inside out” highlighting the importance placed on making sure athletes felt comfortable and able to address

emotional issues with him, which was believed to help athletes manage their emotions most effectively:

I've always said to them inside-out because one way or another it will always come out. So whatever you are feeling inside it will show in some way, whether it be now or whether it be later it will come out at some point. So get it out... I think that's a key thing with coaching that I would say to any other coach, make sure that they are comfortable, they can say anything that they want, they can you know, they can get any fears out.

In addition, coaches own routines and preparation was also considered an important strategy for supporting athletes' emotional management. Highly structured pre-competition routines and detailed pre-competition preparation was perceived to help athletes maintain optimal emotional states in the build up to competitions, for example:

By being prepared and them having the support that they need it basically gives them confidence in what is happening. They know exactly what is happening so there's no panic and there's not as much panic or anxiety. Not as many issues and problems so they can just get on calmly with their job on the day rather than worrying about things that should be pre planned. And knowing that they have had the best opportunity to train and to make sure their nutrition is right, their hydration, if they need psychology, just to make sure that they are physically and psychologically prepared because that helps if you are trying to reassure them if they have any issues during the competition and even in training. Anxieties will come up if they don't think they are getting the support that they need.



### **4.3.2 Positive Outcomes**

Coaches perceived that the use of their emotional abilities had various positive effects in relation to their coaching practice. Specifically, three primary positive outcomes were identified in relation to coaches' use of their emotional abilities. Thus, the lower-order themes included, (a) influence on athlete, (b) coach-athlete relationships, and (c) psychological well-being.

#### **4.3.2.1 Influence on Athlete**

Many coaches discussed the use of their emotional abilities in relation to positively influencing athlete performance and development. Using such abilities in competition environments was perceived to help coaches handle various emotionally laden situations effectively, as demonstrated in the following quote:

For the Olympic Games it was quite different...he [athlete] was just very nervous. And at that point I sort of, I didn't panic... I was very calm and I just tried to give him confidence in his ability 'you've done all those [practices]'... I wasn't as confident in his ability to [perform] because I hadn't seen him like that. But what was really important for me in that situation was to stay the same, and I stayed exactly the same...and fortunately he did his [performance], he just went into autopilot.

Coaches also highlighted how their use of emotional abilities could support their athletes' development both as a person (away from sport) and as an athlete. Helping athletes to become more aware of their emotions and how to manage them was perceived to facilitate emotional development, as one coach stated "with the younger ones it's trying to expose them really to different ways they can prepare and manage those emotions in advance and letting them realise what is best for them". One coach demonstrated how his ability to encourage and facilitate open

and honest discussion about emotions positively influenced his athletes, in terms of their development:

We had this massive discussion and it wasn't [the] coach talking feedback and the players just sitting there and [then] going home. It was me facilitating the meeting but asking open questions, probing them... and then I didn't mind the other athletes chipping in because it was about feelings... This one athlete, I had a meeting with him after and he said 'I've learnt a lot from that'.

#### **4.3.2.2 Coach-athlete Relationships**

Coaches also discussed how they believed that their use of emotional abilities helped them to build closeness and develop strong lasting connections with their athletes. Closeness was characterised by building trust and developing mutual respect, as one coach stated, "My relationship with the players has grown, all of them know they can have discussions with me". Additionally coaches' use of their emotional abilities was perceived to help build mature and robust relationships, as one coach stated:

Especially if it's something emotional, it's a lot of open questions to get them to figure it out. It's made a more mature relationship... I think that they see that you are taking the time to listen to them... And it just builds a stronger relationship.

Interestingly, when discussing how the quality of the coach-athlete relationship is crucial to coaching effectiveness, one coach highlighted how his "emotional intelligence" helped him to recognise, understand and facilitate relationships his athletes had with others:

I've been reading books recently about successful athletes and there is always one individual they have such a good bond with... This is how I thought [early coaching

career], every athlete needs to have that bond with you. But actually it's you understanding that that bond might be their friend... If you can see that, and use it, and influence it in the right way, then you are in a great position... I think that's being emotionally intelligent, that's not undermining you [coach], that's you being very clever.

#### **4.3.2.3 Psychological Well-being**

Several coaches discussed how their use of emotional abilities had various positive effects on their own psychological well-being by promoting healthy psychological adaptation and supporting psychological growth. Healthy psychological adaptation was apparent in coaches' conscious attempts to handle their own emotional experiences to avoid negative consequences. Actively utilising support systems to verbalise issues and express intense emotions was considered important to help prevent negative psychological consequences, as one coach stated:

When I'm on tour with my [spouse] I've got someone really good to tap into. I think that having a good support system to help you deal with emotion is really important. Because otherwise...if you make a mistake and you've got no one to bounce that off and you go back to your hotel and you are there on your own you can wind up feeling really [bad] really easily.

One coach discussed how he would use his coach support specialist to express and resolve any emotional issues:

I think I will always have one now, a coach support specialist... That's someone who you can go to outside of your sport. I can go to family as well but having that sort of someone that you don't see every day but you have a good relationship with I think is critical

actually because you can have those, you can be totally open and you can get stuff off your chest without being judged or without being put under any threat. I'm better at controlling my emotions and managing them because I have resources to use if I need them.

Three coaches discussed that their awareness of their emotions and ability to understand potential negative consequences allowed them to recognise when their current situation needed to change. This was perceived to help maintain balance and prevent negative psychological well-being issues:

When I notice myself going off too much in one direction [getting overwhelmed] then I've got enough awareness to pull back and say, you know this just isn't right, you need to spend time on your own leisure time... You've got to be aware that you are starting to slip and that it's affecting you.

Numerous coaches also highlighted that their ability to understand emotions and know when emotions should be managed influenced their level of autonomy. One coach believed that her behaviours and display of emotions were purposeful rather than behaving in a way that was perceived to be most appropriate by others, as stated, "In the early days of coaching when you're not so experienced it's about other people. You react in a way because it's what others expect of you rather than how you should conduct yourself".

### **4.3.3 Moderating Factors**

All coaches discussed various factors that appeared to influence their use of emotional abilities within their coaching practice. The lower-order themes representing such moderating factors included, (a) coaches' beliefs, (b) coaches' knowledge, and (c) past experiences.

#### 4.3.3.1 Coaches' Beliefs

The majority of coaches discussed their own personal beliefs relating to emotional aspects of their coaching practice. In particular, several coaches discussed how they believed that coaches required a certain persona to be most effective. This persona included demonstrating behavioural and emotional consistency and appropriate emotional displays. Inconsistent behaviours and emotional displays were perceived to have detrimental consequences on their athletes, as highlighted in the following quote:

I think inconsistent emotions and regular changing of moods is negative. So the [athlete] can't really gauge what to expect... Like sometimes the coach will be happy, pleased, sometimes they will be sad, they will be angry... Consistency, that's the sort of behavior that I think an athlete would want rather than somebody that is just completely off the wall unpredictable and inconsistent.

Beliefs regarding the negative impact of being overemotional or unemotional appeared to guide coaches in their own behaviours. Being overemotional was associated with getting distracted, not being athlete focused and passing on detrimental emotions to their athletes. One coach in particular highlighted the potential detrimental effects of being overemotional when coaching:

I think your [coach] emotions need to be positive overall and raise the players up... I remember coaching against a Scottish team that an [names nationality] coach was coaching and at half time... she shouted so loudly and bawled so much... and at that point she was almost doing my team talk for me because we could see how rattled they were and what the problems were... I would never advocate emotions like that for coaching because it was hugely negative.

Conversely, being unemotional was also believed to have a negative impact on coaching effectiveness, as one coach stated, “Being emotionally detached can be very detrimental... I think if you make sport emotionless, it’s dangerous”. In addition, several coaches implied that they believed emotions to be malleable and controllable in nature, as one coach stated, “a bad emotion can very quickly be turned into a good emotion”. With this belief, coaches actively sought to influence emotions both within themselves and their athletes when considered necessary.

In addition, some coaches held beliefs regarding the importance of understanding how emotions can influence coaching practice and expressed the need for opportunities to learn about emotions in coach education programmes, as one coach stated:

I think the more that you can understand and manage the emotional environment the better you are at coaching. The difficulty for coaches is that it is very much like a taboo subject, it’s not on coach education programmes and I don’t think a lot of coaches are even aware of the emotional management of the game.

#### **4.3.3.2 Coaches’ Knowledge**

Coaches displayed knowledge and understanding pertaining to their athletes’ characteristics and their own characteristics. Specifically, coaches’ interpersonal knowledge (e.g., knowledge of athletes’ typical behaviours, dispositions, and individual needs) was used to help provide support for individual athletes in what was perceived to be the most effective approach:

One particular [athlete], they are completely giddy and like so excited that actually they need to calm down...Talking about it loads and loads and loads actually helps them.

Rather than saying, you know, ‘go to the side and visualise, calm yourself down’. Well

actually they're pumped and they've got to release that. So again learning that difference in emotion... that's really important for a coach to know.

One coach in particular highlighted the importance of understanding athletes' different personalities in order to understand and manage emotional situations:

I had to manage these personalities in the boat... And you might do that in a different way. One athlete I would say 'I want to talk to you, I'm just going to go upstairs and get something, wait here' and I would just leave her for 10 minutes and by the time I came back down stairs she would be like 'I'm sorry blah blah blah' you know. And then another athlete was very dominant in the boat so I chose not to tackle her in front of the others... So it's just about knowing how to deal with different personalities for the benefit of the whole crew.

Coaches also discussed their intrapersonal knowledge by having the ability to “understand yourself” in different situations and having “self-awareness”. Having awareness and understanding towards their own typical behaviours and emotional dispositions enabled coaches to monitor themselves in different situations and be aware of the potential impact they may be having:

I think emotionally you really need to understand yourself on every level. You have to be honest about it... I am emotional and stuff so I have to be able to understand it and embrace it at the right times and subdue it at times... Wherever you are on that continuum, just understand where you are and how that can impact upon you positively and negatively.

#### 4.3.3.3 Coaches' Past Experiences

Coaches' past emotional experiences as both a coach and a former athlete were used to inform coaches' practice. For instance, several coaches reported using past experiences as a former athlete to help them recognise, understand and manage their athletes' emotions. Specifically, several coaches believed that their experiences as a former athlete helped them to be able to identify and resolve similar emotional issues in their athletes, as highlighted in the following quote:

On the start line of a big Olympic Games, I can tell what the athletes are feeling... And also now looking back at the experience of [poor] sessions, of good sessions, good competitions, bad competitions, how the athletes are feeling after a massive competition when they have done really well or when they have done rubbish. At least you [coach] can feel it from them [athlete] as well, so I know what they need from me.

In addition, past experience as a former athlete were found to help coaches understand the effect emotions can have on athlete performance and development which subsequently influenced their coaching practice. As one coach described:

I take from experiences from when I was playing... I can understand why a coach would get angry when I made a stupid mistake or something like that but I would be like "that's not helping" and it's when a coach was like "come on, keep going" and I was like "yes, belief". And as a coach that's what you've got to try and push all the time, those positive emotions, to keep them motivated.

In relation to coaching experiences, some coaches discussed that reflecting on ineffective coaching experiences involving emotion enabled coaches to identify aspects of their own



coaching practice that would benefit from being modified in order to try and become more effective in the future. One coach stated:

Just with experience, I've lost a few [athletes] simply because my behaviour and my emotions were wrong at the time. You know I might have pushed too hard or I might have not understood their needs or what was going on with them outside of the [sports arena] and I'd still be pushing and then the upshot would be that they leave the sport... I always analyse why they have left, was it the time commitments or because you weren't good enough as a coach or you didn't change your behaviour.

#### **4.4 Discussion**

The importance placed on coaches abilities to attune to the emotional aspects of their practice, was highlighted in study one of this thesis. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to gain a detailed understanding into how coaches use such emotional abilities within their coaching practice. Overall, findings identified the key emotional skills and strategies coaches use and how various moderating factors can influence coaches' use of their emotional abilities. In addition, findings highlighted how coaches' use of their emotional abilities can promote various positive outcomes.

Specific to the use of emotional abilities, within the present study, coaches appeared to alter and direct their behaviours based on how they perceived and processed emotional information. Thus, it was evident that coaches largely utilised their emotional awareness and emotional understanding skills to support and respond to the needs of their athletes both in training and competition situations. In relation to coach stress, Thelwell, Wagstaff, Rayner, Chapman, and Barker (2017), recently identified that athletes within elite sport environments are

able to detect and be effected by the stress experienced by their coaches. Specifically, findings indicated that athletes were able to identify when their coaches were experiencing stress through their behaviours, appearance, and style of communication. Although not directly related to stress, findings of the present study suggest that elite coaches do use emotional awareness and understanding skills to inform their behaviours in attempts to positively influence interactions with athletes. In particular, coaches noted the importance of being able to recognise and understand how their own behaviours and displays of emotions can influence athletes both positively and negatively. However, it is certainly plausible that how coaches believe they are being perceived by their athletes may not be consistent with athletes' true perceptions. This provides an area for future investigation where athletes perceptions of their coaches should also be considered when investigating coaches' emotional abilities.

In addition, emotional management strategies also emerged within the present study, which described coaches' efforts to regulate emotions within themselves and their athletes. The majority of emotion regulation research that has been conducted in sport typically focuses on athlete intrapersonal emotional regulation (e.g., Wagstaff, 2014). This research has more recently expanded into investigating interpersonal emotional regulation within team sports (e.g., Campo, Sanchez, Ferrand, Rosnet, Friesen, & Lane, 2017) and sports officiating (e.g., Friesen, Devonport, & Lane, 2017). Davis and Davis (2016) have recently outlined a number of emotion regulation strategies (e.g., mindfulness, written emotional disclosure) that may be useful to help coaches optimise their emotions based on the coaching stress literature. Indeed, Davis and Davis (2016) highlighted that coach education programmes may benefit from including discussion on coaches emotional experiences and the training of strategies to help emotional management. Findings from the present study have contributed to this literature by identifying key strategies

elite coaches use within their practice to manage their own emotions (i.e., intrapersonal: preparation, redirecting focus; emotional suppression, routine) and how they attempt to influence the emotional experiences of their athletes (i.e., interpersonal: feeding forwards, distraction and refocus, creating an emotionally supportive environment, coach routine and preparation). It was clear that coaches attempted to regulate emotions to levels they believed would facilitate desired outcomes. As stated by Friesen and colleagues (2013), strategies to regulate emotions for instrumental purposes are often fundamental in applied sport psychology interventions, yet such interventions are predominantly targeted at athletes to help them regulate their own emotions before, during and after competition. Findings of the present study support the notion that coach education programmes should aim to teach coaches strategies to regulate their own emotions and influence the emotional experiences of their athletes. The emotional management strategies identified within the present study can be used to help inform the development of such programmes.

As stated by Salovey and Grewal (2005) merely developing the skills of EI may not prove prolific unless implemented interventions also address factors affecting the use of these skills. The present study highlighted the importance of several factors that appeared to influence coaches' use of their emotional abilities in practice. For instance, coaches' in-depth intra- and interpersonal knowledge appeared to impact how coaches recognised and processed emotional information, which helped to inform the selection and application of emotional management strategies. Indeed, research has suggested that sport psychology practitioners should look to increase coaches' self-awareness to enhance coaches' experiences (e.g., Giges, Petitpas, Vernacchia, 2004; McCarthy & Giges, 2017). McCarthy and Giges (2017) suggest that self-awareness can "lead to fuller knowledge of oneself, and a greater appreciation of one's

complexity and wholeness” (p. 103). The findings of the present study suggest that helping coaches to build awareness of their emotional dispositions and behavioural tendencies in various situations may help to facilitate emotional ability development.

In addition, coaches’ beliefs also emerged as a theme within the data, identifying coaches’ personal beliefs relating to the emotional aspects of their practice. Findings indicated that the beliefs coaches held about emotions (e.g., nature of emotions, emotional consistency, and, appropriate emotional displays) could influence how coaches processed and attempted to manage emotions. The beliefs individuals hold regarding emotion has received attention within the sports literature, with a focus primarily directed toward investigating athletes’ beliefs (e.g., Lane, Beedie, Devonport, & Stanley, 2011; Lane, Davis, & Stanley, 2014). Such research has identified that athletes meta-beliefs (i.e., knowledge or beliefs a person has about his or her previous experiences) can influence athletes selection and implementation of emotional regulation strategies. For example, Lane et al. (2011) found that athletes who believed that anger was helpful to their performance reported experiencing higher anger scores during performance than athletes who did not hold such beliefs. Lane and colleagues (2014) suggested that to “increase the likelihood of an emotion regulation intervention being successful with certain individuals, it may be of paramount importance to explore individuals’ beliefs about emotions and the degree to which they can be controlled” (p. 30). In one respect, findings of the present study indicated that several coaches believed emotions to be malleable and controllable which appeared to influence coaches’ views on their ability to manage their own and athletes’ emotions. Gross (2008) suggested that individuals could differ in the beliefs they hold about emotions. That is, some individuals may believe that you cannot really change emotions that are experienced whereas others believe that everyone can learn to control and regulate emotions.

Taking into account such research and the findings from the present study, future research is warranted to further explore coaches' beliefs about emotions and how they may impact upon how coaches process and attempt to manage emotions in themselves and their athletes. Collectively, these findings suggest the need to attend to coaches' emotional abilities in combination with other factors such as coaches' knowledge, their beliefs and past experiences in order to support coaches' personal development.

In addition to the identification of emotional abilities and moderating factors, the present study also identified positive outcomes perceived to be associated with coaches' use of their emotional abilities (i.e., influence on athlete, coach-athlete relationships, and coaches' psychological well-being). Within the sport psychology literature, a growing body of research has highlighted the important role of quality coach-athlete relationships (e.g., Jowett, 2003; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Antonini Philippe & Seiler, 2006). Research has demonstrated positive associations between the quality of relationships and various important factors such as, athlete satisfaction (e.g., Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004), team cohesion (e.g., Jowett & Chaundy, 2004), and, collective efficacy (e.g., Hampson & Jowett, 2012). In light of such research, the need to identify the psychological factors that help coaches to develop high quality relationships with their athletes has been highlighted (e.g., Lafrenière, Jowett, Vallerand, Donahue, & Lorimer, 2008; Lafrenière, Jowett, Vallerand, & Carbonneau, 2011). Findings from the present study suggest that coaches' emotional abilities may be an important psychological factor that can influence the quality of coach-athlete relationships. More broadly, these findings offer support for Wagstaff and colleagues (Wagstaff et al., 2012) in their research highlighting the importance of emotion-related abilities in developing and maintaining positive interpersonal relationships within sport organisations. Coaches in the present study provided an initial indication into how

their emotional abilities are perceived to facilitate the quality of their relationships (e.g., build trust and respect). Such findings offer an area for future research to investigate whether there is a relationship between coaches' emotional abilities and the perceived quality of their coach-athlete relationships. Given the coach-athlete relationship is defined as "the situation in which coaches' and athletes emotions, thoughts, and behaviours are mutually and causally interconnected" (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004, p. 246), such research should involve both coaches and athletes.

Coaches' use of their emotional abilities was also found to have positive influences on their own psychological well-being. In particular, the findings of the present study suggested that coaches actively used support systems to address emotional issues and help them manage their own emotions to avoid negative consequences. The importance of social support has repeatedly been reported as an important influential factor in athlete performance and development (e.g., Rees & Hardy, 2000, Rees, Hardy, & Freeman, 2007), where coaches themselves have been found to be key providers of support for athletes (e.g., Antonini Philillpe & Seiler, 2006). Exploring the role of social support in relation to coaches' own performance and development has received less attention. Yet, several studies have identified that coaches support networks can have a positive influence on coaches stress levels (e.g., Knights & Ruddock-Hudson, 2016; Olusoga et al., 2010). Although coaches in this study reported using social support networks, findings also highlighted that several coaches felt they had limited access to support, as one coach stated, "it's very difficult to talk to other coaches... and there isn't the secure network for coaches to talk to other people because of the nature of the environment". Previous research has highlighted aspects of this where coaches have reported feeling isolated and alone within their coaching environments (e.g., Allen & Shaw, 2009; Knights & Ruddock-Hudson, 2016). Therefore, from an applied perspective, these findings highlight the need for sport psychology

practitioners to ensure that coaches have (and feel they have) strong support systems they can utilise to help handle emotionally-laden situations.

#### **4.4.1 Strengths and Limitations**

A strength of this study was the elite sample of coaches investigated. At the time of data collection, 10 of the participants were actively coaching at the elite level, thus, reducing potential memory bias limitations often associated with retrospective studies (Brewer et al., 2011). It is also important to acknowledge the limitations of the study. Firstly, coaches involved in the study were from a variety of sports. In particular, it is possible that the emotional abilities and skills utilised by coaches might be employed in sport specific ways. Thus, future research may wish to be sport specific in its focus to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the emotional abilities and skills required for particular sports. In addition, although generalisability is not the intent of qualitative research, the sample used in this study all worked within high-performance coaching contexts. Therefore, findings should not be generalised to other coaching contexts (e.g., participation coaches) as the roles, responsibilities, and objectives of coaches are suggested to vary significantly (e.g., Côté & Gilbert, 2009).

#### **4.4.2 Applied Implications and Future Research**

The present findings have applied implications for sport psychology practitioners working with coaches by providing information that can guide their approach in addressing the emotional nature of coaching practice. Firstly, findings indicate that sport psychology practitioners should help coaches to explore and understand the role emotions can play in their coaching practice and how they can influence coach-athlete interactions. Attention should be directed toward helping coaches' learn and develop specific emotional skills and strategies that

can support their ability to recognise, understand and manage emotions within themselves and their athletes. For example, helping coaches to identify and learn how to recognise specific situations that elicit emotional responses (i.e., emotional triggers) in themselves and their athletes may enhance coaches' abilities to recognise early or prevent emotions considered debilitating. Coaches in the present study reported the importance of creating an emotionally supportive environment where athletes feel comfortable to talk about their emotions openly and honestly. Thus, teaching coaches' activities they can use with their athletes to encourage emotion-centered discussions and aiming to improve coaches' communication and active listening skills may be useful. Coaches also reported regularly suppressing their experienced emotions, offering support for previous research. In particular, through a narrative exploration of a semiprofessional head soccer coach's experiences, Nelson and colleagues (2013) highlighted the coach's use of emotional suppression when engaging in acts of social performance. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that coaches actively suppress their true emotions when they are not considered conducive to overall goals. Emotional suppression is often associated with contributing to psychological well-being issues such as, negative affective experiences and poorer interpersonal functioning (e.g., Gross, 1998; Gross & John, 2003). Interestingly, coaches in the present study demonstrated awareness of such negative psychological effects. Yet, rather than avoiding the use of emotional suppression, coaches actively sought to prevent such consequences by addressing emotional issues at an appropriate time. Based on these findings, practitioners may wish to educate coaches on the potential consequences of engaging in emotional suppression while considering strategies coaches can use to help them address emotional issues at appropriate times. From a practical perspective, role-play activities may also be of value in helping coaches to practice, observe and learn about their different emotional abilities. In addition, using fictional



emotionally-laden scenarios and getting coaches to discuss how they would respond to such situations and why may help to facilitate learning and development.

Findings also indicate that sport psychology practitioners should be aware of various factors that can influence coaches' use of their emotional abilities (i.e., coaches' knowledge, beliefs, and past experiences). To help promote emotional ability development practitioners should consider incorporating activities that aim to enhance coaches' self-awareness and awareness of their individual athletes. The absence of addressing coaches' knowledge may impact the effectiveness of the programme. For example, teaching interpersonal emotional management strategies to a coach that has little understanding of their athlete's emotional and behavioural tendencies might result in the ineffective application of emotional management strategies in practice. In addition, practitioners should help coaches to become aware of the beliefs they may hold regarding emotions and how such beliefs may influence coaches themselves and the interactions they have with their athletes. In one respect, practitioners should aim to develop the belief that emotions are malleable and capable of being modified before attempting to teach coaches any emotional skills or strategies.

Findings of the present study have outlined several emotional management strategies that coaches use in their practice. Considering the current lack of knowledge in this area, future research may wish to further explore the specific emotional management strategies coaches use and circumstances that may evoke the use of specific strategies. Further investigation into how and why coaches attempt to manage emotions for the sake of desired outcomes is also recommended. Secondly, research is warranted to investigate the beliefs coaches hold about emotions and how such beliefs may influence how coaches process and attempt to regulate emotions. Finally, future research is needed to address the potential impact of introducing

emotional ability development programmes for sports coaches. The present study suggests a need to attend to coaches emotional abilities in combination with coaches' knowledge, beliefs and experiences in attempts to elicit learning returns and support coach development. It is anticipated that findings from this study have provided an initial foundation for designing and implementing such interventions for sports coaches.

#### **4.4.3 Concluding Remarks**

The present study is the first to investigate how elite coaches' use their emotional abilities within their practice. Overall, the findings offer novel insights into the specific emotional abilities and skills elite coaches use to facilitate positive outcomes. In addition, findings have identified several moderating factors that appear to influence coaches' use of their emotional abilities. Collectively, the findings from studies one and two of this thesis have contributed to the small body of literature investigating emotion within the sports coaching context. Findings have highlighted that coaches believed they had developed their emotional abilities throughout their careers. In addition, coaches expressed that educational opportunities that addressed emotions in coaching would have been beneficial in the earlier stages of their careers. To knowledge, no existing literature in sports psychology has investigated the effectiveness of an Emotional Ability Development programme specifically designed for sports coaches. Yet, research inquiry into this area could be particularly valuable to sports psychology practitioners aiming to support coach development. Findings from the present study offer guidelines that can be used to support the design and implementation of interventions aimed at developing coaches' emotional abilities. Therefore, based on the aforementioned, study three of this thesis will design, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of an emotional ability development programme.

## Chapter V

### Pilot Study and Study Three

#### *The design, implementation, and evaluation of an emotional ability development programme for sports coaches*

##### 5.1 Introduction

While EI research has received increasing interest within the sport psychology literature (e.g., Hwang et al., 2013; Laborde, Lautenbach, Allen, Herbert, & Achtzehn, 2014; Thelwell, et al., 2008), little consideration has been directed towards examining the effectiveness of interventions designed to develop EI in performers operating within sporting contexts. Specifically, in an overview of the current literature only three studies have been identified examining the effectiveness of EI-based interventions within sport (e.g., Campo, Laborde, & Mosley, 2016; Crombie et al., 2011; Wagstaff et al., 2013). It is important to note that such research has differed in relation to the theoretical underpinnings adopted and tools used to measure EI. Specifically, research in sport has used both the ability model of EI (e.g., Crombie et al., 2011; Wagstaff et al., 2013) and the trait conceptualisation of EI (e.g., Campo et al., 2016). As a result, evaluating the value of such interventions is problematic due to a lack of theoretical and measurement consistency.

In the first reported study, Crombie and colleagues (2011) investigated the effects of EI training on the EI scores of individual cricket players. Findings demonstrated significant increases in EI scores for cricket players within the EI training group, between pre-test and post-test, in comparison to the control group. More recently, Wagstaff and colleagues (2013)

conducted an action research intervention aimed at developing emotion-related abilities and emotion regulation strategies in a sports organisation. The group-based intervention was found to be effective at promoting the use of more adaptive emotion regulation strategies although only participants receiving extended one-to-one coaching showed improvements in EI scores. In addition, Campo and colleagues (2016) tested the effectiveness of an EI training intervention in team contact sports. Findings demonstrated improvements in some aspects of trait EI (e.g., social competence, emotion perception), however no differences were observed in global trait EI scores. Collectively, this small body of research offers some support for other research conducted outside of the sports domain demonstrating that EI can be developed (e.g., Groves, McEnrue, & Shen, 2008).

The findings from studies one and two of this thesis identified three emotional abilities that are perceived to play an important role in coaching effectiveness at the elite level. The emotional abilities identified demonstrated similarity and overlap with Mayer and Salovey's (1997) ability model of EI. To reiterate, the ability model of EI pertains to an individual's capacity to process and reason about emotion-laden information in order to enhance cognitive processes (Brackett & Salovey, 2006). Specifically, the ability model is conceptualised by four distinct yet related abilities that are suggested necessary for carrying out emotional reasoning. The four abilities encompassed in the model include, a) perceiving emotions, b) facilitate thought by using emotions, c) understanding emotions, and, d) managing emotions. Each ability portrays various areas of reasoning, which collectively, represent EI. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2016) recently proposed a revised version of the ability model that included several added areas of reasoning that did not appear in their original model. A brief summary of the four abilities is provided below which has been adapted from Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2016). More detailed

presentations can be found elsewhere (cf. Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2016):

- *Perceiving emotions*: The ability to identify emotions in one's own physical states, feelings and thoughts. The ability to perceive emotions in others through their vocal cues, facial expression, language, and behaviour.
- *Facilitating thought by using emotion*: The ability to generate emotions as an aid to judgement and memory. The ability to prioritise thinking by directing attention according to present feeling.
- *Understanding emotions*: The ability to label emotions, recognise relations among them, and understand complex and mixed emotions. The ability to determine the antecedents, meanings, and consequences of emotions. The ability to understand how a person might feel in the future or under certain conditions.
- *Managing emotions*: The ability to effectively manage one's own and others emotions to achieve desired outcomes. The ability to monitor emotional reactions and evaluate strategies to maintain, reduce or intensify an emotional response.

The findings from studies one and two of this thesis most closely related to three of the emotional abilities encompassed in the ability model of EI, perceiving emotions, understanding emotions, and managing emotions. The perceiving emotions branch of EI reflects the ability to identify emotions in one's own physical and psychological states, as well as the ability to perceive emotions in others through their vocal cues, facial expression, language and behaviour (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016). Findings from the present thesis indicated that elite coaches used such emotional awareness skills when coaching to help identify and recognise emotions both in themselves and their athletes. The understanding emotions branch represents the mental

ability to comprehend the connections between different emotions and how emotions change over time and situations (Rivers, Brackett, Salovey, & Mayer, 2007). Findings from the present thesis indicated that elite coaches actively attempt to understand how emotions and changes in emotions can influence a situation and use this information to help inform their decisions and actions when coaching. Finally, managing emotions refers to the ability to regulate emotions in the self and others to achieve desired outcomes (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Findings from the present thesis highlighted a variety of emotional management strategies that elite coaches' utilise in their practice in attempts to influence their own and their athletes' emotional responses to help achieve desired outcomes.

In line with the ability model of EI, findings from this thesis also highlighted that elite coaches' emotional abilities were believed to have developed over time. Specifically, coaches emphasised that their emotional abilities had developed throughout the later stages of their coaching careers, and the potential benefit of emotion-based educational opportunities for sports coaches in the earlier stages of their careers was advocated. Taking into consideration the findings of studies one and two, combined with the paucity of research investigating the effectiveness of EI-based interventions for sports coaches, the purpose of the present study was to address this gap in the literature and broaden knowledge and understanding into this area. Thus, the aim of the present study was to design, implement and evaluate an emotional ability development programme for sports coaches. The findings from studies one and two of this thesis provided the theoretical underpinnings for the design and implementation of a small-scale and full-scale intervention. In addition, the ability model of EI (Meyer & Salovey, 1997) was also used as a guiding theoretical framework in the design and evaluation of the interventions.

For the present study, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence test (MSCEIT) was considered the most appropriate measure to assess coaches' emotional abilities. Specifically, the MSCEIT was founded on the ability model of EI and was purposely designed to measure the four abilities within the model. In addition, the MSCEIT is a performance-based measure that aims to assess an individual's actual mental ability. Within the sport psychology literature, self-report measures of EI have generally been supported (e.g., Barlow & Banks, 2014; Campo 2016; Lane et al., 2009; Thelwell et al., 2008). Such studies have predominately used measures such as, the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I; Bar-On, 1997) and, the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS; Schutte et al., 1998). However, such self-report measures were considered inappropriate for the present study because of two primary concerns. Firstly, self-report questionnaires to measure EI have been criticised for social desirability bias concerns (e.g., Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2009). Secondly, such measures are often conceptually founded on mixed-model approaches of EI. In general, mixed-model approaches suggest a broader conception of EI that incorporates both abilities and non-cognitive competencies such as personality and motivational traits (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2009). Thus, mixed models of EI have been criticised for incorporating constructs that are unrelated to both emotion and intelligence (e.g., Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008).

Within the business management domain, Mattingly and Kraiger (2018) recently conducted a meta-analytical investigation on studies that attempt to increase EI via training interventions. In stating potential areas for future research, the authors suggested that it would be useful for intervention-based research to consider the effects of EI-based programmes on other possible outcomes. Such research could enable the examination of the broader impacts of such programmes beyond EI scores (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2018). Thus, in addition to measuring

coaches EI the present study also aimed to investigate other factors that may potentially be influenced by the EAD programme. Specifically, one of the additional factors investigated was the coach-athlete relationship. Broadly, EI research has demonstrated positive relationships between EI and the quality of social interactions (e.g., Lopes et al., 2004). Within the sport domain, Wagstaff and colleagues (2012) demonstrated the importance of emotion-related abilities in developing and maintaining positive interpersonal relationships within sports organisations. In support of this, findings from study two of this thesis indicated that elite coaches perceived their emotional abilities to have positive influences on the quality of their coach-athlete relationships. The coach-athlete relationship was measured using the Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). The CART-Q has been widely used within the sport psychology literature and various studies have evaluated the psychometric properties of the measure (e.g., Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Yang & Jowett, 2013).

The second factor examined was coach efficacy. Coach efficacy has been defined as “the extent to which coaches believe they have the capacity to affect the learning and performance of their athletes” (Feltz et al., 1999, p. 765). Feltz and colleagues (1999) model of coach efficacy is comprised of four main components that include motivation, game strategy, technique, and character building efficacies. Previous research (e.g., Thelwell et al., 2008) has begun to suggest correlations between the constructs of coach efficacy and EI. Such findings have indicated that EI may be a possible antecedent of coach efficacy (Boardley, 2018). In reviewing the coach efficacy literature, Boardley (2018) suggests that future applied research could examine whether coach-development activities are successful in enhancing coach efficacy. Thus, the current study also aimed to investigate whether participation in an EAD programme positively influences coach efficacy. Given that self-efficacy judgements are domain specific beliefs held by an



individual (Bandura, 1997) the Coaching Efficacy Scale (CES; Feltz et al., 1999) was deemed most appropriate for the present study. Specifically, the CES is the only published sport-specific measure alleged to measure coach efficacy.

Finally, the third factor examined was athletes' perceptions of coaches' behaviours. Ample research has indicated that coaches' behaviours can have both positive and negative influences on their athletes in relation to outcomes such as athlete performance and development (e.g., Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002; Gould et al., 2002). Findings from study two of this thesis indicated that elite coaches believed their emotional abilities helped to inform their coaching behaviours and consequently had positive influences on athlete performance and development. Thus, a further aim of the present study was to investigate whether coaches' participation in an EAD programme effects coaches' behaviours (as measured via athlete perceptions). The Coach Behaviour Questionnaire (CBQ; Kenow & Williams, 2002) was deemed appropriate for the present study as the measure emphasises interpersonal behaviours displayed by coaches (e.g., supportiveness) rather than focusing on behaviours related to coaching skills (e.g., technical skills, organisational skills). Specifically, the CBQ assesses whether athletes evaluate their coaches behaviours as having a positive or negative effect on their performance and psychological states.

This chapter of the thesis is presented in two phases. Phase one provides an overview of a small-scale pilot study designed to evaluate the perceived value and practicality of delivering an EAD programme to sports coaches. Taking into consideration the findings of the pilot study, phase two then provides a comprehensive overview of the design, implementation, and evaluation of a full-scale EAD programme aimed at enhancing coaches' emotional abilities.

## **5.2 Phase One: Study Purpose**

The primary purpose of the small-scale pilot study was to evaluate the perceived value and practicality of delivering an EAD programme to sports coaches. Thus, the primary aim of the pilot-study was to gain social validation data on the design and delivery of the EAD programme. It was anticipated that gaining such social validation data would help to further inform the development of the full-scale intervention study.

## **5.3 Phase One: Method**

### **5.3.1 Participants**

With institutional ethics approval (see appendix C), purposive sampling (Patton, 2002) was used to recruit participants for the pilot study. In total, 2 male coaches ( $M_{\text{age}} = 22$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ) agreed to participate. Inclusion criteria required coaches to hold a National Governing Body (NGB) level 2 coaching qualification (minimum) and have coached athletes in their respective sports for a minimum of two years. One of the coaches was a swimming coach currently coaching full-time (approx. 20 hours per week) at club level. At the time of the study he had been coaching for two years and held an NGB level 2 coaching qualification. The second coach involved in the study was a diving coach currently coaching full-time (approx. 20 hours per week) at club and regional level. At the time of the study he had seven years coaching experience and held an NGB level 2 coaching qualification. Both coaches had also competed in their respective sports ( $M_{\text{years}} = 8.5$ ,  $SD = 0.5$ ) at regional and international levels. Given that findings from study one of this thesis indicated that coaches' emotional abilities were perceived to have developed over time and were believed to be unrefined in their developmental years, pathway level coaches were deemed most appropriate for the sample.

### **5.3.2 Intervention Design**

The coaches participated in two, two hour workshops that aimed to enhance awareness and understanding of emotion in coaching while also targeting the development of three emotional abilities (i.e., emotional awareness, emotional understanding, and emotional management). See Table 5.1 for a summary of the aims and content of the workshops (for full review of the supporting materials used in the workshops please see appendix F). The content of the workshops was largely informed by the findings of studies one and two specifically related to elite coaches' emotional abilities. Firstly, workshop one explored the key psychological attributes identified in study one where particular emphasis was directed toward identifying and understanding the emotional abilities related to perceived coaching effectiveness. The concept of emotional intelligence was introduced by providing an overview of Mayer and Salovey's (1997) ability model of emotional intelligence. The remainder of the workshop focused on increasing awareness and understanding of how emotions can potentially influence coaching practice and coaching effectiveness. Workshop two provided an introduction into coaches, emotional awareness, emotional understanding and emotional management. Specifically, each ability was discussed separately and various strategies were introduced related to emotional ability development.

### **5.3.3 Intervention Procedures**

In order to recruit coaches for the pilot study, an initial email was sent out to a member of the University staff from the coach development department, detailing the nature of the study. A meeting was then arranged to further discuss the intervention programme and the recruitment of suitable coaches. This member of staff then disseminated the information to local coaches he felt

Table 5.1: A summary of the small scale Emotional Ability Development (EAD) programme (pilot study)

<b>Workshop Theme</b>	<b>Aims of the Workshop</b>	<b>Content of the Workshop</b>	<b>Activities involved in workshop</b>	<b>Source of the Content</b>	<b>Delivery Approach</b>
1. Introduction	<p>I. Increase knowledge and understanding of the psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness at the elite level.</p> <p>II. Provide introduction into the role of coaches' emotional abilities.</p> <p>III. Increase awareness and understanding of how emotions relate to coaching practice and perceived coaching effectiveness.</p>	<p>I. Psychological Attributes</p> <p>a) Open discussion on psychological attributes. underpinning sports coaching</p> <p>b) Overview of study one findings and introduction into coaches emotional abilities.</p> <p>II. What are emotions?</p> <p>a) Open discussion on definition of emotion.</p> <p>b) Identifying the components of emotions.</p> <p>III. Emotions and coaching</p> <p>a) Open discussion on how emotions can influence coaching practice and perceived coaching effectiveness.</p>	<p>I. Knowledge of emotions – Coaches define a list of emotions and provide examples of when they had experienced that emotion when coaching. Coaches then explain why the experience was perceived to be either positive or negative.</p> <p>II. Emotions and coaching – Coaches write down examples of how emotions can influence coaching from past experiences and discuss as a group.</p> <p>III. Characteristics of an effective coach – Coaches write down their beliefs on the characteristics of an effective coach and discuss how such beliefs may influence their coaching practice.</p>	<p>I. Key findings from study one related to coaches psychological attributes.</p>	<p>a) Didactic</p> <p>b) Group discussion</p>
2. Emotional Abilities	<p>I. Increase knowledge and understanding of emotional abilities and how they relate to coaching practice.</p> <p>II. Introduce various strategies to support</p>	<p>I. What is Emotional Intelligence?</p> <p>a) Open discussion on emotional intelligence.</p> <p>b) Definition of emotional intelligence.</p> <p>II. Emotional Awareness</p>	<p>I. Emotional awareness activities</p> <p>a) Behavioural tendencies - Coaches identify behaviours (e.g., body language, actions, communication) typically displayed when experiencing various emotions and situations</p>	<p>I. Key findings from studies one and two related to coaches emotional abilities.</p> <p>II. Mayer and Salovey's (1997)</p>	<p>I. Didactic</p> <p>II. Group discussion</p> <p>III. Experiential</p>

emotional ability development.

- a) Defining emotional awareness.
- b) Relating emotional awareness to coaching.
- c) Emotional awareness development.

### III. Emotional Understanding

- a) Defining emotional understanding.
- b) Relating emotional understanding to coaching.
- c) Emotional understanding development.

### IV. Emotional management

- a) Defining emotional management.
- b) Relating emotional management to coaching.
- c) Emotional management development.

that elicit specific emotional responses.  
b) Paying attention to emotions - Coaches practice consciously attending to physiological states to label emotions.

### II. Emotional Understanding activities

a) Causes and consequences – coach-athlete role play where coaches act out emotionally-laden scenarios and discuss the causes and consequences of the emotional responses displayed.

### III. Emotional management activities

a) Forward thinking – Coaches identify and plan responses to possible ‘what if’ situations that may elicit specific emotional responses.

V. Competition routines – Coaches develop a competition routine which is discussed in relation to enhancing coaching consistency during competitions.

ability model of emotional intelligence.

may be interested in taking part in the study. Two coaches made contact with the principal investigator demonstrating interest in being involved and a meeting was arranged to discuss the study purpose and content of the workshops in more detail. At this point it was made clear that the workshops being delivered were part of a larger coach development programme and the purpose of the pilot study was to gain feedback on the perceived effectiveness of the programme and identify possible areas of programme development. After the initial meeting, both coaches agreed to take part in the study. The two workshops were scheduled to take place, with a four week period between the scheduled workshops.

After gaining coaches initial agreement to take part in the pilot study, informed consent was gained from both coaches prior to the delivery of the first workshop. At this time-point both coaches also completed the demographic information questionnaire. The principal investigator with previous experience delivering psycho-educational workshops delivered both workshops. One week after the completion of the second workshop both coaches attended a post-test data collection session and were asked to complete the social validation questionnaire in order to provide feedback pertaining to their involvement in the workshops.

### **5.3.4 Measures**

#### **5.3.4.1 Demographic Information**

Before the pilot study each coach was required to complete a demographic information questionnaire. Questions assessed coaches' age, gender, primary sport, number of years coaching, highest coaching qualification, current level of coaching (e.g., recreational, club, regional, and international), number of hours spent coaching per week, and competitive involvement in sport.

#### **5.3.4.2 Social Validation**

The Social Validation Questionnaire (SVQ) used within this study was designed based on recommendations for collecting social validation data (cf. Wolf, 1978). Specifically, the SVQ consisted of eight open ended questions focused on the following four areas: the social significance of the goal (e.g., Do you think your participation in these workshops was of value to you as a coach?), the social appropriateness of the procedures (e.g., Did you find the content useful and informative?), the social importance of the effects (e.g., Do you think taking part in the workshops has changed your coaching in any way?), and future development of the programme (e.g., Do you have any suggestions for how the workshops could be developed?). The social validation data obtained resulted in 3 single-spaced pages of type written responses.

#### **5.3.5 Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2006) were undertaken to interpret the social validation data. Specifically, 20 individual statements were extracted from the text of the SVQs. Each statement was then inductively analysed by the principal investigator where any similarities in individual data extracts were grouped together based on like ideas to form lower-order themes. The lower-order themes were then deductively grouped together under the four main areas of the SVQ. To enhance trustworthiness of the data, a critical friend received a copy of the individual statements and placement into themes. Collaboration between the principal investigator and critical friend then continued until consensus on the placement of all statements had been established.

## **5.4 Phase One: Results**

### **5.4.1 Social Validation**

Given the primary aim of the pilot study was to evaluate the perceived value of delivering an EAD programme to sports coaches it was anticipated that social validation data would provide insight into coaches' satisfaction with the programme while also highlighting potential areas for programme development. Overall, the social validation data indicated that the coaches were highly satisfied with the delivery of the programme and experienced perceived benefits through their involvement. In addition, several implications were identified for the development of more effective EAD programmes for sports coaches. Specifically, 11 themes (i.e., lower-order themes) were generated from coaches' individual evaluations of the programme and have been presented under the four main areas of the SVQ (i.e., higher-order themes) (see Figure 5.1).

#### **5.4.1.1 Coaches' Evaluation of the Significance of the Intervention Goal**

Both coaches believed that the EAD programme was of value to them as coaches. Specifically, two themes emerged related to a) enhanced knowledge and understanding and, b) applied value. Both coaches indicated that their involvement in the workshops helped to broaden their knowledge and understanding of emotions and how they relate to coaching practice and coaching effectiveness, as Coach 1 stated, "I have gained more knowledge on how psychology and emotions relate to my coaching and learnt different strategies that I can use to improve myself and how I can support my athletes better". In addition, Coach 2 detailed:

Emotions are huge in sport and they can have a massive effect on how athletes perform but also how coaches perform too. I think it's really important that coaches learn how to



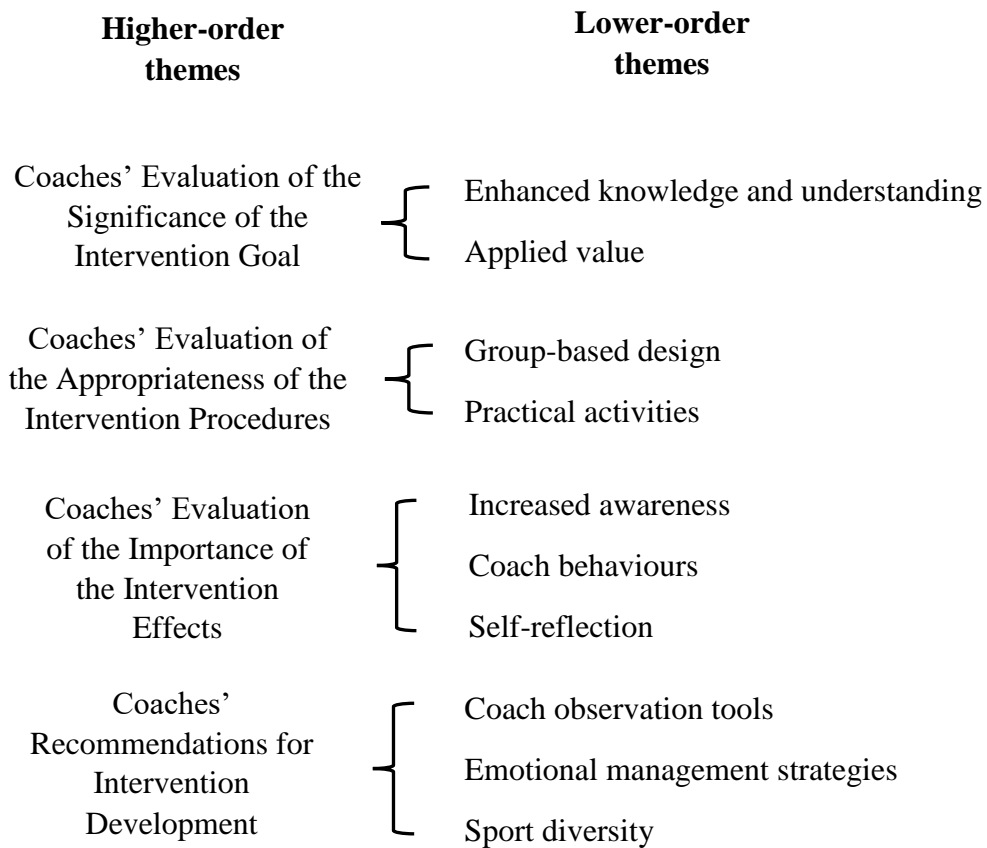


Figure 5.1: Pathway level coaches' evaluation of the Emotional Ability Development programme (pilot study)

manage their own emotions and can recognise how their emotions are affecting them and how they work with their athletes. These sessions have really helped me to become more aware of that.

Both coaches referred to the applied value of the programme. Specifically, Coach 1 highlighted how the programme had helped him identify potential areas of development “The workshops have helped me to identify some of my strengths and weaknesses and I’ve identified some aspects of my coaching that I can change to help me become a better coach”. Coach 2 commented on how his involvement in the programme had helped him to work through some current coaching issues, as stated:

Having the opportunity to talk about emotions is really important in coaching... These sessions have helped me with a couple of issues I have at the moment. I’m now trying to use a different approach with one of my athletes in training which I don’t think I would have done if I hadn’t attended the sessions.

#### **5.4.1.2 Coaches’ Evaluation of the Appropriateness of the Intervention Procedure**

Both coaches highlighted their satisfaction with the design and delivery of the programme which was encapsulated in two themes a) group-based design, and b) practical activities. Both coaches indicated that the group-based design of the programme encouraged an effective learning environment. The informal approach of the workshops with facilitated discussions was perceived to help coaches relate the content of the workshops to their own coaching practice, as Coach 2 noted:

I liked that [principal investigator] didn’t just read off the presentation and the sessions were engaging and pretty laid back. We had a lot of time to talk about our own

experiences and get some advice which was helpful. Having those discussions really helped me to think about how I can improve my own coaching.

In addition, coach 1 stated:

I really liked that the workshops didn't just involve talking about theory and there was a lot of opportunity to talk about my own coaching. Being able to talk about that and get advice from others was really useful.

The practical activities involved in the second workshop were perceived to have useful applied implications for the coaches. For example, Coach 1 believed that having the opportunity to think through possible coach-athlete scenarios helped him prepare for situations that he may encounter within his own coaching practice.

I liked having the various scenarios to work through. Thinking about different situations and how they may affect athletes in different ways was really helpful. It helped me to link what was being said to working with my own athletes. It's helped me feel more confident about being able to support my athletes' individual needs.

In addition, Coach 2 highlighted how the activities centered on emotional awareness development had influenced his coaching practice:

I found the behaviours activity helpful, it really made me think about what I do in different situations and how I react to things and how that may come across to other people. I now try and be more aware of that when I'm coaching and I'm more conscious of my behaviours and my body language and how that comes across to my athletes.

### 5.4.1.3 Coaches' Evaluation of the Importance of the Intervention Effects

Both coaches indicated that their involvement in the workshops had positively influenced their coaching practice in various ways. Three themes were identified a) increased awareness, b) coach behaviours, and, c) self-reflection. In relation to increased awareness, Coach 1 indicated how his conscious attempts to be more aware of his athletes and their individual needs influenced his coaching practice:

I really try to pay more attention to my athletes and to how they are responding to different situations but also how they are responding to me. I think that's helped me pick up on things quicker and so I know if there is anything that I need to do or need to change. It's created a more positive relationship because I'm responding more to what my athletes need.

Coach 1 also referred to improvements in his own self-awareness, as stated, "It [programme] made me think about some of things that I do and how that comes across to my athletes. I think it's made me become more self-aware". Both coaches also highlighted how their involvement in the programme had positively influenced their coaching behaviours. For example, Coach 2 expressed how his conscious attempts to think more positively had influenced his interactions with his athletes:

I think it's very useful to learn about emotions and understand more about how they can impact you. I definitely try and think more positively now... It's changed the way that I work with some of my athletes. The athlete that I talked about during the sessions that I have been having issues with, I use to go into training thinking that he was going to annoy me and that affected my emotions. I felt grumpy going into training which then

showed in my behaviour, I was deflated and not very energetic. I now try and go into those sessions with a more positive outlook, I know that it's just a clash in personalities so I don't take it personally anymore. I've tried to change my coaching style so that I can help him more.

Additionally, Coach 2 believed that he was better equipped to handle certain situations more effectively after his involvement in the programme:

I've learnt to not let things get to me and get easily annoyed and frustrated. Being able to work through some of the issues I am having at the moment has really helped with that and I feel more confident that I will be able to handle certain situations better.

In relation to self-reflection, Coach 1 indicated that the programme had encouraged him to become more reflective, reflecting more on his own coaching practice and how he interacts with his athletes:

I haven't really spent much time thinking about my own psychology, I've spent time looking into how I can use mental skills with my athletes but never really thought about it for myself. I think this [programme] has made me reflect more and I now think about my own actions in a different way, I've realised that I can influence my athletes more than I thought I could and being more aware of that is going to help me become a better coach.

#### **5.4.1.4 Coaches' Recommendations for Intervention Development**

Both coaches highlighted various implications in relation to how the overall effectiveness of the programme could be enhanced. Specifically, four themes emerged, a) coach observation tools, b) emotional management strategies, c) sport diversity, and, d) practical activities. When highlighting areas for programme development, Coach 2 discussed the potential benefit of

utilising video footage as an observational and personal reflection tool. Having the opportunity to observe other coaches practice while also being able to observe one's own practice was suggested as a means to further facilitate learning and development:

I think with my sport it's a little different because athletes can't really see me while they are competing but it definitely applies at the end of the competition when I talk to the athletes or in between events. How I approach that is really important, if they have won or if they have lost. I think watching videos of other coaches or maybe having videos of my own coaching that I can watch back would be really helpful. I think that would help me to see what I do well and what I could work on.

In addition, Coach 1 emphasised the need for additional emotional management strategies to be incorporated into the programme. Specifically, having a range of strategies that could be utilised in response to emotional situations was suggested in order to enhance the overall effectiveness of the programme.

I found the emotional management strategies helpful so I think more strategies to cope/respond to emotional situations would be good...Looking into positive self-talk and things like that. I know personally that's something I can struggle with and I tend to be a bit negative and self-critical so learning how to deal with that would be helpful for me. I think we tell athletes how important it is to think positively but I don't really do that enough myself, so that's something I would like to improve on.

Both coaches discussed the perceived benefit of interacting with other coaches outside of their own sport. It was believed that the programme may be more effective if a variety of coaches

from different backgrounds were involved as it may facilitate “new ideas and a different way of thinking”. Coach 2 highlighted:

I think it’s helpful to hear from coaches from other sports too. They’ve had different experiences and might see things from a different perspective so that can be helpful. I think having a good mix is important, also looking at team sports and individual sports. I think you will learn more that way rather than just hearing from coaches that coach the same sport as you.

As previously mentioned, both coaches made reference to the importance of the interactive nature of the programme. While highlighting the perceived benefit of open discussion and the opportunity to interact with other coaches, both coaches made the suggestion that more practical activities incorporated into the programme would further facilitate learning. The inclusion of more practical-based activities was suggested to help enhance engagement into the programme while also allowing coaches to explore aspects of their own coaching practice, as Coach 1 stated:

Maybe more of the practical stuff would be helpful. I learn through doing rather than just sitting and listening. Going through the characteristics of an effective coach and then relating that to my own coaching was helpful so more stuff like that.

## **5.5 Phase One: Discussion**

The purpose of this pilot study was to evaluate the application and effectiveness of an EAD programme specifically designed for sports coaches. Overall, the findings demonstrated no clear visual changes in coaches’ MSCEIT scores at post-test when compared to pre-test scores. However, the social validation data provided support for the value and perceived effectiveness of the programme. Specifically, findings indicated that coaches experienced positive changes in

their coaching practice as a result of being involved in the programme. That is, enhanced awareness, positive changes in coaches' behaviours, and enhanced self-reflection, were all highlighted as beneficial outcomes of the programme.

In relation to the MSCEIT data, it is believed that the short timeframe of the intervention and the restricted amount of content delivered in the workshops may partially explain why no changes in coaches' MSCEIT scores were observed at the post-test phase. For instance, the post-test data was collected one week after the delivery of the second workshop, which primarily focused on emotional ability development. Therefore, the limited time available for coaches to reflect on the workshop and implement aspects of the programme into their own coaching practice may have affected the results. Although speculative, it is anticipated that a full-scale EAD programme that provides more detailed content and is conducted over a longer period of time may be more likely to facilitate changes in coaches' MSCEIT scores. The inclusion of the MSCEIT in this pilot study enabled the appropriateness of the measure to be evaluated. That is, the coaches involved in the pilot study, indicated that they were able to fully understand and respond to the questions involved in the test. Such findings offer confidence in the appropriateness of the MSCEIT for future EAD intervention-based research.

Despite this result, the social validation data indicated that the intervention was perceived to lead to improvements in coaches own coaching practice. Specifically, one of the coaches indicated that his enhanced self-awareness and awareness of his athletes had positively impacted his coach-athlete relationships. Previous research has indicated that the quality of the coach-athlete relationship is instrumental to athlete performance success and well-being (e.g., Jowett, 2003; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003), with recent suggestions contending that the coach-athlete relationship lies at the heart of coaching effectiveness (cf. Jowett, 2017). In addition, one coach



involved in this pilot study, referred to an increase in confidence in his own ability after his participation in the programme. Coaching efficacy (i.e., confidence in a particular situation) has been related to athlete outcomes with research demonstrating that coaching efficacy can influence athlete performance and satisfaction (e.g., Feltz et al., 1999). The findings of the pilot study indicate that EAD programmes may facilitate positive changes in key factors associated with coaching practice. Thus, further interventions of this nature should look to examine additional factors that may be influenced. That is, based on the findings of this pilot study, investigating possible changes in coach-athlete relationships and coaches' confidence may provide a more comprehensive insight into the effectiveness of EAD programmes for sport coaches.

Although the use of single-case research designs have been supported for novel intervention-based studies in the sports psychology literature (e.g., Barker, McCarthy, Jones, & Moran, 2011; Slack, Maynard, Butt, & Olusoga, 2015), the group-based design of the present study was perceived to be of value to the coaches involved. Specifically, findings indicated that the interactive nature of the workshops provided a learning environment that supported coach development. The notion that coach learning is enhanced through interaction has been supported in a number of studies. For example, Gould, Giannani, Krane, and Hodge (1990) found that U.S sports coaches primary means of knowledge development was through experience and interaction with other coaches. Findings of the present study offer support for previous coach education research that has demonstrated the importance of networking and active learning in coach development (e.g., Nash & Sproule, 2009; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2013). In addition, the perceived effectiveness of group-based interventions has been demonstrated in previous sport

psychology research aimed at enhancing coach development (e.g., Olusoga, Maynard, Butt, & Hays, 2014).

As highlighted by Nelson, Cushion and Potrac (2013), coaches themselves often have limited input into the design and delivery of the courses that they attend. Mccullick, Belcher and Schempp (2005) have suggested that consulting coaches about the implementation of coach education may help to ensure that provision better serves the development needs of coaches. In light of this, the present study aimed to explore coaches' perceived satisfaction with the EAD programme while also attempting to gain insight into how these coaches believed their learning might have been better enhanced. It is recognised that the suggestions made by these coaches cannot be considered generalisable to all coaches but it is hoped that the findings from this pilot study will enhance the design and delivery of future intervention programmes.

### **5.5.1 Limitations**

The two main limitations of this study are reflected in the small sample size and the absence of follow-up assessments. Firstly, taking into consideration the small sample size of coaches' involved in the pilot study, the meaningfulness of the findings should be viewed with caution. Specifically, the main intention of this study was to gain a preliminary insight into the potential benefits of delivering an EAD programme to sports coaches while identifying possible areas for programme development. Therefore, future research is required to gain more comprehensive understandings into the effectiveness of such programmes. Secondly, due to the lack of follow-up assessments, retention effects were not assessed. Follow-up assessments can not only provide information on any lasting effects of a programme but can also provide insight into any further changes observed over time, thus, enabling longitudinal effects of the

programme to be evaluated. Therefore, future research evaluating EAD programmes should incorporate follow-up assessments into the design of the study.

### **5.5.2 Applied Implications**

The findings obtained within this pilot study provide several implications for sport psychology consultants to consider when designing and developing EAD programmes for sports coaches. Firstly, the design of such programmes should foster an interactive coach-centered approach that enables coaches to discuss personal experiences and relevant issues. It is likely that such an approach will support coach learning and development by enabling coaches to relate the content of the workshops to their own coaching practice. Furthermore, coach learning and development may be enhanced if such programmes promote sport diversity where coaches are able to interact with coaches from various sporting backgrounds.

Sport psychology consultants should also consider using a variety of practical-based activities to enhance engagement into the programme and coach learning (e.g., role-plays, scenarios, video analysis). The findings of the present study highlighted the potential benefit of utilising coach observation as a learning tool. Specifically, enabling coaches to observe their own coaching practice through visual feedback or having the opportunity to observe other coaches in action was considered important to promoting coach learning and development.

### **5.5.3 Concluding Remarks**

In conclusion, the findings from this pilot study have provided an encouraging insight into the perceived effectiveness of an EAD programme designed for sports coaches. Specifically, both coaches involved in the study believed that the programme was of value to their personal coach development and positively influenced their coaching practice in various ways. However,

there were several implications identified to further support the development of the programme.

In overview, coaches highlighted:

- The need for more emotional management strategies to be incorporated into the delivery of the programme.
- The need for various tools that enable coach observation and reflection.
- The need for group-based workshops that embrace sport diversity.
- The need for practical activities that enable coaches to explore aspects of their own coaching practice.

Overall, the information gained within this pilot study has provided a solid foundation for initiating future research in an effort to develop more robust EAD programmes, for sports coaches.

## **5.6 Phase Two: Study Purpose**

The primary purpose of the full-scale intervention study was to use the information gained from elite sports coaches (i.e., studies one and two) and pathway level coaches (i.e., pilot study), to design, deliver, and evaluate an emotional ability development (EAD) programme aimed at enhancing pathway level coaches' emotional abilities. A secondary aim of the present study was to evaluate the effects of an EAD programme on additional possible outcomes. Specifically, taking into consideration findings from study two and the pilot study, various positive outcomes related to coaches use of their emotional abilities (e.g., influence on athlete, coach-athlete relationships, coach confidence) were used to inform the selection of measures adopted within the present study. Thus, changes in coaches' emotional intelligence, coach efficacy, coach-athlete relationships, and athletes' perceptions of coach behaviours were

assessed. It was anticipated that conducting this research would develop knowledge and understanding of emotional ability-based training and potential factors influenced as a result. It was hypothesised that coaches would show an increase in EI scores after receiving the EAD programme. Secondly, it was hypothesised that coaches would show positive changes in their coach efficacy and coach-athlete relationship and athletes would rate their coaches' behaviours more positively after coaches' involvement in the EAD programme.

## **5.7 Phase Two: Method**

### **5.7.1 Participants**

With institutional ethics approval (see appendix C), purposive sampling (Patton, 2002) was used to recruit participants for the study. In total, 6 coaches (4 male, 2 female), aged between 39 and 56 years ( $M_{\text{years}} = 50$ ,  $SD = 7.3$ ) agreed to participate. The 6 coaches recruited in the present study had not participated in the small-scale pilot study. Coaches had between 5 and 35 years coaching experience ( $M_{\text{years}} = 21.5$ ,  $SD = 11.6$ ), and represented three different sports (i.e., archery, netball, and triathlon). Inclusion criteria required coaches to hold a National Governing Body (NGB) level 2 coaching qualification (minimum) and have coached athletes in their respective sports for a minimum of 2 years. All coaches had participated in their respective sports before/during their coaching careers for between 2 and 31 years ( $M_{\text{years}} = 16.5$ ,  $SD = 9.5$ ). Initially, 9 coaches were recruited and started the EAD programme, however, due to coaching commitments and unforeseen circumstances, 3 coaches' failed to complete the full programme and thus, were removed from the investigation.

### **5.7.2 Intervention Design**

The full-scale intervention study adopted an experimental pre-test, post-test, with retention follow-up design (see Figure 5.2 for study design process). The 6 coaches involved in the study participated in a series of workshops designed to develop coaches' emotional abilities. Table 5.2 provides a summary of the EAD programme including the aims of each workshop, the content delivered and practical activities completed within each workshop (for a detailed overview of the workshops delivered and supporting materials used in the workshops please see appendix G). The coaches participated in 5 informal and interactive workshops (approximately 1.5hrs each) over a 10-week period. In brief, the programme aimed to build coaches awareness of how emotions can influence coaching practice and coaching effectiveness, enhance coaches' abilities to recognise, understand and manage emotions both within themselves and others (i.e., their athletes), while also taking into consideration key moderating factors (i.e., coaches knowledge, beliefs, and past experiences) that can influence the use of such abilities in practice. The full-scale intervention programme was largely informed by the findings of studies one and two related to coaches' emotional abilities. In addition, the findings from study two regarding the moderating factors and positive outcomes related to coaches' emotional abilities also informed the development of the intervention programme. Specifically, the moderating factors were delivered as part of the workshop content whereas the positive outcomes were used as measures to evaluate the effect of the intervention.

### **5.7.3 Intervention Procedures**

In order to recruit coaches for the study an initial email advertisement was sent to multiple sports organisations detailing the nature of the study. Several of the organisations contacted then disseminated this information to coaches from their respective sports and coaches

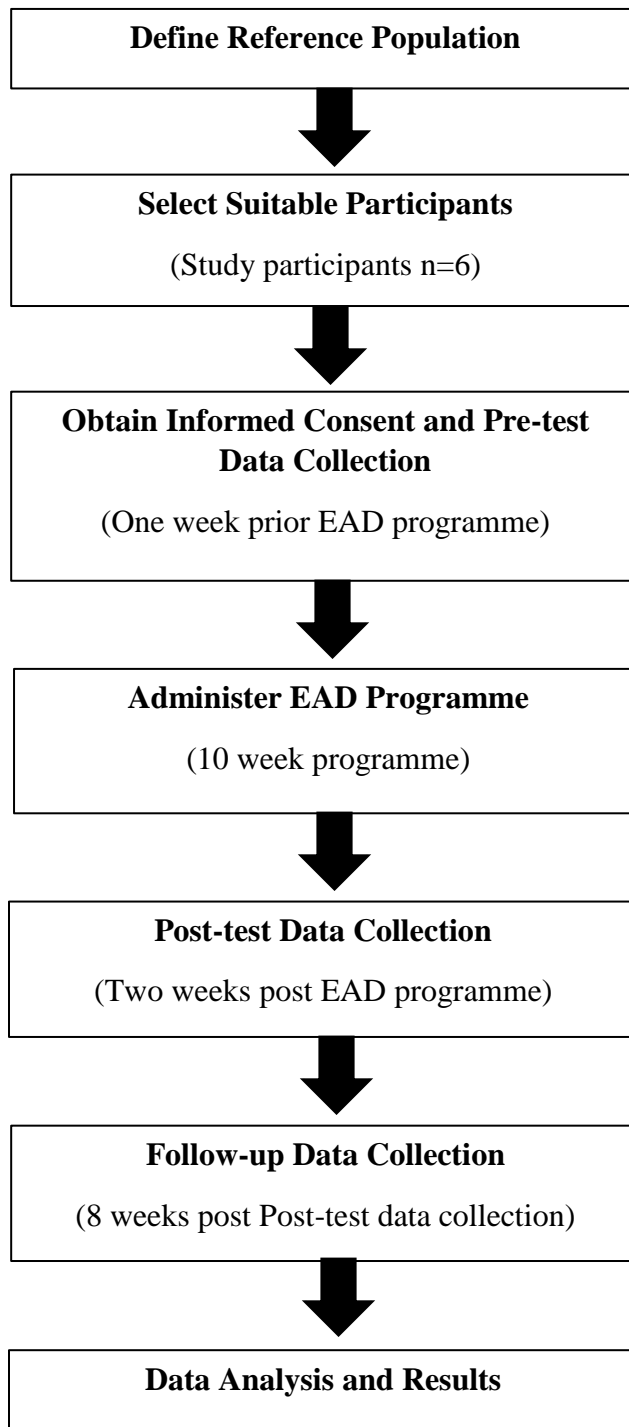


Figure 5.2: Overview of study design process (full-scale intervention)

Table 5.2: A summary of the Emotional Ability Development (EAD) programme (full-scale intervention)

Workshop Theme	Aims of the Workshop	Content of the Workshop	Activities involved in the workshop	Source of the Content	Delivery Approach
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<p>I. Increase knowledge and understanding of the psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness at the elite level.</p> <p>II. Provide introduction into the role of coaches' emotional abilities and introduce the concept of emotional intelligence.</p> <p>III. Increase awareness and understanding of how emotions relate to coaching practice and perceived coaching effectiveness.</p> <p>IV. Encourage coaches to consider how emotions can influence coaching practice and perceived coaching effectiveness through observation and reflection.</p>	<p>I. Psychological Attributes a) Open discussion on psychological attributes underpinning coaching. b) Overview of study one findings and introduction into coaches' emotional abilities.</p> <p>II. Emotional Intelligence a) Open discussion on emotional intelligence. b) Definition of emotional intelligence. c) Relating emotional intelligence to coaching.</p> <p>III. What are emotions? a) Open discussion on definition of emotion. b) Identifying the components of emotions.</p> <p>IV. Emotions and coaching a) Open discussion on how emotions can influence coaching practice and perceived coaching effectiveness.</p>	<p>I. Knowledge of emotions – Coaches define a list of emotions and provide examples of when they have experienced that emotion when coaching. Coaches then discuss why the experience was perceived to be either positive or negative.</p> <p>II. Emotions and coaching – Coaches write down examples of how emotions can influence coaching from past experiences and discuss as a group.</p> <p>III. Observation task – Coaches were asked to observe another coaches practice (real life observation or video observation) and reflect on their observed behaviours and emotional displays. To be completed before the next scheduled workshop.</p>	<p>I. Key findings from study one related to coaches psychological attributes.</p> <p>II. Mayer and Salovey's (1997) ability model of emotional intelligence.</p>	<p>a) Didactic b) Group discussion</p>



## 2. Intra- and Interpersonal knowledge

I. Increase awareness of factors that can influence coaches' emotional abilities and coaching practice.

II. Increase awareness of coaches' own beliefs and values and how they relate to coaches' emotional abilities and coaching practice.

III. Increase awareness of coaches' personality characteristics and how they relate to coaches' emotional abilities and coaching practice.

VI. Increase awareness of athletes' personality characteristics and individual differences.

V. Encourage coaches to implement aspects of the workshop into their coaching practice by creating individualised objectives.

I. Knowledge domains  
a) Types of knowledge.  
b) Performance drivers.

II. Beliefs and Values  
a) Open discussion on beliefs and values.  
b) Definition of beliefs and values.  
c) Understanding how beliefs and values influence coaching.  
d) Understanding athletes' beliefs and values.

III. Personality characteristics  
a) Open discussion on personality.  
b) Definition of personality.  
c) Relating personality to coaching practice.  
d) Understanding athletes' personalities.

I. Coaching values – Coaches identify core coaching values and discuss how such values influence their coaching practice.

II. Characteristics of an effective coach - Coaches write down their beliefs on the characteristics of an effective coach and discuss how such beliefs may influence their coaching practice.

III. Personality – Coaches complete an online personality test and then reflect on how their personality characteristics can influence their coaching practice.

IV. Personality – Coaches identify their athletes' dominant personality characteristics and discuss how this inter-personal knowledge can be used to facilitate their coaching practice.

V. Coaching objectives - Coaches write down two objectives they plan to implement into their coaching practice and develop an action plan on how to achieve the objective before the next scheduled workshop.

I. Key findings from study two related to moderating factors that influence coaches' emotional abilities.

a) Didactic  
b) Group discussion

### 3. Emotional Awareness

I. Increase knowledge and understanding of emotional awareness and how it relates to coaching practice and perceived coaching effectiveness by encouraging coaches to reflect on their own experiences.

II. To increase awareness of how coaches can identify their own emotions and provide strategies coaches can use to develop their emotional awareness skills.

III. To increase awareness of how coaches can identify their athletes' emotions and provide strategies coaches can use to develop their ability to identify athletes' emotions.

IV. Encourage coaches to implement aspects of the workshop into their coaching practice by creating individualised objectives.

I. What is emotional awareness  
a) Open discussion on definition of emotional awareness.  
b) Relating emotional awareness to coaching.

II. Enhancing Emotional Awareness (self)  
a) Introduction into emotional awareness development strategies.

III. Enhancing Emotional Awareness (others)  
a) Sources of emotional information.  
b) Introduction into emotional awareness development strategies.

I. Emotional awareness (self)  
a) Paying attention to emotions -Coaches practice consciously attending to physiological states to label emotions.  
b) Behavioural tendencies - Coaches identify behaviours (e.g., body language, actions, communication) typically displayed when experiencing various emotions and situations that elicit specific emotional responses.

II. Emotional awareness (others)  
a) Observation – In pairs, one coach acts out a specific emotion while the other coach describes and labels the emotion being displayed.  
b) Recognising triggers – Coaches identify situations that can elicit emotional responses in their athletes and plan how to respond/prevent such emotional responses.  
c) Communication – In pairs, coaches use role play to practice utilising communication techniques to identify and understand athletes' emotional responses.

III. Coach objectives – Coaches write down two objectives they

I. Key findings from studies one and two related to emotional awareness.

a) Didactic  
b) Group discussion  
c) Experiential

#### 4. Emotional Understanding and Emotional Management

I. Increase awareness and understanding of what it means to understand emotion and how it relates to coaching practice and perceived coaching effectiveness.

II. Introduce strategies to enhance emotional understanding.

III. Increase awareness and understanding of emotional management and how it relates to coaching practice.

IV. Introduce strategies to enhance coaches' abilities to manage their own emotions.

V. Encourage coaches to implement aspects of the workshop into their coaching practice by creating individualised objectives.

I. What is emotional understanding  
a) Open discussion on definition of emotional understanding.  
b) Relating emotional understanding to coaching.

II. Knowledge of emotions  
a) Enhance knowledge of the similarities and differences between emotions and the complexity of emotions.

III. Enhancing Emotional Understanding  
a) Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions.  
b) Understanding the relationship between emotions, thoughts, and behaviours.

IV. What is emotional management  
a) Open discussion on definition of emotional management.

plan to implement into their coaching practice and develop an action plan on how to achieve the objective before the next scheduled workshop.

I. Relationship between emotions – As a group, coaches organise various emotions into groups based on similarities and differences.

II. Causes and consequences - Coach-athlete role play where coaches act out emotionally-laden scenarios and discuss the causes and consequences of the emotional responses displayed.

III. Athlete perspective – Using hypothetical scenarios, coaches consider how their own behaviours can influence athletes emotional and behavioral responses.

IV. Forward thinking - Coaches identify and plan responses to possible 'what if' situations that may elicit specific emotional responses.

V. Preparation – Coaches develop individualised pre-competition routines.

I. Key findings from studies one and two related to emotional understanding and emotional management.  
a) Didactic  
b) Group discussion  
c) Experiential

## 5. Emotional Management

I. Recap on emotional management and explore whether coaches believe they are able to influence the emotional responses of their athletes by encouraging coaches to reflect on their own experiences.

II. Introduce strategies to enhance coaches' abilities to influence athletes' emotions.

III. To provide an overview of the programme with the opportunity for coaches to ask questions.

- b) Types of emotional management.
- c) Relating emotional management to coaching.

### V. Enhancing Emotional Management (self)

- a) Introduction into emotional management strategies.
- b) Forward thinking.
- c) Preparation.
- d) Positive self-talk.
- e) Refocus routines.

### I. What is emotional management

- a) Recap.
- b) Emotional management in others.

### II. Enhancing Emotional Management (others)

- a) Introduction into emotional management strategies.
- b) Creating an emotionally supportive environment.
- c) Sticking to routine.
- d) Situation reappraisal.

### III. Programme overview

- a) Review of programme.
- b) Group reflection.

VI. Positive self-talk – Coaches practice a three stage process to counter negative thoughts.

VII. Coach objectives – Coaches write down two objectives they plan to implement into their coaching practice and develop an action plan on how to achieve the objective before the next scheduled workshop.

I. Creating an emotionally supportive environment – Coaches identify behaviours/actions that can facilitate an emotionally supportive environment for athletes.

II. Competition routines – Coaches develop a competition routine which is discussed in relation to enhancing coaching consistency during competitions.

III. Situation reappraisal – Use of athlete scenarios to allow coaches to practice how they can help an athlete to reappraise a situation.

Key findings from studies one and two related to emotional management.

- a) Didactic
- b) Group discussion
- c) Experiential

IV. Emotional reflection –  
Coaches reflect on an  
emotionally-laden previous  
experience by considering the  
three emotional abilities (i.e.,  
emotional awareness, emotional  
understanding, emotional  
management).

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interested in taking part in the study made contact with the principal investigator. After initial contact, all coaches were provided with more information relating to the study and the proposed dates and times of the workshops. After having gained coaches initial approval to be involved, a data collection session was held with all coaches where the principle investigator responded to any questions and informed consent was gained. All coaches then completed the pre-test measures and were supplied with additional questionnaires to be completed by their athletes. The five workshops were scheduled to take place on a bi-weekly basis over a 10-week period. The principle investigator, with previous experience delivering psycho-educational workshops to sports coaches delivered all workshops. After the completion of the workshops, a second data collection session took place two weeks post intervention where all coaches completed the post-test measures. At this point all coaches completed a Social Validation Questionnaire (SVQ) to give their individual thoughts of the programme and 4 coaches took part in a social validation focus group interview in order to gain a more in-depth insight into their experiences on the programme. A follow-up data collection phase then took place 8-weeks after the post-test data collection session. At this time point, all coaches received the relevant information to complete the measures, via email. All data was obtained within the following two-week period.

### **5.7.3.1 Intervention Fidelity**

Fidelity is regarded as an important aspect of designing and implementing intervention-based studies (e.g., Murphy & Gutman, 2012) and refers to “the methodological strategies used to monitor and enhance the reliability and validity of behavioural interventions” (Bellg et al., 2004, p. 443). Thus, in order to enhance the fidelity of the present intervention programme, several fidelity strategies were implemented before, during and after the delivery of the EAD programme. Specifically, the fidelity strategies applied within the present study were informed

by Bellg and colleagues (2004) practical recommendations on how to enhance fidelity when conducting intervention-based research. In one respect, it is essential to consider the competence with which the intervention programme is delivered. In this case, competence refers to the skills and abilities of the intervention provider (i.e., the principle researcher) that enable them to deliver the programme as intended. Thus, for the present study, strategies were implemented in attempts to assess and enhance the competence of the intervention provider. Firstly, the intervention provider delivered an EAD workshop to a group of sports coaches under the observation of a member of the research team with a sport psychology practitioner accreditation (Health Care Professions Council). This was done before the implementation of the pilot study, to assess whether the intervention provider was competent in delivering the workshop material and also provided the opportunity to receive feedback. Secondly, the pilot study workshops were video recorded so that the footage could be used as a self-reflective tool to monitor and assess the intervention provider's competency. The video footage was also used to identify possible areas of development that may enhance the delivery of the intervention. Strategies were also put in place to enhance consistency in the delivery of the intervention. For instance, the principle researcher delivered all workshops and all participants were required to attend the same workshops to ensure all participants experienced the same delivery of the programme.

#### **5.7.4 Measures**

##### **5.7.4.1 Demographic Information.**

Before the intervention each participant was required to complete a demographic information questionnaire. Questions assessed coaches' age, gender, primary sport, number of years coaching, highest coaching qualification, and the number of hours spent coaching per week. The questionnaire also inquired about whether participants had participated in their

respective sports as athletes and number of years participating (see Table 5.3 for coach demographic information).

#### **5.7.4.2 Emotional Intelligence (EI)**

To measure coaches EI the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT 2.0: Mayer & Salovey, 2002) was administered. The MSCEIT is a performance-based measure comprised of 141-items that assess four different "branches" of EI (i.e., perceive, use, understand and manage emotions). The test yields seven scores: one for total EI, one for each of the four branches of EI, and two area scores. The two area scores are termed experiential EI (branches one and two combined) and reasoning EI (branches three and four combined). The MSCEIT was scored using a general consensus method meaning each respondent's scores were evaluated against a criterion of correctness formed by a sample of the general public (n=5,000), and were also tested against norm scores for age and gender. Internal consistency of the MSCEIT has been reported with full-test split half reliabilities of .93 and .91 for consensus and expert scoring, respectively (Mayer et al., 2003), and three-week test-retest reliability is reported at .86 (Brackett & Mayer, 2003). The test publisher does not permit reproduction of test items.

#### **5.7.4.3 Coach Efficacy**

The Coaching Efficacy Scale (CES: Feltz et al., 1999) was used in the present study to measure coaching efficacy. The CES consists of 24-items in which coaches are asked to assess the degree of confidence they have in their ability to affect the learning and performance of their athletes. The CES is composed of four sub-sections, including, motivation efficacy (7-items: e.g., maintain confidence in your athletes), game strategy (7-items: e.g., make critical decisions during competition), character building (4-items: e.g., adjust your game strategy to fit your teams



Table 5.3: Demographic information for the pathway level coaches involved in EAD programme (full-scale intervention)

<b>Coach Identification</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Primary Sport</b>	<b>Years Coaching Experience</b>	<b>Highest Coaching Qualification</b>	<b>Hours spent Coaching Per Week</b>
<b>Coach A</b>	56	Male	Archery	35	Level 3	6
<b>Coach B</b>	56	Male	Archery	5	Level 2	12
<b>Coach C</b>	56	Male	Archery	30	Level 2	10
<b>Coach D</b>	39	Male	Archery	15	Level 2	15
<b>Coach E</b>	44	Female	Triathlon	15	Level 3	30
<b>Coach F</b>	49	Female	Netball	29	Level 2	8

talent), and teaching technique efficacy (6 items: e.g., demonstrate the skills of your sport), where items are recorded on a 10-point Likert scale ranging from *not at all confident* (0) to *extremely confident* (9). This measure has been supported by confirmatory factor analysis and has been shown to be internally reliable. Feltz and colleagues (1999) reported coefficient alphas of .88, .89, .91, and .88 for character building, technique, motivation, and strategy, respectively.

#### **5.7.4.4 Coach-athlete Relationship**

The 11-item Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q: Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) was used to measure coaches direct perceptions of the quality of the coach-athlete relationship. The CART-Q measures perceptions of closeness (4 items: e.g., I like my athlete), commitment (3 items: e.g., I feel committed to my athlete), and complementarity (4 items: e.g., When I coach my athlete I am ready to do my best) on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7). There is empirical evidence and conceptual rationale to support the adequacy and appropriateness of the CART-Q in relation to convergent validity and internal consistency (see Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004 for full review). For instance, Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004) reported convergent validity values of .61 for the commitment factor, .66 for the closeness factor, and .67 for the complementarity factor. In addition, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the CART-Q subscales were reported as, .82, .87, and .88, for commitment, closeness, and complementarity, respectively. The alpha for the higher-order Coach-Athlete Relationship scale was .93.

#### **5.7.4.5 Athletes' Perceived Coach Behaviours**

The Coaching Behaviour Questionnaire (CBQ: Kenow & Williams, 1992) was used to assess athlete's perceptions and evaluations of their coach's behaviours. The CBQ consists of 28

items (21 actual items and 7 non-coaching fillers) where responses are measured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (4). Positively worded items (e.g., criticism from my coach is done in a constructive manner) were reversed scored so that higher total scores reflected a more negative evaluation of the coach's behaviours. In analysing the factor structure of the CBQ, Williams and colleagues (2003) provided support for a 2-factor model suggesting the CBQ measures two different aspects of coaching behaviour (i.e., negative activation and supportiveness/emotional composure). The author's reported cronbach's alpha of .82 and .83 for negative activation and supportiveness/emotional composure, respectively, providing psychometric evidence for the integrity of the measure. This two-factor model was therefore used for the purpose of data analysis in the present study.

#### **5.7.4.6 Social Validation**

The use of social validation as a tool to determine the satisfaction with an intervention is important in intervention studies because it is alleged to tie the intervention effects to the social context and subjectively assess socially important outcomes (Storey & Horner, 1991). To obtain social validation information in the present study, two methods were employed. Firstly, each coach was asked to individually complete a Social Validation Questionnaire (SVQ) at the end of the post-test data collection session. Secondly, 4 coaches in the EAD group took part in a social validation focus group. Details of both methods are below.

In line with recommendations for collecting social validation data (cf. Wolf 1978), the SVQ questions focused on the following four main areas: the social significance of the goal (e.g., Do you think your participation in the workshops was of value to you as a coach?), the social appropriateness of the procedures (e.g., Did you find the content useful and informative?), the social importance of the effects (e.g., Do you think taking part has changed your coaching

practice in any way?), and future development of the programme (e.g., Do you have any suggestions for how the workshop could be developed). In completing the SVQ, participants were required to answer each question on a 3-point Likert scale (where appropriate) ranging from (1) *no*, (2) *somewhat*, (3) *yes*, with the opportunity to provide an open-ended response to each question.

To conduct the focus group interview, a semi-structured interview guide was developed, based on the same four main areas as the SVQ. The focus group was conducted in order to gain a more in-depth understanding into coaches' experiences, attitudes and perceptions of the intervention programme. Before the focus group began the principle investigator explained the purpose of the interview and the nature of the focus group. Specifically, it was explained that any questions asked would be directed to the group as a whole and all coaches were free to contribute to discussion at any point. It was made clear that the interview was being audio-recorded and all coaches were informed that they could withdraw from the interview at any point. At this point the coaches were encouraged to engage with one another in discussion rather than addressing the principle investigator directly (Kitzinger, 1994). During the focus group the principle investigator acted as a moderator in order to facilitate discussion between the coaches. Specifically, lead questions were asked such as "Do you think your involvement in the workshops has changed your coaching in any way?" and further elaboration questions were used based on group discussion, such as, "what differences have you noticed in your behaviour?" The focus group interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and was transcribed verbatim resulting in 5 single-spaced pages of text. Please see appendix D for all data collection documents (e.g., questionnaires, semi-structured interview guide).

## **5.7.5 Data Analysis**

### **5.7.5.1 Quantitative Analysis**

A repeated measures design was adopted in order to analyse the quantitative data. The Independent Variable (IV) was the time of measurement (i.e., pre-test, post-test, and, follow-up) and the Dependent Variables (DVs) were the scores on the relevant outcome measures (i.e., MSCEIT, CES, CART-Q, and, CBQ). Non-parametric tests were deemed most appropriate to analyse the data for two main reasons: to reduce the likelihood of type I error due to the small sample size and high number of dependent variables and; the data were at the ordinal level. Therefore, the Friedman test was employed to compare the pre-test, post-test and follow-up scores on each of the measures and related subscales. Statistical levels were set at  $p < 0.05$ . Post hoc analysis with Wilcoxon Signed-rank tests were conducted when significant differences were found to make pairwise comparisons. All quantitative data was analysed using the computer software programme IBM SPSS Statistics.

### **5.7.5.2 Qualitative Analysis**

Thematic analysis procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2006) were undertaken to interpret the social validation data. In relation to the SVQ, 27 individual statements were extracted from the text and inductively analysed by the principle investigator, and raw data responses were grouped together based on similarity to form lower-order themes. When analysing the data from the social validation focus group interview, the principle investigator read and reread the interview transcript before undergoing a process of initial open coding where data was analysed on a line-by-line basis. Raw data responses were organised into patterns of like ideas and then grouped together based on similarity. The analysed data from both the SVQ and focus group interview

transcript were then grouped together based on similarities to form preliminary themes. After the generation of preliminary themes, a process of analyst triangulation was implemented where an additional researcher received a copy of the interview transcript, the SVQ statements and the raw data extracts organised into preliminary themes. This researcher read through the transcripts and made suggestions for the placement of raw data into themes. Collaboration between the two researchers regarding the placement of data into themes continued until consensus was reached. Coaches' responses are presented using descriptive quotes to show the views of the participants.

## **5.8 Phase Two: Results**

The results from the data analysis process are presented in two sections. The first section presents the findings from the quantitative data analysis reporting the pre-test, post-test, and follow-up, median scores and standard errors for all measures (see Table 5.4). The second section presents the findings from the qualitative data analysis, which is comprised of the social validation data from the SVQ, and focus group interview, in which coaches discussed their perceptions of the programme.

### **5.8.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data**

#### **5.8.1.1 Emotional Intelligence**

Coaches' median scores for total EI showed an increase at post-test (Mdn = 96.6, SE = 3.8) and follow-up (Mdn = 99.1, SE = 3.2) in comparison to pre-test (Mdn = 94.2, SE = 4.6). However, the Friedman test revealed no significant difference between timeframes ( $\chi^2(2) = 3.000, p = 0.252$ ). Coaches' median scores on the subscales of perceiving emotions, understanding emotions, managing emotions all showed increases at both post-test and follow-up compared to pre-test. However, the Friedman test revealed no statistically significant differences

Table 5.4: Pre-test, post-test, and follow-up medians and standard errors for each of the measures and related subscales

Measure	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Follow-up	
	Mdn	SE	Mdn	SE	Mdn	SE
<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>						
Total EI	94.2	4.6	96.6	3.8	99.1	3.2
Perceiving Emotions	97.8	4.4	103.1	11	103.6	10.8
Using Emotions	100.9	5.9	100.3	2.9	103.2	3.2
Understanding Emotions	93.3	2.4	97.7	4.5	102.8	3.5
Managing Emotions	89.6	2.5	93.1	4.2	95.4	1.9
Experiential Area	99.4	6.3	105.4	4.4	104.9	5
Reasoning Area	89.6	2.7	91.4	4.4	93.2	2.4
<b>Coach Efficacy</b>						
Total CE	7.6	0.4	8.0	0.2	8.2	0.2
Motivation	7.3	0.5	8.1	0.3	8.0	0.2
Strategy	7.3	0.5	7.6	0.3	7.9	0.4
Technique	7.8	0.4	8.3	0.3	8.3	0.2
Character Building	7.6	0.4	8.9	0.3		
<b>Coach-Athlete Relationship</b>						
Total CAR	6.1	0.2	6.8	0.2	6.9	0.2
Closeness	6.1	0.2	6.8	0.2	7.0	0.2
Commitment	6.0	0.3	6.8	0.2	6.7	0.2
Complementarity	6.1	0.2	6.8	0.2	6.9	0.2
<b>Perceived Coach Behaviour</b>						
Supportiveness/Emotional composure	1.5	0.1	1.1	0.1	-	-
Negative Activation	1.9	0.1	1.1	0.1	-	-

*Note.* Coach Efficacy 10-point Likert scale; Coach Athlete Relationship 7-point Likert scale; Perceived Coach Behaviour 4-point Likert scale

between the timeframes (perceiving emotions  $\chi^2(2) = 4.957$ ,  $p = 0.093$ ; using emotions  $\chi^2(2) = 0.333$ ,  $p = 0.956$ ; understanding emotions  $\chi^2(2) = 1.333$ ,  $p = 0.570$ ; managing emotions  $\chi^2(2) = 1.652$ ,  $p = 0.524$ ). In addition, both ability area scores showed increase at post-test and follow-up compared to pre-test, however no statistically significant differences were observed between the timeframes (experiential area score  $\chi^2(2) = 2.333$ ,  $p = 0.430$ ; reasoning area score  $\chi^2(2) = 1.333$ ,  $p = 0.570$ ).

### **5.8.1.2 Coach Efficacy**

Coaches demonstrated an increase in median total CE scores at post-test (Mdn = 8.0, SE = 0.2) and follow-up (Mdn = 8.2, SE = 0.2) when compared to pretest (Mdn = 7.6, SE = 0.4) indicating that coaches perceived themselves to be more confident after the intervention. The Friedman test revealed a significant difference between the timeframes ( $\chi^2(2) = 6.348$ ,  $p = 0.042$ ). Post hoc analysis with Wilcoxon signed-rank tests was conducted with a Bonferroni correction applied, resulting in a significance level set at  $<0.017$ . Wilcoxon signed-rank tests revealed no significant difference in total coach efficacy score between pre-test and post-test  $z = -1.153$ ,  $p = 0.313$  (two-tailed) or post-test and follow-up  $z = -0.674$ ,  $p = 0.625$  (two-tailed). However, a significant difference was found between pre-test and follow-up  $z = -2.207$ ,  $p = 0.016$  (one-tailed). In relation to the subscales, increases in median scores were found in all four subscales at both post-test and follow-up in comparison to pre-test. However, Friedman tests revealed no significant difference between the timeframes on any of the subscales (motivation  $\chi^2(2) = 4.333$ ,  $p = 0.142$ ; strategy  $\chi^2(2) = 3.600$ ,  $p = 0.191$ ; technique  $\chi^2(2) = 2.800$ ,  $p = 0.367$ ; character building  $\chi^2(2) = 2.000$ ,  $p = 0.528$ ).



### 5.8.1.3 Coach-athlete Relationship

Coaches demonstrated a median increase in total CART-Q scores at post-test (Mdn = 6.8, SE = 0.2) and follow-up (Mdn = 6.9, SE = 0.2) when compared to pre-test (Mdn = 6.1, SE = 0.2), indicating that coaches perceived their coach-athlete relationship to be more positive after the intervention. The Friedman test revealed a significant difference between the timeframes ( $\chi^2(2) = 9.294$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ). Post hoc analysis with Wilcoxon signed-rank tests was conducted with a Bonferroni correction applied, resulting in a significance level set at  $<0.017$ . There were no significant differences found between pre-test and post-test  $z = -2.023$ ,  $p = 0.031$  (one-tailed), pre-test and follow-up  $z = -2.032$ ,  $p = 0.031$  (one-tailed), or post-test and follow-up  $z = -1.342$ ,  $p = 0.250$  (one-tailed). In relation to the subscales, median score increases were observed in all three subscales at post-test and follow-up when compared to pre-test. Friedman test revealed significant differences between the timeframes on all three subscales (closeness  $\chi^2(2) = 6.118$ ,  $p = 0.049$ ; commitment  $\chi^2(2) = 9.294$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ; complementarity  $\chi^2(2) = 7.600$ ,  $p = 0.025$ ). However, Wilcoxon signed rank tests with a Bonferroni correction revealed no significant differences for any of the pairwise comparisons.

### 5.8.1.4 Athletes' Perceived Coach Behaviours

As follow-up data was not collected for the CBQ Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were used to analyse the data. Athletes' responses on the CBQ demonstrated median decreases in scores at post-test when compared to pre-test for both supportiveness/emotional composure (pre-test Mdn = 1.5, SE = 0.1; post-test Mdn = 1.1, SE = 0.1), and, negative activation (pre-test Mdn = 1.9, SE = 0.1; post-test Mdn = 1.1, SE = 0.1). Such results indicated that the athletes had more positive evaluations of their coaches' behaviours after the intervention. Wilcoxon Signed-rank tests revealed the observed decreases in scores between pre-test and post-test to be significantly

different for both supportiveness/emotional composure  $z = -2.214$ ,  $p = 0.016$  (one-tailed), and negative activation  $z = -2.214$ ,  $p = 0.016$  (one-tailed).

## **5.8.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data**

### **5.8.2.1 Social Validation**

Due to the small sample included in the study and the novel approach of an EAD programme designed for sports coaches, it was intended that social validation data would provide insight into coaches' satisfaction with and perceived effectiveness of the intervention. In general, the social validation data suggested, that overall, coaches were highly satisfied with the intervention programme and experienced perceived benefits through their involvement. Specifically, ten themes (i.e., lower-order themes) were generated from the raw data (i.e., SVQ and focus group), which encapsulated the coaches' individual evaluations of the programme. The themes have been presented under the four main areas of the social validation questions (i.e., higher-order themes) (see Figure 5.3).

#### **5.8.2.1.1 Coaches' Evaluation of the Significance of the Intervention Goal**

All coaches believed that having the opportunity to learn about emotions and develop key emotional abilities was of value to them as sports coaches ( $M = 2.8$ ). Specifically, two themes were generated related to the significance of the goal; (a) emotions as a topic, and (b) supporting athlete performance and development. Three coaches highlighted the importance of having the opportunity to learn about emotions as a topic and develop emotional skills, as one coach stated, "It is an important subject and quite useful to learn how to deal with emotions both in myself and in my athletes". In addition, several coaches believed that it was important for them to be

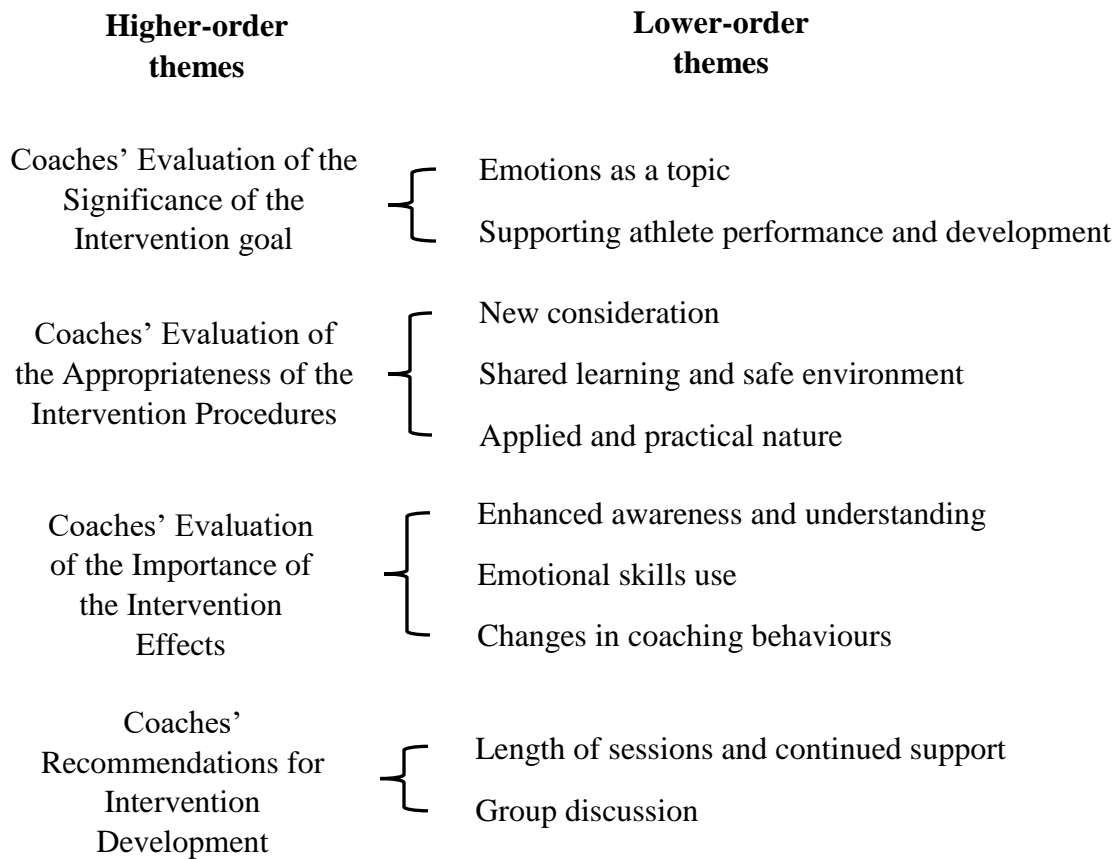


Figure 5.3: Pathway level coaches' evaluation of the Emotional Ability Development programme (full-scale intervention)

'emotionally intelligent' in both learning and competition situations in order to support and enhance athlete performance and development. Specifically, one coach stated:

Essentially the athletes have to deal with and implement their emotions in order to be able to perform at their best. We're their right hand men, or women. We have to do exactly the same to ensure that we do everything that we can to make sure that they can perform at their best.

A second coach highlighted the importance of being able to understand and manage emotions from a team perspective:

Girls are definitely emotional creatures, and in a team it's not just like one player in an individual sport. So therefore it is very important for me to understand that, and understand myself how different things affect them [athletes] emotionally and what I can do to deal with that, and how to balance it.

#### **5.8.2.1.2 Coaches' Evaluation of the Appropriateness of the Intervention Procedures**

In general, coaches believed that the content and overall design of the workshops was useful and informative to them ( $M = 2.8$ ). Three themes were generated that described the coaches' evaluation of the workshop programme; (a) new consideration, (b) shared learning and safe environment, and (c) applied and practical nature. Some coaches indicated that the workshops had provided them with new considerations by addressing aspects of psychology and coaching they had not really considered in the past. As one coach stated:

The workshops themselves, yes, absolutely [beneficial]... As an [athlete] I've looked into the mental game and the emotional side inside out and I've basically done everything that I can to try and perform at my best. But as a coach, I've never done that. I've generally

always just kind of winged it... It [workshop programme] gave a lot that hasn't really been considered.

The majority of coaches believed that the interactive nature of the workshops and the ample opportunities to share and discuss thoughts, feelings and experiences and learn from other coaches was an invaluable aspect of the programme, as one coach stated, "I think having the platform to be able to share ideas has been absolutely phenomenal". Having the opportunity to reflect on experiences and gain feedback from others was considered beneficial, "You find yourself on your own and you question yourself often... these sessions are like your thoughts aloud, and I can have these thoughts in here aloud and share them and get feedback so that helps me". The following quote emphasises how one coach in particular found the opportunity to interact with coaches from other sports to be highly beneficial:

And like we've said, having other coaches, because you know, I find this for me has been really good. And I like to share with other coaches and I like to learn about other sports and different aspects of other sports and how that can, or those behaviours translate. All things that I perhaps hadn't thought about come to the floor... I don't think it would have been the same for me if I was here with 6 other [names own sport] coaches. That doesn't really interest me, I want to cross with other sports and see how I can relate.

In addition, several coaches discussed that the programme itself facilitated a safe environment to discuss the emotional aspects of their own coaching practice, as one coach stated "a safe and confidential environment was created where it was safe to do that [discuss own experiences]". One coach emphasised that the programme had created an "emotionally supportive environment", feeling comfortable to share experiences with others, as illustrated in the following quote:

It's created an emotionally supportive environment... You know it's been that kind of safe place that we can actually just kind of sit and talk about stuff... Even just as us, coaches in [names own sport] we've not really discussed it you know, things about behaviours and emotions, well I definitely haven't anyway. I mean I've spoken a lot about some of the things that have happened with my athletes and I've shared things like that I've never shared before, even with these guys [coaching peers]... There's been stuff on trips with [names coach] that I've not shared with him but I'd quite happily do that now. It's just created that safe environment that you can actually just talk about emotions and that kind of stuff.

Coaches also discussed their satisfaction with the applied and practical nature of the workshops highlighting how they were able to relate the content of the workshops to their own coaching practice, as one coach stated, "I was able to use the content and relate this to my coaching. I found it useful to speak to other coaches and [principle investigator] to discuss my own situations and how these might be resolved. I enjoyed learning new things that related to my work". Three coaches also discussed the perceived benefit of having exercises, described as 'homework', to complete between workshops. One coach in particular illustrated how this encouraged his own self-reflection:

We've had a boatload of homework but I mean that kind of suits me because I don't, I'm not one that can just sit here and write while people talk... But what this did, is it's really made me think about myself more, and that's why I loved it. You know, all the homework and I sat there on the train quickly panicking and doing my homework and even then it's making me think a lot more about how I approach things.

A second coach described how the 'homework' material allowed time to reflect on the workshops and digest the information:

I'm always checking my homework, I have found them informative and I think it helps to reread because I think I'm that kind of person... I need to digest it on my own and in my own environment so it's been good to go back and reread and having the leaflets [exercise book] and the information to refer back to and having something I can keep and go back to, so yeah it's really useful.

#### **5.8.2.1.3 Coaches' Evaluation of the Importance of the Intervention Effects**

In general, coaches believed that their participation in the EAD programme had contributed to their personal development ( $M = 2.7$ ) and somewhat changed their coaching practice ( $M = 2$ ). Specifically three themes emerged related to the importance of the effects of the intervention: changes in coaching behaviour, (b) emotional skills use, and (c) enhanced awareness and understanding.

Three coaches indicated that their involvement in the programme had changed and influenced their coaching behaviours in positive ways. One coach indicated that they had made attempts to become more open with their athletes. Specifically, this coach highlighted using more open questions with her athletes and talking about emotions more frequently, as demonstrated in the following quote:

I've practiced trying to use more open questions when I'm coaching, get athletes thoughts on what we are doing and what decisions are being made, how they [athlete] are feeling, you know. I think it's helped me to see things from their side a little better. If I'm more

open and ask questions about how they are feeling then they might feel more comfortable to come and talk to me if there is an issue or if they are struggling with something.

In addition, two coaches discussed how they had made conscious attempts to try and display more positive behaviours in front of their athletes:

I think I'm more aware of how what I'm doing can come across to my athlete. So I've tried to use more positive reinforcement, I think I'm quite reserved in that way so I've tried to be more positive. You know, a thumbs up when they have done something well that kind of thing, making little changes.

It's helped me to see how I need to react or behave. How I react can have a big impact on an athlete and I think I've learnt more about what behaviours are more appropriate in different situations. So I've changed my behaviours to try and have a better impact.

Another coach indicated being more patient with athletes, "I'm more patient, I've become a little bit more understanding. I try and think about things from their point of view [athlete] so I think I'm less quick to react".

Two coaches specifically indicated how their changes in coaching behaviour had resulted in positive consequences in terms of interactions with their athletes, as demonstrated by the following two quotes:

I realise from this [workshop programme], using the illustration of a baby, if a baby falls over and hurts themselves, the parent will either go 'ahh oh no', and they'll cry or the parent will go 'silly boy' and they'll get up. And it's exactly the same as a coach, how I behave will change how they [athlete] behave. And I've been putting this into action... I use to be very protective and very supportive over my athletes, male or female, that's just



the way I approached it... And they were very good athletes but they always needed me, which is very nice in an ego way but it's not productive... I've gradually changed how I approach it, and some of them [athletes] that I've been a lot more sheltering with I've become a lot more kind of blunt and decisive and progressive I would say. And that's worked... now some of the girls that are a lot more quiet and a lot more reserved are actually a lot more open... I can't explain how I've changed it but I've become a lot more approachable for them with certain things that they would never have been able to tell me... So I know it has helped me and changed my coaching.

I have tried different ways of coaching after being on the course and have found athletes have responded to this in positive ways. I don't think I would have been able to find these different ways of doing things without the prompts from being on the course... I've had a massive step forward with [names athlete] at the weekend. I changed my response following a really successful race, more measured and less gushy and he really responded to it. It was brilliant.

Two coaches indicated that their involvement in the programme had not directly changed their coaching behaviours or coaching practice however they believed that they needed more time to reflect and encounter coaching situations, as stated by one coach, "Not yet [changed coaching practice] but I think it will in the future as I have more time to think about it and experience situations".

Several coaches also highlighted how their involvement in the programme had influenced their emotional skills use. Specifically, coaches indicated that their involvement in the programme had enhanced their abilities to recognise, understand and manage emotions both in

themselves and their athletes. For example, one coach discussed how he had become more aware of his own emotions since being involved in the programme:

It's made me think about myself a lot more, I'm a lot more self-aware now in terms of my approach and my emotions and how I do things. Like, if I'm having a bad day I think I'm more aware of how I'm feeling so I try and make sure that doesn't come across to my athletes.

Two coaches discussed the emotional management strategies that they had begun to use in their coaching practice, as demonstrated in the following quotes:

I've learnt coping skills that I can use at key events and tournaments and things like that. I know that's helped me and changed my coaching...I feel like I'm more prepared. I have things that I can put in place that I maybe didn't do before. Thinking about different situations that might happen and planning how to respond them, things like that.

I found the positive thoughts activity useful. I know that I can be quite negative about myself and I have a lot of self-doubt so thinking about how I can be more positive was useful... I've wrote down little phrases as reminders and keep saying them to myself.

In addition, one coach indicated that they felt more able to influence their athletes' emotional responses, as stated, "I think it's more about knowing your athletes individually and what they respond best to and how you can get the most out of them... I try and adapt my style a bit more now".

Finally, the majority of coaches highlighted how their involvement in the programme had resulted in enhanced awareness and understanding. In one respect coaches felt that involvement in the programme had helped them to identify their strengths and weaknesses. For example, one

coach stated, "It has caused me to think hard and look at myself as a coach and person and identify the areas I need to develop". One coach in particular discussed how she had been able to examine her 'inner game of coaching', which was believed to have enhanced her own self-awareness:

I have been able to examine my inner game of coaching and how this influences what I'm trying coach and how I can manipulate it to make sure I am coaching the most effectively. I have examined the kind of coach I am and weaknesses that I would like to develop as well as strengths I have and how I use them effectively in my coaching. I feel I have much more awareness of the coach that I am and how athletes receive this now.

In addition, three coaches indicated that they had become more reflective since being involved on the programme which was perceived to have had a positive influence on their coaching practice, as highlighted in the following quotes:

It's made me sort of more reflective of myself... I'm a very emotional coach and I accept that, I am, that's me. I think being more aware of that and understanding why I get emotional sometimes has helped. I've learnt to not take things too personally and let things get on top of me.

I try and reflect more now after I've coached a session. What emotions did I feel, how did I deal with them, what could I have done differently? I didn't really do that before. I think that's helping me to improve my coaching.

#### **5.8.2.1.4 Coaches' Recommendations for Intervention Development**

Coaches identified two ways in which they believed the overall programme could be developed (a) length of sessions and continued support, and (b) group discussion. In relation to

the length of the sessions, all coaches believed the sessions should be longer in order to allow more time for group discussions, as one coach stated "longer sessions so our discussions don't interfere with our learning". In addition, some coaches advocated the need for continued support for coaches, highlighting the need for reinforcement beyond the duration of the EAD programme, as highlighted by one coach

I mean [names coach] is here and I see her and we often catch each other in the corridor for a quick chat, but it's only sort of very briefly and it's about creating that [support] because I think that's really important. I don't think they realise that here [organisation] and it's that support for coaches. I think that's a key thing to have.

As previously discussed, several coaches discussed their satisfaction with having the opportunity for shared learning. In relation to programme development, one coach highlighted that more opportunity for coaches to discuss their own thoughts could be beneficial to the programme, by providing the example, "we should probably start by saying, 'emotional intelligence, discuss' and just leave us to it for an hour. It may actually work out better if you [principle investigator] did something like that".

## **5.9 Phase Two: Discussion**

Research has demonstrated that, alongside athletes, coaches are also subject to psychological and performance-related demands and benefit from psychological support in terms of their coaching effectiveness and personal well-being (e.g., Olusoga et al., 2014; Thelwell et al., 2008a). The findings from study one and two of this thesis has identified the important role coaches emotional abilities can play in perceived coaching effectiveness. Yet, to date, no studies have investigated the evaluation of an EAD programme specifically designed for sports coaches.

The purpose of the present study was to bridge this gap and outline the design, delivery and evaluation of an EAD programme aimed at developing coaches' key emotional abilities that have been found to underpin perceived coaching effectiveness at the elite level. Overall, the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data provide some promising initial insights into the value of EAD programmes for sports coaches.

Results from the quantitative data suggested that after receiving the EAD programme coaches' showed improved total EI scores at both post-test and follow-up. However, such improvements were not found to be significant. Although significant differences were not observed, the findings of the present study offer some indication that coaches EI continued to increase after the completion of the EAD programme as total EI scores were highest at the completion of the retention phase. It may be the case that the continued increase in EI was related to coaches having more time to reflect on the workshops and implement changes into their own coaching practice which may have supported continued development. Such findings offer some support for Wagstaff et al. (2013) in suggesting that the development of EI and related emotional abilities may require a more longitudinal approach. Thus, future longitudinal research is needed to further evaluate the effects of EAD programmes on coaches EI.

Confidence has been identified as an important psychological attribute required by coaches in previous literature (Olusoga et al., 2012) and study one of this thesis. With this in mind, it was interesting to see that coaches in the present study demonstrated positive trends in enhanced coach efficacy after the intervention programme, with a significant increase found between pre-test and follow-up. It would appear that coaches felt more confident in their ability to influence the learning and development of their athletes several weeks after the completion of the EAD programme. It may be that the aspects of the EAD programme that focused on

enhancing coaches' abilities to recognise and facilitate the management of their athlete's emotions influenced how confident coaches felt about being able to effectively respond to their athletes' needs (cf. Feltz et al., 1999).

The coach-athlete relationship is well recognised as an important interpersonal factor associated with coaching success (e.g., Lyle, 2002). Previous research has suggested that factors such as coaches' emotional characteristics can influence the quality of coach-athlete relationships (e.g., Lafrenière, Jowett, Vallerand, & Carbonneau, 2011). Study two of this thesis highlighted that coaches at the elite level perceived their emotional abilities to positively influence coach-athlete relationships, particularly in relation to building trust and respect. Findings from the present study provide an initial indication that EAD programmes may be useful for supporting the development of quality coach-athlete relationships. Specifically, positive trends from the CART-Q indicated that coaches perceived the quality of their relationship with their athletes to be more positive after the completion of the EAD programme. This was also evident from the social validation data as one coach in particular believed that he had become more approachable for his athletes. Considering the dyadic nature of coach-athlete relationships it is recommended that future research also evaluate athletes' perceptions of the coach-athlete relationship to provide a more complete understanding of how EAD programmes may influence coach-athlete interactions. In relation to athletes' perceptions of their coaches' behaviours, the findings of the present study indicated that athletes perceived their coaches as more supportive and emotional composed after the completion of the EAD programme. As highlighted by Allan and colleagues (2016) the potential for coaches' emotional behaviours to reinforce or alter the emotions of athletes can produce significant consequences for athletes' performance and continued participation in sport. Thus, the positive changes observed in athletes

perceptions of their coaches' behaviours suggests that EAD programmes may affect how athletes perceive and respond to coaches' actions. Such findings indicate that additional subjective observations such as athlete perceptions may be a valuable way to further measure the effectiveness of EAD programmes and should therefore be incorporated into future emotion-related interventions.

In addition, social validation provided an encouraging understanding into coaches' perceived satisfaction with the EAD programme. Ultimately, it was apparent that coaches believed that workshops aimed at improving their emotional abilities and skills were of value to them and their personal development as coaches. In an investigation exploring coaches' views of how the provision of coach education can better facilitate coach learning and development, Nelson, Cushion and Potrac (2013) reported that, in one respect, coaches viewed effective education, as having relevance to coaches' needs. Specifically, coaches indicated that beneficial coach education should enable the identification and improvement of coaches' weaknesses. Based on the qualitative feedback gained from the present study it would appear that this was achieved. That is, several coaches emphasised that their involvement in the EAD programme helped them to recognise both personal strengths and weaknesses and develop action plans, which could be implemented into their coaching practice. This undoubtedly contributed to the perceived success of the programme. In line with previous research (e.g., Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2013; Olusoga et al., 2014) it was also evident that coaches benefited from the group-based design of the intervention. The opportunity for shared learning and emotional reflection was perceived to contribute towards coaches' development. In addition, several coaches reported that as the workshops were informal in nature and specifically focused on emotions coaches felt more comfortable and able to discuss their own emotional experiences. These findings support

calls for more expansive views of the practices of reflection that move beyond pencil and paper activities (Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013). Specifically, findings of the present study suggested that the organised group-based discussions helped to encourage and facilitate emotional reflection between the coaches which was perceived to be a beneficial aspect of the programme.

### **5.9.1 Strengths and Limitations**

A strength of the present study relates to the performance-based instrument used to measure coaches EI (i.e., MSCEIT 2.0). Rather than applying self-report instruments that are commonly used in sport psychology research (e.g., Lane, Thelwell, Lowther, & Devonport, 2009; Thelwell et al., 2008) data obtained within the present study is less likely to be subject to social desirability bias and thus enhances the internal validity of the findings. However, it should be noted that the MSCEIT is not a sport specific measure, which could have impacted upon the findings from the present study. It has been advocated that individuals may question the relevance of certain test items included in the measure (Groves et al., 2008). For instance, a proportion of the questions focus on identifying various degrees of emotion conveyed by landscape. Within the present study, one coach in particular expressed his difficulties in interpreting the value of the questions in relation to his coaching practice. Thus, suggesting a more sport specific measure may have yielded more accurate results.

It is important to note that the findings obtained in the present study do need to be interpreted within its limitations. Firstly, the most significant limitations relate to the small sample size used within the study and the lack of a control group which pose threats to the validity of the findings. The small sample size and lack of a control group was reflected in the inherent challenges faced when conducting research in a real-world setting. Specifically, it proved very difficult to recruit coaches to an intervention programme that took place over several



weeks. It should be noted that it is not uncommon for small sample sizes to be adopted in exploratory experimental studies within sport psychology (e.g., Olusoga et al., 2014). Even with a small sample, the findings of the present study provide some promising initial results for the value of providing EAD programmes for sports coaches. However, the lack of a control group means that the results obtained should be interpreted with a degree of caution. For instance, it is possible that the changes observed in coaches emotional abilities and additional factors measured may have occurred naturally over the time of the intervention. Thus, there is no way to ensure that any observed changes were solely the result of the intervention.

### **5.9.2 Future Research and Applied Implications**

In contention with the limitations outlined above, future research is warranted to conduct similar intervention-based studies with larger sample sizes that also includes the use of a control group. To help mitigate for the difficulties faced in recruiting participants to take part in a prolonged intervention programme future research may wish to alter the mode of delivery for the intervention. Specifically, designing a programme that involves a combination of both group-based and individual sessions may be more suitable for coaches. One suggestion would be to create a virtual learning environment where coaches can complete aspects of the taught programme in their own time without the need for direct contact. Online discussion forums can also be used to allow communication between coaches themselves and the programme lead outside of any group-based sessions. In addition, future longitudinal research is required to further investigate the retention effects of EAD programmes on coaches EI and other factors that may be influenced as a result (e.g., coach efficacy, coach-athlete relationships). Investigating the effects of providing ongoing support to coaches after the completion of an EAD programme is also warranted.

In addition, future research should consider the measures used to analyse the effectiveness of the intervention. Although social validation indicated that coaches made positive changes to their behaviours and a positive significant difference was found in athletes' perceptions of coaches' supportiveness/emotional composure and negative activation after completing the EAD programme, no actual coaching behaviours were observed or assessed. Thus, observational methods for examining the specific emotions associated with coach behaviours could be used to further evaluate the effectiveness of EAD programmes. In developing the Assessment of Coach Emotions instrument (ACE), Allen and colleagues (2016) advocate that the ACE could be a useful observational tool in the design, implementation and evaluation of emotion-targeted coach interventions and thus may be a useful tool for evaluating EAD programmes in future. In addition, athletes involved in the present study provided general perceptions of their coaches' behaviours that were not context specific (e.g., training environment, competition environment). The use of context specific measures may provide a more detailed evaluation of how EAD programmes influence athletes' perceptions of their coaches' behaviours.

In the present study the coaches themselves emphasised the need for continued support and reinforcement after the completion of the intervention. Thus, it is important for sport psychology practitioners to consider how they can best ensure that the EAD concepts and processes are continually reinforced. A potential suggestion may be for the practitioner to set up an online discussion forum at the beginning of the programme in which coaches can access throughout and beyond the completion of the programme. This discussion forum could then be used as a useful tool for the practitioner to provide coaches with additional supporting material that may strengthen the application of emotional ability use into coaching practice. In addition,

although the group-based workshops were perceived as beneficial in supporting coaches' development further one-to-one sessions that allow for coaches to discuss their own needs in more depth and provides a more individualised evaluation of coaches' own emotional abilities and skills could be a valuable addition to the programme. Indeed, a difficulty for sport psychology practitioners relates to designing and implementing EAD programmes that suit the needs and practical constraints of coaches themselves.

### **5.9.3 Concluding Remarks**

In summary, the present study has increased knowledge and understanding into the potential benefits of providing EAD programmes to sports coaches. Broadly, results indicated (i.e., median scores observed) that the EAD programme improved coaches overall EI, however, significant changes were not demonstrated. Findings also provide an initial indication that coaches' involvement in an EAD programme can positively influence additional important factors such as coaches' coach efficacy, coach-athlete relationships, and, athletes perceptions of their coach's behaviours. Social validation suggested that the EAD programme was of value to the coaches involved. In short, coaches believed that the intervention programme topic was relevant to their coaching practice, provided new considerations, prompted positive changes in coaches' behaviours, and increased coaches' use of emotional skills. Collectively, findings demonstrate that there is potential value for researchers, practitioners and current coach education to begin applying and evaluating emotional ability-based development programmes for sports coaches. The findings of the present study have provided a valuable initial foundation for future research to further develop robust EAD programmes specific to the sports coaching context.

# Chapter VI

## *Summary, Discussion, and Conclusions*

### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter VI of this thesis comprises of three sections. Firstly, the summary section provides an overview of the overall purpose of this thesis and details the key findings identified from the three studies contained within the thesis. Secondly, the discussion section details the theoretical and applied implications, the strengths and limitations of the thesis as a whole, and recommendations for future research. Finally, the last section outlines the overall conclusions of the thesis.

### **6.2 Summary**

The performance excellence literature in the sport domain has received considerable interest. With much of this research focused on athletes there is now a comprehensive understanding of factors underpinning elite athletic performance and development (e.g., Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002; MacNamara, Button, & Collins, 2010). In attempts to advance the performance excellence literature, research has moved beyond investigating athletes and has examined other sporting performers, such as, coaches (e.g., Carter & Bloom, 2009) and sports officials (e.g., Slack et al., 2013). In particular, much attention has been directed toward understanding coaching practice given the integral role coaches play in athlete performance and development (e.g., Côté et al., 2010; Horn, 2008). Accordingly, the sports coaching literature has identified a variety of factors that contribute to coaching expertise and effectiveness. Consequently, the lack of a shared conceptual understanding makes it difficult to define coaching expertise and coaching effectiveness. However, despite such conceptual issues a number of

factors have been identified in the sports coaching literature that are suggested to influence coaching effectiveness.

Traditionally, a large body of this research has been dedicated to investigating coach behaviour (e.g., Becker & Wrissberg, 2008; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Horton, Baker, & Deakin, 2005). However, more recent trends have attempted to move beyond simple descriptive accounts by exploring factors that can influence coaches' behaviours (Gilbert & Rangeon, 2011). For example, attention had been directed toward understanding coaches' knowledge (e.g., Carter & Bloom, 2009; Jones et al., 2003), coaches' expectancies (e.g., Solomon & Buscombe, 2012), coaching efficacy (e.g., Feltz et al., 1999), and coaches' personal characteristics (e.g., Bloom & Salmela, 2000), to better capture the complex nature of coaching practice. Although such research has contributed to our understanding of factors underpinning coaching expertise and effectiveness, little consideration has been directed toward identifying and understanding coaches' psychological attributes. Yet, Olusoga and colleagues (2012) propose that it is vital to explore the psychological factors influencing coaching at the elite level for the education, personal, and professional development of coaches. In addition, it has been highlighted that while previous research has tended to focus on examining factors attributed to athletic success (e.g., Gould et al., 2002) it is far less clear what factors elite coaches themselves attribute to their own success (e.g., Currie & Oats-Wilding, 2012). Therefore, the central purpose of this thesis was to explore, in-depth, the psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness at the elite level. The qualitative methods (i.e., in-depth interviews) used in studies one and two of this thesis has certainly advanced understandings of elite coaches' psychological attributes and consequently their emotional abilities. In addition, the richness of information gained from the elite sample of coaches investigated, informed the development of a bespoke

emotional ability intervention that has practical implications for coaches themselves and sports psychology practitioners.

### **6.2.1 Study One**

The purpose of study one of this thesis was to explore, in-depth, the psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness at the elite level and factors related to attribute development. Findings highlighted a variety of psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness (e.g., confidence, resilience, focus, attitude, emotional awareness, and emotional management), providing some support for previous coaching research (e.g., Currie & Oats-Wilding, 2012; Olusoga et al., 2012). A unique contribution to the literature was the identification of several attributes related to the emotional nature of coaching. Specifically, coaches highlighted that their ability to accurately perceive, understand and manage emotions both in themselves and their athletes influenced their perceived coaching effectiveness. In addition, findings indicated that coaches' psychological attributes had developed over time through a variety of factors (i.e., experience, education, and conscious self-improvement). In relation to coaches' emotional abilities, several coaches highlighted that their emotional abilities had developed through the later stages of their careers and advocated that the opportunity to engage in emotion-related coach education programmes would have been beneficial in the earlier stages of their careers. Subsequently, the findings enabled a further study to explore the emotional abilities perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness in greater detail.

### **6.2.2 Study Two**

The purpose of study two was to gain a comprehensive understanding into how coaches use their emotional abilities in relation to perceived coaching effectiveness, by interviewing the

same 12 elite level coaches, from study one. The findings presented three higher-order themes demonstrating coaches' emotional abilities (i.e., emotional awareness, emotional understanding, and emotional management), positive outcomes (i.e., psychological well-being, influence on athlete, and coach-athlete relationship) related to the use of such abilities, and, several moderating factors (i.e., coaches' beliefs, coaches' knowledge, and past experiences) that appeared to influence coaches' use of their emotional abilities. Based on the findings of study two, recommendations for the development of coaches' emotional abilities were offered. Taken together with the findings of study one, study two highlighted the need for emotional ability related interventions and provided an initial foundation for the design of an Emotional Ability Development (EAD) intervention for sports coaches.

### **6.2.3 Pilot Study and Study Three**

The purpose of study three was to design, implement and evaluate an EAD programme for sports coaches through conducting a pilot study and full-scale intervention. The purpose of the pilot study was to evaluate the perceived value and practicality of delivering an EAD programme to sports coaches. Specifically, two pathway level coaches took part in two two-hour workshops over a four week period. Results from the qualitative data (i.e., SVQ) indicated that both coaches were satisfied with the delivery of the workshops and experienced perceived benefits through their involvement in the programme. Specifically, coaches reported that the programme was of value to them as coaches, identified positive changes in their coaching practice (e.g., enhanced awareness, changes in coach behaviours) and highlighted their satisfaction with the group-based design of the programme and the practical activities involved throughout. In addition, coaches identified several developmental implications (e.g., coach observation tools, sport diversity) that they believed would enhance the overall effectiveness of

the programme. In overview, this pilot study identified the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention programme and provided a preliminary foundation for conducting future research in an effort to develop more robust EAD programmes for sports coaches. As a result, the information gained within the pilot study contributed to the development of the full-scale EAD programme.

The purpose of study three was to design, deliver and evaluate an EAD programme aimed at enhancing pathway level coaches' emotional abilities and overall EI. A secondary aim of the intervention was to also investigate additional possible outcomes of delivering an EAD programme to sports coaches (i.e., confidence, coach-athlete relationship, perceived coach behaviour). The study employed an experimental pre-test, post-test, with retention follow-up design where 6 coaches participated in a series of 5 workshops. Building on the pilot study, results provided additional support for the effectiveness of the EAD programme for sports coaches. In relation to EI, increases in scores between pre-test, post-test, and follow-up were found in overall EI and the subscales of perceiving emotions, understanding, emotions, and, managing emotions. However, such improvements were not found to be significant. Positive trends were also identified in coaches' perceptions of their coach-athlete relationship, their coach efficacy and athletes' perceptions of their coaches' behaviours. Such findings indicated that coaches experienced various positive outcomes through their involvement in the EAD programme. In addition, the social validation data provided support for the effectiveness of the EAD programme. Specifically, coaches highlighted the importance of learning about emotions as a topic and the important role of coaches' emotional abilities in supporting athlete performance and development. The programme was perceived to stimulate new consideration regarding the role of emotion in sports coaching, while creating a shared learning environment with applied



value. Importantly, several coaches believed that the EAD programme had contributed toward their own personal development, highlighting positive changes in coaches' behaviours, increased emotional skills use and enhanced awareness of self and others.

### **6.3 General Discussion**

Due to the aims of the thesis, this programme of research has generated new knowledge regarding elite coaches' psychological attributes, and in particular, provided new insights into the role of coaches' emotional abilities. In addition, this thesis has helped to bridge the gap between theory and practice in developing a bespoke emotional ability development intervention programme specifically designed for sports coaches. The following section outlines the theoretical and applied implications that have arisen from the research conducted within this thesis. In addition, the major strengths and limitation of the thesis are discussed with considerations made toward potential avenues for future research.

#### **6.3.1 Theoretical Implications**

A large body of research within the sport psychology domain has used elite athlete samples to explore and understand factors that underpin athletic excellence (e.g., Knight et al., 2015; Orlick & Partington, 1988; Vernacchia et al., 2000). One area in particular that has received increasing interest concerns the investigation of psychological attributes that are suggested to underpin performance excellence (e.g., Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002; Greenleaf et al., 2001; MacNumara et al., 2010). Collectively, this line of literature has consistently demonstrated attributes pertinent to successful athletic performance (e.g., confidence, focus, drive, control, motivation, resilience and commitment). With the increasing importance placed on the role of coaches in athlete development and performance, and coaches now considered as

performers in their own right (e.g., Gould et al., 2002; Olusoga et al., 2009; Thelwell et al., 2008a) increased research has been directed towards identifying and understanding the key factors that contribute toward coaching expertise and effectiveness. Yet, unlike the vast athletic literature, investigating elite coaches' psychological attributes has been somewhat scarce. This gap in knowledge was evident from the review of literature, and, thus study one aimed to advance knowledge in this area. The research contained within this thesis has certainly contributed toward our understanding of the psychological attributes that are perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness at the elite level and how such attributes can be developed.

The findings from study one of this thesis identified a variety of psychological attributes that are perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness at the elite level. This lends support to previous research (e.g., Bloom, 2000; Gould et al., 2002; Olusoga et al., 2012) and further highlights the notion that coaches personal characteristics can play an important role in their ability to coach effectively. In support of previous research, findings indicated that coaches' drive for personal development, being athlete-centered, focus and confidence were all essential for coaching effectively at the elite level. In addition, findings indicated that coaches tough attitude, resilience and emotional abilities (i.e., emotional awareness, emotional understanding, and, emotional management) also underpinned their ability to coach effectively. The dominant themes that emerged from the findings of study one centered on coaches' emotional abilities highlighted new findings that extend previous psychological attribute research.

Further, the findings from study one of this thesis suggested that coaches' psychological attributes developed over time through a variety of factors (i.e., education, experience, and, conscious self-improvement). This provides support for the athletic excellence literature that suggests the psychological development of athletes takes place over time and is influenced by a

variety of factors and individuals (e.g., Connaughton et al., 2008; Gould et al., 2002; Pierce et al., 2016). In line with the athletic literature, coaches in the present thesis also identified that their psychological attributes developed over time. More specifically, coaches' reflective practice, observations of self and other coaches, one's own experiences, and, coach mentors were perceived to have influenced the development of their psychological attributes. The identification of such factors provides support for the wider coach learning and development literature (c.f. Cushion et al., 2010) that suggests learning can happen through a variety of means.

For example, findings from study one of this thesis support the valued use of reflective practice in coach learning and development (e.g., Carson, 2008; Cropley, Miles, & Peel, 2012; Cropley, Neil, Wilson, & Faull, 2011; Whitehead, Cropley, Huntley, Miles, Quayle, & Knowles, 2016). Specifically, findings from study one highlight that it is important to consider how coaches identify with other coaches (e.g., mentors) when developing their own psychological attributes. Previous research has noted aspects of this, for example, Olusoga and colleagues (2010) reported that elite coaches use the support of other coaches and mentors to cope with stressors. The support of others in coach development has also been noted in relation to reflective practice. For instance, Cropley, Miles and Peel (2012) reported that a shared reflective process was perceived to help coaches consider their actions and behaviours more carefully and help them to better understand their experiences. Consequently, when designing the EAD for study three of this thesis it was important to utilise a group-based intervention that incorporated the use of group and partner work to support coach learning and development.

In addition, coach education courses were perceived to influence coaches' psychological development. One ongoing debate within the literature concerns the benefits of both formal and informal coach education (c.f. Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009). Previous research (e.g.,

Cassidy et al., 2004; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006) has reported that coaches perceived their formal coach education experiences as considerably less significant to their overall development when compared to other means of learning. Nonetheless, while existing formal coach education has largely been viewed rather negatively, researchers have also reported positive evaluations of coaches' formal educational experiences (e.g., Irwin et al., 2004; Lemyre et al., 2007). Findings from this thesis have indicated that coach education courses can be perceived as a beneficial aspect of coach development in relation to the development of coaches' psychological attributes. However, it is important to note that the elite coaches interviewed within this thesis placed particular emphasis on the beneficial nature of education courses that tended to focus on coaches' individual needs in the later stages of their coaching careers. This perhaps highlights a neglect for current formal coach education courses to address coaches' own needs, in the earlier stages of their professional development. Indeed, the findings from this thesis indicated that coaches do develop their psychological attributes over time through experience which supports the need for education programmes that can develop these attributes at earlier stages in coaches' careers (i.e., pathway level/ pre-elite).

A unique contribution to existing literature is that the elite coaches interviewed within studies one and two of this thesis emphasised the importance of the emotional nature of their coaching practice. Specifically, three related emotional abilities were identified that coaches believed significantly influenced their ability to coach effectively (i.e., emotional awareness, emotional understanding, and emotional management). The findings from studies one and two of this thesis indicated that coaches primarily utilised their emotional abilities in attempts to support and respond to the needs of their athletes both in training and competition situations. That is, coaches used their emotional abilities for instrumental purposes in attempts to achieve desired

outcomes (e.g., influence athlete performance, support athlete development). The findings from study two of this thesis identified the key emotional skills and strategies that coaches' utilise within their practice and also highlighted factors that can influence how coaches recognise, process, and attempt to manage emotions in both themselves and their athletes. Thus, such findings identified the need to attend to coaches' emotional abilities in combination with other key factors such as, coaches' knowledge, their beliefs and past experiences in attempts to elicit coach learning and development.

The findings from studies one and two provide some support for previous research where coaches' emotional control has been identified as an important attribute (e.g., Becker, 2009; Gould et al., 2002; Olusoga et al., 2012). For instance, Olusoga and colleagues (2012) presented emotional control as a psychological attribute that influenced Olympic coaches' abilities to coach under pressure at the Olympic Games. Findings from studies one and two of this thesis have also enhanced current knowledge by identifying how coaches are able to perceive and process emotional information as well as identifying specific strategies that coaches use to aid emotional management in themselves and their athletes to help facilitate positive outcomes. It has recently been highlighted (Potrac et al., 2017) that little is known about how coaches manage their own emotions and attempt to influence the emotions of others, Thus, the findings in this thesis have broadened understandings into how coaches attempt to manage their own emotions and influence their athletes' emotional responses.

The emotional abilities identified within studies one and two of this thesis demonstrated similarities and overlap with Mayer and Salovey's (1997) ability model of EI, defined as, "the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotion knowledge;

and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 10). In line with Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) conceptualisation, findings from this thesis also support the view that an individual’s emotional abilities are dynamic and malleable and can be learnt and developed over time. Specifically, it was clear from the findings of study one that the elite coaches interviewed perceived their emotional abilities to have developed throughout the later stages of their careers. Several coaches also expressed their views that emotion as a topic is largely neglected within current coach education programmes and indicated that opportunities to engage in emotion-related programmes would have been beneficial in the earlier stages of their careers. This was somewhat supported in the social validation data obtained from the pathway level coaches involved in study three. Specifically, several coaches emphasised that the emotional ability development programme was beneficial to their personal development as it had provided new considerations by addressing aspects of psychology and coaching that they had not really considered in the past.

As highlighted earlier in this thesis, the construct of EI has received growing interest within the sports domain (e.g., Crombie et al., 2009; Lane et al., 2010; Perlini & Halverson, 2006; Zizzi et al., 2003), with several studies specifically focusing on EI and sports coaching (e.g., Thelwell et al., 2008; Hwang et al., 2013). Previous research has predominately focused on examining the relationship between coaches’ trait EI and other psychological constructs (e.g., coach efficacy, emotional labor) through correlational studies. However, how coaches use their emotional abilities to facilitate perceived effective coaching practice has not yet been explored. Thus, the findings of studies one and two of this thesis have contributed towards understanding the role of emotional abilities in sports coaching. Specifically, the qualitative design of studies one and two and the use of an elite sample of coaches has provided a unique insight into the key

emotional skills and strategies elite coaches use within their practice to facilitate positive outcomes.

Within the broader EI literature, research has investigated differences in EI and emotional abilities as a function of sociodemographic variables, such as, gender, age, ethnicity, and experience (e.g., Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Cabello, Navarro Bravo, Latorre, & Fernández - Berrocal, 2014; Cabello, Sorrel, Fernández-Pinto, Extremera, & Fernández-Berrocal, 2016; Fernández-Berrocal, Cabello, Castillo, & Extremera, 2012). In one respect, research has indicated that women generally have greater ability EI when compared to men (e.g., Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Cabello et al., 2016; Extremera, Fernández-Berrocal, & Salovey, 2006; Palmer, Gignac, Manocha, & Stough, 2005). Although such studies have repeatedly reported that women have superior EI the findings have produced some conflicting results. For example, some studies have indicated that women perform higher on all subscales of ability EI and total ability EI (e.g., Day & Carroll, 2004; Extremera et al., 2006), whereas, other studies have indicated that women perform higher on some subscales of ability EI (e.g., Fernández-Berrocal et al., 2012). In addition, the magnitude of the effect size based on individual studies ranges from small (e.g., Cabello & Fernández-Berrocal, 2015; Day & Carroll, 2005) to medium (e.g., Palmer et al., 2005). However, a meta-analysis of ability EI studies involving 30,077 people, demonstrated higher EI scores for women on all EI subscales and total ability EI with an effect size ranging from .29 to .49 (Joseph & Newman, 2010). Thus, indicating that the available research suggests gender differences in ability EI, as measured by the MSCEIT.

In relation to age, studies investigating how ability EI changes with age have produced mixed results. For example, some studies have reported that older adults perform better on all ability EI subscales (e.g., Extremera et al., 2006), whereas, other studies have found no

significant association between ability EI subscales and age (e.g., Farrelly & Austin, 2007). As highlighted by Cabello and colleagues (2016), such studies have predominately relied on student samples with a narrow age range (average ages below 30 years). Thus, it may be possible that such limited samples have contributed to the divergent findings regarding age and ability EI. In a study using a wider age range (average age 42 years), Cabello and colleagues (2014) reported that age was negatively associated with total ability EI and all EI subscales except managing emotions. More recently, Cabello and colleagues (2016) have suggested that age exerts an inverted-U effect on ability EI. Specifically, findings demonstrated that younger and older adults showed lower scores than middle-aged adults for total ability EI and all four ability EI subscales. Such findings suggest that age affects ability EI throughout the adult life span. However, it should be noted that the influence of age on ability EI was significant but only showed small size effects.

Collectively, the above literature holds important implications for emotional ability-based research conducted with sports coaches. Firstly, although gender differences were not investigated within the present thesis it is likely that female coaches possess superior ability EI when compared to their male counterparts. From an applied perspective, emotional ability development interventions may need to be more individually tailored to help accommodate for gender differences. However, future research is needed to establish whether gender differences in ability EI exist within coaching populations, and if so, the implications this may have for coach education. Secondly, future emotional ability-based research with sports coaches should also consider other sociodemographic variables, such as age and experience. Based on the above literature, it is suggested that emotional ability development interventions may be most beneficial for younger coaches that are in the earlier stages of their coaching careers. This was



supported by findings from study one of this thesis that indicated elite coaches believed their emotional abilities were not as refined in the earlier stages of their coaching careers. However, research examining EI and age is still relatively scarce and thus further research is required to provide a complete picture of how EI changes across the lifespan and the implications this may have for applied practice.

Findings from study two of this thesis have also identified several moderating factors that can influence coaches' use of their emotional abilities (i.e., coaches' beliefs, knowledge, and, past experiences). Although preliminary, this finding is important considering research outside of the sports domain has highlighted the importance of understandings factors that can influence the use of an individual's emotional skills (e.g., Salovey & Grewal, 2005). Specifically, Salovey and Grewel (2005) note that research attention should be directed toward understanding motivational underpinnings that can influence the use of certain emotional skills within particular contexts. In one respect, findings from this thesis indicated that coaches believed emotions were malleable and capable of being changed. Holding such a belief appeared to influence how coaches would process and respond to emotional information. In the wider EI literature, Cabello and Fernández-Berrocal (2015) investigated the relationship between beliefs about emotions and EI (i.e., implicit and explicit beliefs) with ability EI. The findings indicated that individuals who believed they could change their emotions and develop their EI (i.e., implicit beliefs) showed higher ability EI than those who believed such attributes were relatively fixed and difficult to change (i.e., explicit beliefs). Thus, the authors suggested that an individual's implicit beliefs about emotions and EI may influence their emotional abilities. The authors suggested that such findings may have important implications for intervention based research. For instance, it was suggested that EI-based interventions may be complimented by

addressing the malleability of emotions and EI. With such findings in mind, it is possible that individual differences in coaches' beliefs and other identified factors (i.e., coaches' knowledge, past experiences) may influence the use of coaches' emotional abilities and related emotional skills. Such findings provide an area for future research to further explore how various factors such as coaches' beliefs and past experiences can influence how coaches process and respond to different emotions. It is believed that research within this area will further support the growth of robust emotional ability development programmes for sports coaches.

Finally, the information-rich data gathered from studies one and two enabled the development of an emotional ability-based intervention programme based on the perceptions of an elite coach sample. More broadly, intervention based research targeting coaches own psychological development remains scarce in comparison to the athletic literature. To knowledge, no research has attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of an emotional-ability based intervention designed for sports coaches. Thus, the findings contained within this thesis provide an initial foundation for designing such intervention programmes and offers a number of applied implications for sport psychology practitioners to consider in facilitating coach development.

### **6.3.2 Applied Implications**

Collectively, the findings from this thesis have ensued a number of applied implications that may be beneficial for sports organisations and sport psychology practitioners working with coaches. Firstly, providing some support for previous research (e.g., Olusoga et al., 2012), coaches psychological attributes have been found to play an important role in perceived coaching effectiveness. Therefore, it is important for sport psychology practitioners to be fully equipped to recognise and understand how they can tailor their knowledge to suit coaches' own needs. It is suggested that practitioners should reflect on the amount of time spent working with coaches and

how they can better their practice to help fulfill coaches own needs. Based on the findings of study one, it is recommended that specific attention is directed towards key psychological attributes, such as, confidence, focus, attitude, and resilience.

In addition, one of the major recommendations of this thesis is that sport psychology practitioners working with sports coaches should consider the important role of emotion in coaching practice. Specifically, practitioners should aim to address the emotional nature of coaching by helping coaches to further their understanding of how emotions can potentially influence their coaching practice. In support of this, practitioners should aim to develop coaches' emotional awareness skills (e.g., behavioural recognition, recognising triggers, emotional acceptance), emotional understanding skills (e.g., understanding consequences of emotions, understanding the situational relevance of emotions; understanding athlete perspective) and emotional management strategies (e.g., emotional expression, reappraisal, positive reinforcement, feeding-forwards, creating an emotionally supportive environment, emotional reflection, distraction/refocus, situation modification), to help better prepare coaches for the day-to-day realities of their roles. To provide more context for the applied implications of this thesis, the key findings will be discussed in relation to implications for coach practice and coach education.

### **6.3.2.1 Implications for Coach Practice**

The findings contained within this thesis hold several important implications for coach practice. Firstly, the findings highlight the importance of coaches' abilities to attend to the emotional side of their coaching practice. In particular, coaches' abilities to recognise, comprehend and manage emotions are perceived to influence coaching effectiveness. Thus, from a practical perspective, coaches of all levels are encouraged to consider how emotions influence

their coaching practice. It is recommended that coaches engage in self-reflection and work with mentors and sport psychology practitioners to explore coaches' personal abilities to recognise, understand and manage emotions. This may help coaches to become more aware of their strengths but also outline potential areas for development, which if addressed, could enhance coaches' practice.

The social validation data from study three of this thesis (i.e., pilot study and full-scale intervention) indicated that coaches' involvement in an EAD programme had positive effects on coaches own practice. Taking such findings into consideration, it is suggested that attending to coaches emotional abilities may promote the use of more positive behaviours in practice. Specifically, coaches reported being more open with their athletes, displaying more positive behaviours, and being more patient and understanding towards their athletes, after their involvement in the EAD programme. In addition, EAD programmes may enhance coaches' use of various emotional skills in practice. In one respect, coaches reported being more aware when coaching, consciously paying more attention to their own emotions and behaviours as well as their athletes. Some coaches also reported using more emotional management strategies when coaching, to help regulate their own emotions and also influence their athletes' emotional responses. Finally, it is suggested that EAD programmes may enhance coaches' use of reflective practice. That is, several coaches involved in study three indicated that they had become more reflective since their involvement in the EAD programmes, taking more time to analyse themselves in relation to their emotions and behaviours.

Finally, it is suggested that coaches' participation in EAD programmes may promote positive outcomes in practice. For instance, it was evident from the social validation data that coaches perceived their involvement in the EAD programme had positively influenced their

coach-athlete interactions. In addition, quantitative data collected indicated that athletes' perceptions of their coaches' behaviours were significantly more positive after coaches' involvement in the EAD programme. Although speculative, the observed changes in athletes' perceptions of their coaches' behaviours may be reflective of the behavioural changes coaches consciously made when interacting with their athletes.

### **6.3.2.2 Implications for Coach Education**

The findings from this thesis also hold several implications that should be considered in relation to coach education. In support of previous research (e.g., Giges et al. 2004; Olusoga et al. 2014) findings from this thesis emphasise that coach education programmes should attend to the individual needs of coaches themselves. In particular, an important recommendation from this thesis is that careful consideration should be directed toward developing coaches' emotional abilities. Study three of this thesis offered a number of practical implications that can be used to help inform the design and delivery of emotional ability development programmes for sports coaches.

Firstly, group-based workshops that encourage sport diversity are recommended. Findings from study three indicated that EAD programmes should be designed to create an informal learning environment that allows time for coaches to discuss their own personal issues and emotional experiences with others. This coincides with previous research that has suggested coach interaction is an essential aspect of coach learning and development (e.g., Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2013). In addition, it is also important to create an environment where coaches feel comfortable and able to discuss personal emotion-related issues and experiences. One suggestion may be to deliver workshops away from coaches' usual coaching environments to try and promote active participation in the programme.

Secondly, EAD programmes should incorporate a range of practical activities. For example, role play activities, video analysis, and the use of coaching scenarios that allow coaches to relate the subject content to their own coaching practice may enhance the applied value of the programme. As previously stated, EAD programmes should also address key factors that may influence coaches' use of their emotional abilities in practice. Specifically, EAD programmes that aim to develop coaches' intra- and interpersonal knowledge, explore coaches' beliefs and utilise coaches' past experiences as a learning resource may further support coach development. For example, exploring coaches beliefs around coach persona's and appropriate emotional displays while enhancing coaches' knowledge on how they generally respond emotionally to various situations may help to support emotional ability development.

Lastly, a further implication for coach education is to ensure that EAD programmes are designed with coaches' desires and availability in mind. Specifically, programmes that require coaches to attend multiple fixed sessions over an extended period of time may not be practical or convenient for coaches to attend. Therefore, although group-based programmes are recommended, incorporating a balance between group-based and individual sessions may allow for a more flexible and individualised approach. This may help to mitigate against coach drop-out and help to ensure coaches completion of the intended programme.

### **6.3.3 Strengths of the Thesis**

A strength of this thesis was the sample of elite coaches investigated. In particular, the sample of coaches from studies one and two had all coached athletes in their respective sports to medal success at major sporting competitions (i.e., World Championships, Olympic Games). In addition, 10 of the coaches were actively coaching at the elite level at the time of investigation, and thus, reducing potential memory bias limitations often associated with retrospective studies

(Brewer et al., 2011). Gaining in-depth accounts of coaches own perceptions through qualitative methods offered a unique insight into the psychological attributes required to coach at the elite level while also identifying factors related to attribute development. To date, little research attention has been directed towards exploring and understanding elite coaches' psychological attributes and the findings contained within this thesis have certainly contributed to knowledge in this area. A further strength relates to the progressive nature of the studies contained within the thesis emerging from theory to practice. Specifically, the overall purpose of the thesis was to explore the psychological attributes underpinning coaching effectiveness at the elite level. This, in turn, directed the research to focus on coaches' emotional abilities and enabled a comprehensive understanding into how coaches' use of their emotional abilities influences their ability to coach effectively. Subsequently, the information gained from the elite sample of coaches investigated informed the design of a coach development programme specifically tailored to target the development of coaches' emotional abilities. Taken together, it is believed that the studies contained within this thesis have helped bridge the gap between theory and practice and provided a valuable addition to the coach development literature.

In addition, a further strength of this thesis relates to the design of the full-scale intervention programme. The group-based setting of the programme allowed a greater degree of coach interaction that could be gained from a one-to-one consultancy setting. This coach interaction undoubtedly contributed to the success of the programme. Specifically, the social validation data from both the pilot study and full-scale intervention highlighted that coaches believed that having the opportunity to discuss their own issues and hear from other coaches from different sports enhanced their learning and development. Therefore, the findings provide support for the effectiveness of group-based programmes in facilitating coach learning and

development (e.g., Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2013; Olusoga et al., 2014). An additional strength of the programme appeared to be the informal and open nature of the programme, as well as, the delivery of the programme taking place outside of the coaches' own coaching environment. For example, several coaches believed that the programme created a safe and supportive environment in which coaches felt comfortable to openly discuss emotions and share emotional experiences. It appeared that coaches' participation in the EAD intervention programme provoked discussion around a topic that is somewhat neglected in their coaching environment. Interestingly, this coincides with a statement made by one of the elite coaches interviewed in study two where emotion in coaching was described as a "taboo subject" that is rarely discussed and not addressed on coach education programmes.

Finally, the adoption of a focus group for the collection of social validation in addition to individual SVQs is believed to have strengthened the overall evaluation of the EAD programme. This approach was particularly useful in gathering richer data than might not have been gained through the individual SVQs. Specifically, as stated by Harwood, Drew, and Knight (2010), focus groups offer the possibility for collaborative sharing amongst individuals and the stimulation of new perspectives that may be less likely through individual reports. The possibility for collaborative sharing and rich discussion was optimised in the focus group of study three given that the coaches had already formed connections through their involvement in the programme.

#### **6.3.4 Limitations of the Thesis**

As with any research investigation it is important to consider the limitations of the thesis when interpreting the findings presented. Firstly, a limitation of the studies contained within this thesis relates to the diversity of elite coaches used in studies one and two. Although coaches



from various sports were purposely recruited in order to enhance the generalisability of the findings it may be the case that there are sport specific differences (e.g., sport type, individual or team sports, contact or non-contact sports) related to coaches psychological attributes or in relation to the factors perceived to influence attribute development. For example, specific psychological attributes may be more prevalent or necessary for coaches operating in some sports in comparison to others or conversely may be utilised in more sport specific ways. With specific reference to coaches' emotional abilities it is equally possible that the emotional abilities and skills utilised by coaches might be employed in sport specific and athlete specific ways.

A second limitation of the thesis relates to the small sample sizes used in the studies contained within the thesis. In relation to studies one and two, given the elite sample and qualitative method of investigation a small sample size was obtained. It is widely accepted that a small sample limits the generalisability of findings to the wider population (e.g., Thelwell et al., 2008a). However, data collection continued until saturation of the data was reached. Further, the sample size obtained corresponds to that of existing literature adopting qualitative methods to explore sporting expertise (e.g., Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002; Nash & Sproule, 2009; Olusoga et al., 2009; Thelwell et al., 2008a). In addition, given the small sample size used in study three, the meaningfulness of the results should be interpreted with caution. Unfortunately, this limitation was a result of the difficulty experienced when recruiting coaches to take part in the study over a prolonged period of time. Specifically, the specified dates and number of workshops and data collection sessions required for coaches to attend restricted the number of coaches able to take part in the study. Although this poses a limitation to the study, it should be noted that it is not uncommon for small samples to be used in exploratory experimental studies within sport

psychology (e.g., Olusoga et al., 2014). In addition, even with a small sample positive trends were identified in the data that provide a promising foundation for future research in the area.

Finally, it is acknowledged that the lack of a sport specific EI measure may not have provided the most accurate representation of the effectiveness of the programme. The test items included in the MSCEIT have been questioned in relation to their applicability for individuals completing the test (Groves et al., 2008). For example, items that require individuals to identify varying degrees of emotion conveyed by landscape may provoke individuals to question whether developing EI is a relevant endeavor. It is possible that the coaches involved in study three may have perceived the MSCEIT test items to lack relevance and value to their own coaching practice which, ultimately, may have negatively influenced coaches' responses. However, the selection of the MSCEIT as a measurement tool was deemed most appropriate based on the strong psychometric properties that aligned to the ability conceptualisation of EI which has been adopted throughout this thesis. The development of a sport coaching specific performance-based EI measure may further advance research in this area.

Researchers outside of the sport domain have begun to develop domain specific conceptualisations and measures of EI. For instance, within the marketing literature, Kidwell, Hardesty, and Childers (2008a) extended Mayer and Salovey's (1997) ability model of EI to the consumer domain. Specifically, the authors developed a domain-specific ability-based measure of consumer EI (CEIS; Kidwell et al., 2008a) to enable a more thorough examination of the influence of emotional abilities on important consumer issues. Since its development the CEIS has been utilised in a number of studies that have aimed to enhance understandings on the role of consumers' emotional abilities in decision making (e.g., Hasford, Kidwell, & Hardesty, 2018; Kidwell, Hardesty, & Childers, 2008b; Kidwell, Hasford, & Hardesty, 2015). Kidwell and

colleagues (2008a) noted that the development of the CEIS was not intended to replace more general measures of ability EI (e.g., the MSCEIT) but rather serve as a domain-specific instrument that could be used to assess consumer outcomes. In their investigation, the authors demonstrated that the CEIS predicted consumer outcomes (e.g., food choice) better than a domain-general alternative measure (i.e., the MSCEIT). Thus, the development of a sport coaching specific measure may help to provide more accurate assessments of coaches' emotional abilities within coaching contexts.

### **6.3.5 Recommendations for Future Research**

There are several avenues for further research that have been identified in this thesis. Firstly, although this thesis identified several psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness, there is a need for further investigation into this area. For instance, one area of investigation concerns coaches' resilience. Research within the sport domain has predominately focused on exploring and understanding the construct of psychological resilience in relation to athletic performance and development (e.g., Galli & Vealey, 2008; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2014). However, the findings from study one of this thesis demonstrate that elite level coaches possess and utilise their resilient qualities. That is, the coaches involved in the study believed that their ability to deal with setbacks and handle negative criticism was an integral aspect of their ability to coach effectively. Further investigation into how coaches are able to positively adapt to adversity may help to inform the design of coach development programmes aimed at supporting coaches own psychological development. In addition, future research may wish to investigate coaches from individual sports to gain more detailed evaluations of the psychological attributes required for particular sports. In this thesis coaches from a variety of sports were purposely selected to ensure a wide range of sporting organisations were represented.

However, taking more individualised approaches may enhance the homogeneity of the sample and provide more detailed evaluations of the psychological attributes perceived to be integral for different sports.

Secondly, through in-depth investigation into coaches' emotional abilities, findings from this thesis identified several emotional management strategies coaches utilise to help regulate both their own and their athletes' emotions, most effectively. It was acknowledged that coaches' efforts to manage and regulate emotions within themselves and their athletes were predominately instrumental in focus. That is, coaches attempted to regulate emotions to levels they believed would facilitate desired outcomes. Although emotion regulation research is growing within the sporting literature (e.g., Lane, Beedie, Jones, Uphill, & Devonport, 2012; Friesen, Devonport, & Lane, 2017), scant research has investigated emotion regulation and management strategies used by sports coaches, with the exception of a few notable examples (e.g., Hill & Davis, 2014). Considering the current lack of knowledge in this area, future research may wish to further explore the specific emotional management strategies coaches employ in attempts to regulate emotions in themselves and their athletes and circumstances that may evoke the use of such strategies. In addition, exploring the role of instrumental motives in driving emotion regulation may further understandings into why coaches attempt to manage emotions, for the sake of desired outcomes. Such investigation may support the development of more robust EAD programmes for sports coaches.

Finally, while the findings from the pilot study and study three have provided a strong foundation to build upon, several modifications are required in order to make EAD programmes as robust as possible. Firstly, based on findings from the social validation data of study three, future research is warranted to investigate the effects of using online discussion forums as an

informal learning tool for coaches involved in EAD programmes. The effectiveness of online blogs as a tool to facilitate reflection and learning in sports coaches has recently been investigated (e.g., Stoszkowski & Collins 2014; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2017). For instance, in a two-part investigation Stoszkowski and colleagues (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2017; Stoszkowski, Collins, & Olsson, 2017) investigated the use of shared online blogs as a tool to promote reflection and community of practice in a cohort of undergraduate sport coaching students. Taken together, findings offered a positive initial insight into the value of online blogs as innovate learning resources for sports coaches. Specifically, findings indicated that shared online blogs were a useful tool to structure and support coaches' informal learning where the coaches themselves reported perceived increases in levels of reflection, knowledge acquisition and improvements in coaching practice. Secondly, although the group-based design of the EAD programme was considered highly beneficial to the coaches involved in study three, future research is required to investigate the effectiveness of EAD programmes that encompass a combination of group-based and one-to-one sessions that enable a more idiosyncratic approach to emotional ability development. For example, utilising coaches individual MSCEIT results to identify specific areas of development may enable the sport psychology practitioner to tailor the intervention to better suit a coach's own needs. Such one-to-one sessions may also allow for a more flexible approach where coaches are able arrange times that are most suitable for them to attend. This may help mitigate for the practical difficulties faced when coaches are required to attend pre-arranged and multiple sessions.

## **6.4 Conclusions**

The primary purpose of this thesis was to explore, in-depth the psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness at the elite level and factors related to attribute

development. Findings identified a variety of attributes (e.g., resilience, confidence, and attitude) perceived to be integral to effective coaching and were believed to have developed throughout coaches careers through education, previous experience, and conscious self-improvement. Of particular interest, a proportion of the attributes identified related to the emotional nature of coaching highlighting the importance of coaches' abilities to recognise, comprehend and manage emotions both within themselves and others. As a result, this thesis provided an in-depth understanding into how elite coaches use emotional abilities in their practice in order to coach effectively.

A secondary purpose of this thesis was to use the information gained from elite level coaches to help bridge the gap between theory and practice by providing practical recommendations for sport psychology practitioners working with coaches, and, by developing a programme aimed at enhancing coaches' emotional abilities and overall EI. Taking the pilot study and study three of this thesis together, the findings provided a detailed overview of the effectiveness of an EAD programme on emotional ability development providing a solid foundation for future research to develop more robust EAD programmes for sports coaches. Specifically, several implications for sport psychology practitioners working with sports coaches were discussed while also highlighting potential avenues for future research.

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## **Word Count**

*61, 683*

## **Appendices**

## **Appendix A: Ethics Approval for Studies One and Two**

Application for Ethics Approval of Research

Participant Recruitment Letter

Participant Information Form

Participant Interview Preparation Form

Informed Consent Form

Participant Debrief Form

## Appendix A: Ethics Approval for Studies One and Two

### Application for Ethics Approval of Research



#### RESEARCH ETHICS CHECKLIST (SHUREC1)

This form is designed to help staff and students to complete an ethical scrutiny of proposed research. The SHU [Research Ethics Policy](#) should be consulted before completing the form.

Answering the questions below will help you decide whether your proposed research requires ethical review by a Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC). In cases of uncertainty, members of the FREC can be approached for advice.

**Please note:** staff based in University central departments should submit to the University Ethics Committee (SHUREC) for review and advice.

The final responsibility for ensuring that ethical research practices are followed rests with the supervisor for student research and with the principal investigator for staff research projects.

Note that students and staff are responsible for making suitable arrangements for keeping data secure and, if relevant, for keeping the identity of participants anonymous. They are also responsible for following SHU guidelines about data encryption.

The form also enables the University and Faculty to keep a record confirming that research conducted has been subjected to ethical scrutiny.

- For student projects, the form may be completed by the student and the supervisor and/or module leader (as applicable). In all cases, it should be counter-signed by the supervisor and/or module leader, and kept as a record showing that ethical scrutiny has occurred. Students should retain a copy for inclusion in their research projects, and staff should keep a copy in the student file.
- For staff research, the form should be completed and kept by the principal investigator.

Please note if it may be necessary to conduct a health and safety risk assessment for the proposed research. Further information can be obtained from the Faculty Safety Co-ordinator.

#### General Details

*(Table cells will expand as you type)*

Name of principal investigator or student	Laura Hodgson
SHU email address	l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk
Course or qualification (student)	Ph.D. student researcher
Name of supervisor (if applicable)	Dr Joanne Butt
email address	j.butt@shu.ac.uk
Title of proposed research	Exploration and development of psychological attributes underpinning coaching excellence
Proposed start date	March 2015
Proposed end date	September 2017

<p>Brief outline of research to include, rationale &amp; aims (250-500 words). In addition for research with human participants, include recruitment method, participant details &amp; proposed methodology (250-500)</p>	<p>It is widely accepted within the sporting literature that the coach contributes to the performance of teams and athletes (Becker, 2009; Nash &amp; Sproule, 2009). Specifically, Gould, Greenleaf, Guinan and Chung (2002) reported that coaches are required to deal with difficult situations on a regular basis (i.e. selection, tactics, decision-making, athlete related performance issues). With this in mind, recent research has begun to recognise that coaches should be considered performers in their own right (Olusoga, Butt, Hays, &amp; Maynard, 2009; Thelwell, Weston, Greenlees, &amp; Hutchings, 2008). Research (Thelwell, Weston, Greenlees, &amp; Hutchings, 2008; Olusoga, Maynard, Hays, and Butt, 2012) provides evidence that alongside athletes, coaches are also subject to psychological and performance related demands and benefit from psychological support in terms of their coaching effectiveness and personal well-being.</p> <p>The definition of an excellent coach is difficult because it often depends ultimately on the performance of the athlete's in the coaches charge. However, if we describe the competencies of coaches and deem excellence based solely on athlete's performances, we are limiting our search to strictly indirect behaviour measures (Cote, Young, North, &amp; Duffy, 2007). Becker (2009) argues that although using an indirect behavioural approach conforms to traditional scientific methods (phenomenon must be observable and measurable), it fails to address aspects of the coaching process that are not observable. Therefore the definition of coaching excellence should describe the competencies required by a coach when interacting with athletes.</p> <p>Research (Bloom &amp; Salmela, 2000; Nash &amp; Sproule, 2009) has demonstrated that expert coaches possess similarities in competencies and attributes that are considered to influence coaching performance. What is not known is whether psychological attributes, such as those found to influence athlete performance, enable coaches to perform, and if so, to what extent such attributes influence performance. Exploring the key psychological attributes that are perceived to underpin coaching performance at the elite level could provide greater insight and more clarity into the ingredients of excellent coaching moving beyond indirect measures such as win-loss records.</p> <p>The aims of this research are to explore the psychological attributes perceived by elite coaches to underpin their coaching performance. This research will also aim to develop a framework of how and when coaches use such psychological attributes.</p> <p>Participants will be selected through purposeful sampling. Criteria for selection will be based on coaches with elite status (i.e. previously or currently coaching athletes with medal success in major sporting competitions). A list of current and/or retired coaches known to meet criteria standards will be generated. All participants will be first contacted via a participant invitation letter or e-mail inviting potential participants to take part in the study, and briefly outlining the main purpose of the investigation</p>
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	<p>Due to the exploratory nature of the research, qualitative methods will be employed. Considering the current lack of knowledge within the area, phenomenological based methods will be employed in order to attempt to construct a psychological understanding of the psychological attributes of elite coaches grounded in the lived experiences of coaches with elite status.</p> <p>Thematic inductive analysis (Braun, &amp; Clarke, 2006) will be applied to search for themes across data sets. Raw data responses will be grouped into like ideas to form lower-order themes. Lower-order themes will then be grouped into high-order themes based on similarities. The final phase of the analysis will be dependent upon investigator triangulation consensus.</p> <p>References:</p> <p>Becker, A. J. (2009). It's not what they do, it's how they do it: Athlete experiences of great coaching. <i>International Journal of Sports Science &amp; Coaching</i>, 4(1), 93-119.</p> <p>Bloom, G. A., &amp; Salmela, J. H. (2000). Personal characteristics of expert team sport coaches. <i>Journal of Sport Pedagogy</i>, 6(2), 56-76.</p> <p>Cote, J., Young, B., North, J., &amp; Duffy, P. (2007). Towards a definition of excellence in sport coaching. <i>International Journal of Coaching Science</i>, 1(1), 3-16.</p> <p>Gould, D., Guinan, D., Greenleaf, C., &amp; Chung, Y. (2002). A survey of U.S. Olympic coaches: Variables perceived to have influenced athlete performances and coach effectiveness. <i>The Sport Psychologist</i>, 16, 229-250.</p> <p>Nash, C. S., &amp; Sproule, J. (2009). Career development of expert coaches. <i>International Journal of Sports Science &amp; Coaching</i>, 4(1), 121-138.</p> <p>Olusoga, P., Butt, J., Hays, K., &amp; Maynard, I. (2009). Stress in elite sports coaching: Identifying stressors. <i>Journal of Applied Sport Psychology</i>, 21(4), 442-459.</p> <p>Olusoga, P., Maynard, I., Hays, K., &amp; Butt, J. (2012). Coaching under pressure: A study of Olympic coaches. <i>Journal of Sports Sciences</i>, 30(3), 229-239.</p> <p>Thelwell, R. C., Weston, N. J. V., Greenlees, I. A., &amp; Hutchings, N. V. (2008). A qualitative exploration of psychological-skills use in coaches. <i>The Sports Psychologist</i>, 22(1), 38-53</p>
<p>Will the research be conducted with partners &amp; subcontractors?</p>	<p><b>Yes/No</b> No</p> <p>(If <b>YES</b>, outline how you will ensure that their ethical policies are consistent with university policy.)</p> <p>N/A</p>

**1. Health Related Research Involving the NHS or Social Care / Community Care or the Criminal Justice Service or with Research participants unable to provide informed consent**

Question	Yes/No
<p>1. Does the research involve?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients recruited because of their past or present use of the NHS or SC</li> <li>• Relatives/carers of patients recruited because of their past or present use of the NHS or SC</li> <li>• Access to data, organs or other bodily material of past or present NHS patients</li> <li>• Foetal material and IVF involving NHS patients</li> <li>• The recently dead in NHS premises</li> <li>• Prisoners or others within the criminal justice system recruited for health-related research*</li> <li>• Police, courts, prisoners or others within the criminal justice system*</li> <li>• Participants who are unable to provide informed consent due to their incapacity even if the project is not health related</li> </ul>	No
<p>2. Is this a research project as opposed to service evaluation or audit?  <i>For NHS definitions please see the following website</i>  <a href="http://www.nres.nhs.uk/applications/is-your-project-research/">http://www.nres.nhs.uk/applications/is-your-project-research/</a></p>	No

If you have answered **YES** to questions **1 & 2** then you **must** seek the appropriate external approvals from the NHS, Social Care, or Criminal Justice System under their Research Governance schemes. Further information is provided below.

NHS <https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/Signin.aspx>

\* All prison projects also need National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Approval and Governor's Approval and may need Ministry of Justice approval. Further guidance at: <http://www.ohrn.nhs.uk/toolkit/Toolkit4thEdition.pdf>

**NB** FRECs provide Independent Scientific Review for NHS or SC research and initial scrutiny for ethics applications as required for university sponsorship of the research. Applicants can use the NHS proforma and submit this initially to the FREC.

**2. Research with Human Participants**

Question	Yes/No
<p>1. Does the research involve human participants? This includes surveys, questionnaires, observing behaviour etc.</p> <p><i>Note If YES, then please answer questions 2 to 10  If NO, please go to Section 3</i></p>	Yes
<p>2. Will any of the participants be vulnerable?</p> <p><i>Note 'Vulnerable' people include young people under 18, people with learning disabilities, people who may be limited by age or sickness or disability from understanding the research, etc.</i></p>	No
<p>3. Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?</p>	No
<p>4. Will tissue samples (including blood) be obtained from participants?</p>	No

Question	Yes/No
5 Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?	No
6 Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?	No
7 Is there any reasonable and foreseeable risk of physical or emotional harm to any of the participants? <i>Note Harm may be caused by distressing or intrusive interview questions, uncomfortable procedures involving the participant, invasion of privacy, topics relating to highly personal information, topics relating to illegal activity, etc.</i>	No
8 Will anyone be taking part without giving their informed consent?	No
9 Is it covert research? <i>Note 'Covert research' refers to research that is conducted without the knowledge of participants.</i>	No
10 Will the research output allow identification of any individual who has not given their express consent to be identified?	No

If you answered **YES only** to question 1, you **must** submit the signed form to the FREC for registration and scrutiny. If you have answered **YES** to any of the other questions you are **required** to submit a SHUREC2A (or 2B) to the FREC. If you answered **YES** to question 8 and participants cannot provide informed consent due to their incapacity you must obtain the appropriate approvals from the NHS research governance system.

### 3. Research in Organisations

Question	Yes/No
1 Will the research involve working with/within an organisation (e.g. school, business, charity, museum, government department, international agency, etc)?	No
2 If you answered YES to question 1, do you have granted access to conduct the research? <i>If YES, students please show evidence to your supervisor. PI should retain safely.</i>	N/A
3 If you answered NO to question 2, is it because: A. you have not yet asked B. you have asked and not yet received an answer C. you have asked and been refused access. <i>Note You will only be able to start the research when you have been granted access.</i>	N/A



### 4. Research with Products and Artefacts

Question	Yes/No
1. Will the research involve working with copyrighted documents, films, broadcasts, photographs, artworks, designs, products, programmes, databases, networks, processes or secure data?	No
2. If you answered YES to question 1, are the materials you intend to use in the public domain? <i>Notes 'In the public domain' does not mean the same thing as 'publicly accessible'.</i>	N/A



Question	Yes/No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information which is 'in the public domain' is no longer protected by copyright (i.e. copyright has either expired or been waived) and can be used without permission.</li> <li>- Information which is 'publicly accessible' (e.g. TV broadcasts, websites, artworks, newspapers) is available for anyone to consult/view. It is still protected by copyright even if there is no copyright notice. In UK law, copyright protection is automatic and does not require a copyright statement, although it is always good practice to provide one. It is necessary to check the terms and conditions of use to find out exactly how the material may be reused etc.</li> </ul> <p><i>If you answered YES to question 1, be aware that you may need to consider other ethics codes. For example, when conducting Internet research, consult the code of the Association of Internet Researchers; for educational research, consult the Code of Ethics of the British Educational Research Association.</i></p>	
<p>3. If you answered NO to question 2, do you have explicit permission to use these materials as data? <i>If YES, please show evidence to your supervisor. PI should retain permission.</i></p>	N/A
<p>4. If you answered NO to question 3, is it because: A. you have not yet asked permission B. you have asked and not yet received and answer C. you have asked and been refused access.</p> <p><i>Note You will only be able to start the research when you have been granted permission to use the specified material.</i></p>	A/B/C N/A

**Adherence to SHU policy and procedures**

<b>Personal statement</b>	
I can confirm that:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I have read the Sheffield Hallam University Research Ethics Policy and Procedures</li> <li>- I agree to abide by its principles.</li> </ul>	
<b>Student / Researcher/ Principal Investigator (as applicable)</b>	
Name: Laura Hodgson	Date: 26.02.15
Signature: 	
<b>Supervisor or other person giving ethical sign-off</b>	
I can confirm that completion of this form has not identified the need for ethical approval by the FREC or an NHS, Social Care or other external REC. The research will not commence until any approvals required under Sections 3 & 4 have been received.	
Name: Dr Joanne Butt	Date: 26.02.15
Signature: 	
<b>Other signing box</b>	
Name:	Date:
Signature:	

**Please ensure the following are included with this form if applicable, tick box to indicate:**

	Yes	No	N/A
Research proposal if prepared previously	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any recruitment materials (e.g. posters, letters, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participant information sheet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participant consent form	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Details of any measures to be used (e.g. questionnaires, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Details of any support materials provided to participants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Debriefing materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix A: Ethics Approval for Studies One and Two

### Participant Recruitment Letter

Dear

I am a sport psychology PhD student studying at Sheffield Hallam University, and I am contacting you, as I would like to invite you to take part in my research. My research is concerned with exploring and understanding the mental attributes of coaching excellence to try and find out what it takes to coach at the highest levels.

I believe that hearing about your sporting experiences and having an insight into the personal attributes you think have helped you along your coaching career will hold great promise in supporting development coaches who aspire towards maximizing their coaching development and potential.

Taking part in my study will only involve one informal interview session led by myself. This interview will be arranged to take place in a location that is convenient for you. There will then be the opportunity for a follow-up meeting where I will present back the key mental attributes found to underpin elite level coaching and how this information may benefit development level coaches within your sport.

My research team includes Prof. Ian Maynard and Dr. Joanne Butt. Both Ian and Joanne are renowned Chartered Sport Psychologists having acted as consultants with both elite and development athletes in a variety of sports. They also have a plethora of research publications to their names within the sporting literature.

If you are interested in taking part please contact me and I will provide you with a little more information about the study and we can arrange a suitable time for the interview.

Best wishes and many thanks,

Laura

Laura Hodgson MSc, PGDip, BSc (Hons)



PhD student

Health and Wellbeing Research Institute - Postgraduate Research Centre

Sheffield Hallam University

Chestnut Court – Room S006

Collegiate Crescent

Sheffield

S10 2BP Email: [l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk)

## Appendix A: Ethics Approval for Studies One and Two

### Participant Information Form

#### Participant Information

##### *Exploring the psychological attributes underpinning coaching excellence*

The purpose of my study is to explore the mental characteristics and attributes of expert coaches to try and identify what it takes to perform at such a high level of coaching. This will be achieved by considering personal qualities and characteristics that as a coach, you believe have helped you along your coaching career and are critical aspects of your ability to perform as a coach.

If you agree to volunteer, you will be required to take part in one interview session designed to last approximately one hour. However please feel free to expand on any topic or areas you feel need further addressing. If there are any questions you feel you cannot answer or feel uncomfortable answering, please indicate so and we will move on to the next question. This interview will be arranged to take place at a location and time that is convenient for you.

All information you provide will be kept completely confidential. If you feel uneasy with any question you can refuse to answer or stop the interview at any time and withdraw from the study. By agreeing to participate, the information you provide may be used for scientific purposes where your anonymity will remain throughout.

The researcher conducting this study is Laura Hodgson under the supervision of Dr. Joanne Butt. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study please ask now. If questions arise after the interview you may direct them to the following contact information.

Laura

Laura Hodgson MSc, PGDip, BSc (Hons)

**Sheffield  
Hallam  
University** | Centre for Sport  
and Exercise  
Science

PhD student  
Health and Wellbeing Research Institute -  
Postgraduate Research Centre  
Sheffield Hallam University  
Chestnut Court – Room S006  
Collegiate Crescent  
Sheffield  
S10 2BP

Dr, Joanne Butt

Reader in Sport Psychology  
Sheffield Hallam University  
A125 Collegiate Hall  
Collegiate Crescent  
Sheffield  
S10 2BP

Email: [l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk)

## Appendix A: Ethics Approval for Studies One and Two

### Participant Interview Preparation Form

#### Interview Preparation

During the interview you will be asked a set of questions based around how you feel your mental qualities and characteristics affect how well you perform as a coach. This will involve you talking about your personal experiences as a coach and how you believe your mental characteristics and abilities have helped you to perform successfully.

When answering questions please feel free to use coaching and sporting experiences that demonstrate your personal qualities and how you think they affect your performance as a coach.

During the interview you will also be asked whether you feel some qualities are more important/used more frequently, during certain occasions, for example, during training, before a major competition, during competition etc. So in preparation to the interview please consider how your personal qualities help you perform as a coach during different timeframes.

Just to be clear, it is not within the intentions of this interview to find out about your personality characteristics or leadership skills but rather the **mental attributes** you have that you believe enhance your coaching practice and make you the coach you are today. In preparation, you may find it helpful to consider your strengths and weaknesses, the personal qualities you need when interacting with your athletes, and how you mentally prepare yourself for competitions.

## Appendix A: Ethics Approval for Studies One and Two

### Informed Consent Form

**Title of Research Project:** *Exploring the psychological attributes underpinning coaching excellence.*  
**Please initial all boxes**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
  
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
  
3. I understand that the research team will keep my responses strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
  
4. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research
  
5. I agree to take part in the above research project
  
6. I agree to my interview being audio recorded

**Date**                      **Signature of participant**

**Name of person taking consent**

**Date**                      **Signature**

#### **Copies:**

Please sign both copies of this consent form.

You will need to keep **one copy** of this consent form for your own records and **return one copy** to the researcher

## Appendix A: Ethics Approval for Studies One and Two

### Participant Debrief Form

#### Participant debrief form

There is lots of research within the sporting domain that has contributed to our understanding of the attributes associated with successful elite athletic performance. However in terms coaching performance, the research is far more limited.

The aim of my research is to explore the mental attributes of expert coaches and identify whether expert coaches demonstrate similarities in such competencies and attributes. Having such knowledge could provide very valuable information when designing coach development programs. The information you provide will greatly influence the final stage of my research, which will involve designing coach development workshops, aimed to enhance the specific mental attributes found to influence successful coaching performance, and aid coach development.

As previously stated, the information obtained in this study will remain entirely anonymous and you will **not** be required to disclose any personal information. Your responses to the questions during the interview will be used for the purpose of this research only. In return, we would appreciate it if you would not speak to any other person regarding this study. In circumstances, if other participants know about the study prior to engaging in the study, their responses could be biased and therefore invalid.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding this current research project, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you are interested in knowing more about this research or obtaining a copy of the results, please email me.

Finally, we would again like to thank you for your participation and cooperation through out this process, knowledge of your personal insights into coaching and coaching experiences is very much appreciated.

Laura Hodgson

PhD Researcher  
Sheffield Hallam University  
Chestnut Court- Room S002  
Collegiate Crescent  
Sheffield  
S10 2BP

Email: [l.hodgon@shu.ac.uk](mailto:l.hodgon@shu.ac.uk)

Dr. Joanne Butt  
Reader in Sport Psychology  
Sheffield Hallam University  
A125 Collegiate Hall  
Collegiate Crescent  
Sheffield  
S10 2BP

Email: [j.butt@shu.ac.uk](mailto:j.butt@shu.ac.uk)

## **Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Guides**

Semi-structured Interview Guide for Study One

Semi-structured Interview Guide for Study Two



## Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Guides

### Semi-structured Interview Guide for Study One

#### Interview Guide

➤ = Probe Question

#### Demographics

Demographic	
Gender	
Sport	
Number of years coaching	
Career as an athlete	Sport: Competitive level: Years involved:
Coaching qualifications	

1. Can you tell me about your coaching background?

#### Psychological attributes

2. Thinking about yourself now, what words do you think best describe you when you are coaching?
  - Can you give an example of when that has helped your coaching?
  - What were you thinking, how did you behave in this situation?
3. Can you tell me about a time when you think you coached really well?
  - What were you thinking/ What were you feeling/ How did you behave?
4. Can you tell me about a time you didn't coach as well as normal?
  - What were you thinking/ What were you feeling/ How did you behave?
  - How did it affect your future coaching/what did you learn?
5. When you are coaching, what do you think are your main strengths and weaknesses? If you think about your mental attributes.
  - How do you think you have developed these strengths/overcome weaknesses?
6. What are important things you need to be aware of when coaching?
  - How does this awareness affect your coaching?
7. Do you think you have always had the attributes you have mentioned?

#### Coaching Strategies

8. Do you have any strategies you use to influence your athletes thoughts, emotions and behaviours?
9. How do you manage your own thoughts, emotions and behaviours to positively influence your coaching?
  - What happens when you don't manage them very well?

## Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Guides

### Semi-structured Interview Guide for Study Two

#### Interview Guide

➤ = Probe Question

*I want you to consider how you think emotions affect your coaching. The next set of questions, are going to look at how you think your ability to **recognise, understand and manage** emotions relates to your coaching.*

1. If you think about emotions and successful coaching, what comes to mind?
  - How does this affect your thoughts and behaviours?
  - How does this affect your athletes/those around you?
2. In terms of emotions, is there anything that you associate with poor coaching?
  - How does this affect your thoughts and behaviours?
  - How does this affect your athletes/those around you?
  - How do you generally react when things are not going to plan?
3. Can you talk me through the day of a really important competition from when you first woke up to when the competition had ended? Tell me about what you were thinking and feeling throughout that day.
  - How did your emotions change, and how did you manage them?
  - How did they affect your behaviour?
  - What did you notice/look for in your athletes?
  - Talk me through any important decisions you had to make and how you came to a decision?
4. Do you think your emotional experiences as an athlete have influenced your coaching?
5. How do you manage the multiple demands coaching places on you?
  - How do you deal with emotionally challenging situations?
6. Is there anything else that you would like to add that will help us understand the role emotions play in coaching?

## **Appendix C: Ethics Approval for Pilot Study and Study Three**

Application for Ethics Approval of Research

Recruitment Materials

Participant Information Form

Informed Consent Form

Participant Debrief Form

## Appendix C: Ethics Approval for Pilot Study and Study Three

### Application for Ethics Approval of Research



#### RESEARCH ETHICS CHECKLIST (SHUREC1)

This form is designed to help staff and students to complete an ethical scrutiny of proposed research. The SHU [Research Ethics Policy](#) should be consulted before completing the form.

Answering the questions below will help you decide whether your proposed research requires ethical review by a Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC). In cases of uncertainty, members of the FREC can be approached for advice.

**Please note:** staff based in University central departments should submit to the University Ethics Committee (SHUREC) for review and advice.

The final responsibility for ensuring that ethical research practices are followed rests with the supervisor for student research and with the principal investigator for staff research projects.

Note that students and staff are responsible for making suitable arrangements for keeping data secure and, if relevant, for keeping the identity of participants anonymous. They are also responsible for following SHU guidelines about data encryption.

The form also enables the University and Faculty to keep a record confirming that research conducted has been subjected to ethical scrutiny.

- For student projects, the form may be completed by the student and the supervisor and/or module leader (as applicable). In all cases, it should be counter-signed by the supervisor and/or module leader, and kept as a record showing that ethical scrutiny has occurred. Students should retain a copy for inclusion in their research projects, and staff should keep a copy in the student file.
- For staff research, the form should be completed and kept by the principal investigator.

Please note if it may be necessary to conduct a health and safety risk assessment for the proposed research. Further information can be obtained from the Faculty Safety Co-ordinator.

#### General Details

*(Table cells will expand as you type)*

Name of principal investigator or student	Laura Hodgson
SHU email address	l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk
Course or qualification (student)	Ph.D. student researcher
Name of supervisor (if applicable)	Dr Joanne Butt Prof Ian Maynard
email address	j.butt@shu.ac.uk ifmiwm@shu.ac.uk
Title of proposed research	Investigating the effectiveness of developing emotional abilities in sports coaches
Proposed start date	February 2017
Proposed end date	September 2017

<p>Brief outline of research to include, rationale &amp; aims (250-500 words). In addition for research with human, participants, include recruitment method, participant details &amp; proposed methodology (250-500)</p>	<p>The notion of the coaching process is that coaches, in various ways, attempt to encourage the learning and development of athletes and positively influence athlete performance (Jones, 2011). The technical rationality that often underpins the coaching literature is becoming increasingly challenged (Jones, 2011) as researchers strive to determine more realistic and accurate evaluations of the coaching process.</p> <p>Within the coaching literature understanding the role of emotion has received relatively little attention (e.g., Allen &amp; Cote, 2016; Jones, 2006; Nelson, Allanson, Potrac, Gale, Gilborne, &amp; Marshall, 2013). Only more recently have researchers begun to highlight the need for incorporating the emotional experiences of coaching practice into developing research agendas (Potrac, Jones, Purdy, Nelson, &amp; Marshall, 2013). Nelson et al., (2013) have advocated that it would be greatly beneficial for future research to consider the emotional 'self' and emotional 'other' in order to gain a more grounded understanding of coaching practice.</p> <p>In a recent study, Hodgson, Butt, and Maynard (in press) explored the psychological attributes of elite coaches. Findings demonstrated that a proportion of the attributes identified related to the emotional nature of coaching. That is, coaches discussed the use of several emotional abilities (i.e., emotional awareness, emotional understanding, emotional management) perceived to influence their coaching effectiveness. Such abilities were indicated to demonstrate clear similarities and overlap to the ability model of Emotional Intelligence (EI; Mayer &amp; Salovey, 1997). In addition such attributes were perceived to have developed throughout the coaches careers through experience, education and conscious self-improvement.</p> <p>To knowledge, no existing literature in sports psychology has tested improvements in coaching effectiveness through the development of emotional abilities. This is not surprising given the current lack of research directed toward the emotional nature of coaching practice. Yet, clearly, based on the findings of recent research, the use of specific emotional abilities plays an important role in coaching effectiveness.</p> <p>The aims of this research will be to (a) investigate whether emotional abilities can be developed in sports coaches, and (b) whether increased emotional abilities has a beneficial impact on coaching effectiveness and psychological well-being.</p> <p>Participants will be selected through purposeful sampling. Criteria for selection will be coaches with at least level 2 qualifications in their respective sports. A list of potential contacts (e.g., National Governing Bodies, head coaches, sport development officers) will be generated to help provide access to suitable participants. Potential participants will then</p>
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	<p>be contacted via a participant invitation letter or e-mail inviting them to take part in the intervention, with a brief overview of the main purpose of the investigation.</p> <p>The proposed investigation will adopt a quasi-experimental, mixed methods research design, being conceptually underpinned by concepts related to the ability model of EI (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). A range of qualitative and quantitative measures will be used in the investigation to measure emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, and a range of factors related to coaching effectiveness (e.g., athlete outcomes, inter- and intra-personal knowledge, coach efficacy).</p> <p>References</p> <p>Allan, V., &amp; Cote, J. (2016). A cross-sectional analysis of coaches' observed emotion-behavior profiles and adolescent athletes' self reported developmental outcomes. <i>Journal of Applied Sport Psychology</i>, 28(3), 321-337.</p> <p>Hodgson, L., Butt, J., &amp; Maynard, I. (in press). Exploring the psychological attributes underpinning elite sports coaching. <i>International Journal of Sports Science &amp; Coaching</i>.</p> <p>Jones, R. (2006). Dilemmas, maintaining "face," and paranoia. An average coaching life. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 12(5), 1012-1021.</p> <p>Jones, R. (2011). Introduction. In: R Jones, P. Potrac, C. Cushins, &amp; L. Ronglan (Eds.) <i>The Sociology of Sports Coaching</i> (pp.12-20). New York, NY: Routledge.</p> <p>Mayer, J. D., &amp; Salovey, P. (1997). What is emotional intelligence? In <i>Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Educational implications</i> (pp. 3-31). New York, NY: Basic Books.</p> <p>Nelson, L., Allanson, A., Potrac, P., Gale, L., Gilbourne, D., &amp; Marshall, P. (2013). Thinking, feeling, acting: The case of a semi-professional soccer coach. <i>Sociology of Sport Journal</i>, 30, 467-486.</p> <p>Potrac, P., Jones, R., Purdy, L., Nelson, L., &amp; Marshall, P. (2013). Towards an emotional understanding of coaching: A suggested research agenda. In P. Potrac et al. (Eds.), <i>The Routledge handbook of sports coaching</i> (pp.235-246). London: Routledge.</p>
<p>Will the research be conducted with partners &amp; subcontractors?</p>	<p><b>Yes/No</b></p> <p>(If <b>YES</b>, outline how you will ensure that their ethical policies are consistent with university policy.)</p> <p>N/A</p>

**1. Health Related Research Involving the NHS or Social Care / Community Care or the Criminal Justice Service or with Research participants unable to provide informed consent**

Question	Yes/No
<p>1. Does the research involve?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients recruited because of their past or present use of the NHS or SC</li> <li>• Relatives/carers of patients recruited because of their past or present use of the NHS or SC</li> <li>• Access to data, organs or other bodily material of past or present NHS patients</li> <li>• Foetal material and IVF involving NHS patients</li> <li>• The recently dead in NHS premises</li> <li>• Prisoners or others within the criminal justice system recruited for health-related research*</li> <li>• Police, courts, prisoners or others within the criminal justice system*</li> <li>• Participants who are unable to provide informed consent due to their incapacity even if the project is not health related</li> </ul>	No
<p>2. Is this a research project as opposed to service evaluation or audit?  <i>For NHS definitions please see the following website</i>  <a href="http://www.nres.nhs.uk/applications/is-your-project-research/">http://www.nres.nhs.uk/applications/is-your-project-research/</a></p>	No

If you have answered **YES** to questions **1 & 2** then you **must** seek the appropriate external approvals from the NHS, Social Care, or Criminal Justice System under their Research Governance schemes. Further information is provided below.

NHS <https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/Signin.aspx>

\* All prison projects also need National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Approval and Governor's Approval and may need Ministry of Justice approval. Further guidance at: <http://www.ohrn.nhs.uk/toolkit/Toolkit4thEdition.pdf>

**NB** FRECs provide Independent Scientific Review for NHS or SC research and initial scrutiny for ethics applications as required for university sponsorship of the research. Applicants can use the NHS proforma and submit this initially to the FREC.

**2. Research with Human Participants**

Question	Yes/No
<p>1. Does the research involve human participants? This includes surveys, questionnaires, observing behaviour etc.</p> <p><i>Note If YES, then please answer questions 2 to 10  If NO, please go to Section 3</i></p>	Yes
<p>2. Will any of the participants be vulnerable?</p> <p><i>Note 'Vulnerable' people include young people under 18, people with learning disabilities, people who may be limited by age or sickness or disability from understanding the research, etc.</i></p>	No
<p>3. Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?</p>	No
<p>4. Will tissue samples (including blood) be obtained from participants?</p>	No

Question	Yes/No
5 Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?	No
6 Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?	No
7 Is there any reasonable and foreseeable risk of physical or emotional harm to any of the participants? <i>Note Harm may be caused by distressing or intrusive interview questions, uncomfortable procedures involving the participant, invasion of privacy, topics relating to highly personal information, topics relating to illegal activity, etc.</i>	No
8 Will anyone be taking part without giving their informed consent?	No
9 Is it covert research? <i>Note 'Covert research' refers to research that is conducted without the knowledge of participants.</i>	No
10 Will the research output allow identification of any individual who has not given their express consent to be identified?	No

If you answered **YES only** to question 1, you **must** submit the signed form to the FREC for registration and scrutiny. If you have answered **YES** to any of the other questions you are **required** to submit a SHUREC2A (or 2B) to the FREC. If you answered **YES** to question 8 and participants cannot provide informed consent due to their incapacity you must obtain the appropriate approvals from the NHS research governance system.

### 3. Research in Organisations

Question	Yes/No
1 Will the research involve working with/within an organisation (e.g. school, business, charity, museum, government department, international agency, etc)?	Yes
2 If you answered YES to question 1, do you have granted access to conduct the research? <i>If YES, students please show evidence to your supervisor. PI should retain safely.</i>	Yes
3 If you answered NO to question 2, is it because: A. you have not yet asked B. you have asked and not yet received an answer C. you have asked and been refused access. <i>Note You will only be able to start the research when you have been granted access.</i>	N/A

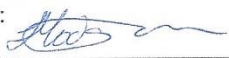
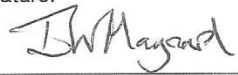
### 4. Research with Products and Artefacts

Question	Yes/No
1. Will the research involve working with copyrighted documents, films, broadcasts, photographs, artworks, designs, products, programmes, databases, networks, processes or secure data?	Yes
2. If you answered YES to question 1, are the materials you intend to use in the public domain? <i>Notes 'In the public domain' does not mean the same thing as 'publicly accessible'.</i>	Yes



Question	Yes/No
<p>– Information which is 'in the public domain' is no longer protected by copyright (i.e. copyright has either expired or been waived) and can be used without permission.</p> <p>– Information which is 'publicly accessible' (e.g. TV broadcasts, websites, artworks, newspapers) is available for anyone to consult/view. It is still protected by copyright even if there is no copyright notice. In UK law, copyright protection is automatic and does not require a copyright statement, although it is always good practice to provide one. It is necessary to check the terms and conditions of use to find out exactly how the material may be reused etc.</p> <p><i>If you answered YES to question 1, be aware that you may need to consider other ethics codes. For example, when conducting Internet research, consult the code of the Association of Internet Researchers; for educational research, consult the Code of Ethics of the British Educational Research Association.</i></p>	
<p>3. If you answered NO to question 2, do you have explicit permission to use these materials as data? <i>If YES, please show evidence to your supervisor. PI should retain permission.</i></p>	N/A
<p>4. If you answered NO to question 3, is it because: A. you have not yet asked permission B. you have asked and not yet received and answer C. you have asked and been refused access.</p> <p><i>Note You will only be able to start the research when you have been granted permission to use the specified material.</i></p>	A/B/C N/A

**Adherence to SHU policy and procedures**

<b>Personal statement</b>	
I can confirm that:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I have read the Sheffield Hallam University Research Ethics Policy and Procedures</li> <li>- I agree to abide by its principles.</li> </ul>	
<b>Student / Researcher/ Principal Investigator (as applicable)</b>	
Name: Laura Hodgson	Date: 04.12.2016
Signature: 	
<b>Supervisor or other person giving ethical sign-off</b>	
I can confirm that completion of this form has not identified the need for ethical approval by the FREC or an NHS, Social Care or other external REC. The research will not commence until any approvals required under Sections 3 & 4 have been received.	
Name: Prof Ian Maynard	Date: 04.12.2016
Signature: 	
<b>Other signing box</b>	
Name:	Date:
Signature:	

**Please ensure the following are included with this form if applicable, tick box to indicate:**

	Yes	No	N/A
Research proposal if prepared previously	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any recruitment materials (e.g. posters, letters, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participant information sheet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participant consent form	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Details of any measures to be used (e.g. questionnaires, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Details of any support materials provided to participants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Debriefing materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Coaching from the inside out

## Coach development workshops

The aim of these workshops is to supplement traditional coach education programmes by **focusing more on the needs and skills of coaches themselves**, and in particular addresses the **emotional nature of coaching**. These workshops will aim to educate coaches on why emotion is an important aspect of their coaching, help coaches build a more in-depth understanding of themselves and their athletes and teach key emotional skills that will help them in their coaching practice.

### Why focus on emotion?

Research in the sports coaching domain has recently begun to highlight the need for understanding the emotional experiences of coaches, as **emotion plays such a vital role in coaching practice**. As you will well know, coaching is much more complex than just being able to teach skills and pass on technical knowledge. It also involves **working with different people, creating strong relationships, dealing with uncertainty and being able to perform under pressure**. My PhD research with elite level coaches has demonstrated that coaches at this level use several emotional abilities and skills that influence their ability to coach most effectively, both in training and during major competitions. What was interesting is that these coaches discussed the importance of recognizing, understanding and being able to manage the emotional nature of coaching, yet, highlighted how it is an area not addressed on coach education courses. Some even went as far to say that emotion is often seen as a **“taboo topic” that very rarely gets mentioned**.

These workshops aim to bridge this gap by increasing awareness of the important role emotions play in coaching and by teaching emotional skills that can aid coaches in their own personal development.

Below is a brief outline of the workshops:

#### **Workshop 1:**

- Introduction to psychology in sport.

- Coaches psychological attributes and the importance of emotional intelligence
- Emotions and coaching effectiveness.
- Qualities of an effective coach.

#### **Workshop 2:**

- Psychological factors that drive behaviour/performance.
- Develop self-understanding by exploring values, beliefs and personality characteristics.
- Enhance understanding of others by exploring individual differences.

#### **Workshop 3:**

- Develop emotional awareness skills through emotional and behavioural recognition.
- Develop emotional awareness of others through observational, listening and questioning skills.
- Reflective practice skills.

#### **Workshop 4:**

- Understand how emotions relate to thoughts and behaviours/actions.
- Identify emotional management strategies.
- Apply emotional management strategies in practice.

#### **Workshop 5:**

- Identify strategies to influence athlete's emotional management.
- Apply emotional management strategies in practice.
- How to create an emotionally supportive environment.

**For further information please contact Laura Hodgson**

**Laura Hodgson, Center for Sport and Exercise Science, Sheffield Hallam University,  
Chestnut Court, Collegiate Crescent, Sheffield, S10 2BP, l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk**

## Appendix C: Ethics Approval for Pilot Study and Study Three

### Participant Information Form

# Coach Development Workshops

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of a mental skills training intervention on coaching effectiveness.

Your participation involves attending 5 developmental workshops, each approximately 1.5 in duration that will take place on a bi-weekly basis. Your participation will also involve completing several assessment tools (e.g. questionnaires, online assessment) before the workshops begin and after they have been completed. You may also be asked several interview questions at the end of the investigation to reflect on your experiences taking part in the workshops.

The workshops will be educational and interactive with practical exercises to complete both during the workshops and in the time between them.

All information you provide and data from the assessment tools will be kept completely confidential. If you feel uneasy or uncomfortable at any point during the investigation, please say so and you can withdraw from the study. By agreeing to participate, the information you provide may be used for scientific purposes where your anonymity will remain throughout.

The researcher conducting this study is Laura Hodgson under the supervision of Dr Joanne Butt. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study or if questions arise after your involvement you may direct them to the following contact information.

Laura Hodgson

Email: [l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk)

Dr Joanne Butt

Email: [j.butt@shu.ac.uk](mailto:j.butt@shu.ac.uk)

## Appendix C: Ethics Approval for Pilot Study and Study Three

### Participant Consent Form

#### Participant Consent Form

**Title of Research Project:** Investigating the effectiveness of a mental skills training intervention on coaching effectiveness.

**Please initial all boxes**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, I understand that if I do not wish to take part in any practical activities, I am free to decline.
3. I understand that the research team will keep my responses strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
4. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research
5. I agree to take part in the above research project

**Date**                      **Signature of participant**

**Name of person taking consent**

**Date**                      **Signature**

**Copies:**

Please sign both copies of this consent form.

You will need to keep **one copy** of this consent form for your own records and **return one copy** to the researcher

## **Appendix C: Ethics Approval for Pilot Study and Study Three**

### Participant Debrief Form

# Thank you

Firstly, I would like to extend my thanks for your involvement in this research study. Without your dedicated time, enthusiasm toward the workshops and cooperation, the completion of this study would not have been possible.

## **Research Purpose**

Research in the sports coaching domain has recently begun to highlight the need for understanding the important role emotion plays in sports coaching. As you will well know, coaching is much more complex than just being able to teach skills and pass on technical knowledge. To name just a few, coaching also involves working with different people, creating strong relationships, dealing with uncertainty and being able to perform under pressure. My PhD research with elite coaches has demonstrated that coaches at this level use several emotional abilities (i.e., emotional awareness, emotional understanding, emotional management) that influence their ability to coach most effectively. It is this research that informed the design of the workshops in this study that aim to develop these emotional abilities in sports coaches.

## **Your Involvement**

As a participant in this study you took part in the workshops designed to enhance emotional abilities. As previously stated, the information obtained in this study will remain entirely anonymous. The data collected during this study will be used for the purpose of this research only.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding this current research project, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you are interested in knowing more about this research or obtaining a copy of the results, please email me.

Finally, we would again like to thank you for your participation and cooperation throughout this process.

Laura

**Laura Hodgson, Center for Sport and Exercise Science, Sheffield Hallam University, Chestnut Court, Collegiate Crescent, Sheffield, S10 2BP, [l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk)**

## **Appendix D: Data Collection Documents for Study Three**

Demographic Information Questionnaire

Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test

Coach Efficacy Questionnaire

Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire

Coach Behaviour Questionnaire

Social Validation Questionnaire

Semi-structured Interview Guide for Social Validation Focus Group



## Appendix D: Data Collection Documents for Study Three

### Demographic Information Questionnaire

# Coach Questionnaire

Personal details

Participant number:

D.O.B:

Age:

Gender: M/F

Team/club you are a coach of:

Number of years coaching:

Highest coaching qualification:

Level(s) you currently coach at (*please tick*)

Recreational

Club

County

University

Regional

International

Did you take part in this sport before becoming a coach? Yes/No

If yes, for how many years did you participate?

What was the highest standard you played at? (*please tick*)

Recreational

Club

County

University

Regional

International

Number of hours spent coaching per week:

Is coaching your full time profession? Yes/No

Date completed:

## **Appendix D: Data Collection Documents for Study Three**

The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (Mayer & Salovey, 2002)

**The test publisher does not permit reproduction of test items.**

## Appendix D: Data Collection Documents for Study Three

The Coaching Efficacy Scale (Feltz et al., 1999)

**Please indicate your degree of agreement (using a score ranging from 0-9) to the following sentences.**

	Not at all confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you in your ability to:		
1. Maintain confidence in your athletes.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
2. Recognise opposing team's strengths during competition.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
3. Mentally prepare athletes for game strategies.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
4. Understand competitive strategies.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
5. Instil an attitude of good moral character.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
6. Build the self-esteem of your athletes.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
7. Demonstrate the skills of your sport.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
8. Adapt to different game situations.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
9. Recognise opposing team's weaknesses during competition.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
10. Motivate your athletes.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
11. Make critical decisions during competition.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
12. Build team cohesion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
13. Instil an attitude of fair play among your athletes.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
14. Coach individual athletes on technique.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
15. Build the self-confidence of your athletes.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
16. Develop athlete's abilities.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
17. Maximise your team's strengths during competition.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
18. Recognise talent in athletes.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
19. Promote good sportsmanship.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
20. Detect skill errors.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
21. Adjust your game strategy to fit your team's talent.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	

22. Teach the skills of your sport.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

23. Build team confidence.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

24. Instil an attitude of respect for others.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

## Appendix D: Data Collection Documents for Study Three

Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q: Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004)

**Please indicate your degree of agreement (using a score ranging from 1-7) to the following sentences.**

	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			
1. I am close to my athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I am committed to my athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I like my athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. When I coach my athlete, I am at ease.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I trust my athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I feel that my sport career is promising with my athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. When I coach my athlete, I am responsive to his/her efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I respect my athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I appreciate my athlete's sacrifices in order to improve performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. When I coach my athlete, I am ready to do my best.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. When I coach my athlete, I adopt a friendly stance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Appendix D: Data Collection Documents for Study Three

The Coaching Behaviour Questionnaire (CBQ: Kenow & Williams, 1992)

**Please indicate your degree of agreement (using a score ranging from 1-4) to the following sentences.**

	Strongly disagree		Strongly agree	
1. Before and during a game, my coach clearly communicates what he/she expects us to do.	1	2	3	4
2. Criticism from my coach is done in a constructive manner.	1	2	3	4
3. I can talk to my coach about anything.	1	2	3	4
4. My coach's behaviour during a game makes me feel tight and tense.	1	2	3	4
5. My coach displays confidence in me as a player.	1	2	3	4
6. I feel comfortable asking my coach to clarify instructions.	1	2	3	4
7. When my coach gets too emotional, it alters his/her effectiveness to coach a game.	1	2	3	4
8. When I need it, my coach's tone of voice is soothing and reassuring.	1	2	3	4
9. My coach and I have a good relationship.	1	2	3	4
10. My coach is appropriately composed and relaxed.	1	2	3	4
11. Emotional outbursts from my coach help me get fired up.	1	2	3	4
12. The communication between my coach and I needs improvement.	1	2	3	4
13. My coach's mannerisms and displays of emotion contribute to me playing poorly.	1	2	3	4
14. My coach shows support for me even when I make a mistake.	1	2	3	4
15. During timeouts and half time, my coach emphasizes what should be done rather than what we didn't do.	1	2	3	4
16. My coach and I often disagree with each other.	1	2	3	4
17. My coach's mannerisms and display of emotions help me relax and play better.	1	2	3	4
18. My coach's sideline behaviour distracts my attention during a game.	1	2	3	4

19. My coach uses timeouts and half time to build our/my confidence.	1	2	3	4
20. I work well with my coach in achieving the goals set.	1	2	3	4
21. I respect my coach's efforts.	1	2	3	4
22. My coach controls his/her emotions well during games.	1	2	3	4
23. When my coach appears uptight, I don't play well.	1	2	3	4
24. My coach focuses on my personal development as an athlete.	1	2	3	4
25. My coach's behaviour during a game makes me worry about my performance.	1	2	3	4
26. I get more nervous watching my coach on the sidelines than I do playing a game.	1	2	3	4
27. My coach gets more stressed out when I/we play the top teams in the conference.	1	2	3	4
28. My coach makes me feel uptight.	1	2	3	4

**Appendix D: Data Collection Documents for Study Three**

Social Validation Questionnaire

# Evaluation Questionnaire

The following questions relate to your involvement in this coach development programme. Please provide your feedback regarding the content of the workshops, your satisfaction with the programme and any recommendations for future development.

Do you think your participation in the workshops was of value to you as a coach? *(Please circle your answer)*

**Yes      Somewhat      No**

Please expand on your answer

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Did you find the content useful and informative? *(Please circle your answer)*

**Yes      Somewhat      No**

Please expand on your answer

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Do you think taking part has changed your coaching practice in any way? (*Please circle your answer*)

**Yes      Somewhat      No**

Please expand on your answer

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Do you think your involvement has contributed to your personal development as a coach?  
(*Please circle your answer*)

**Yes      Somewhat      No**

Please expand on your answer

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Do you have any suggestions for how the workshop could be developed?

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## **Appendix D: Data Collection Documents for Study Three**

### Semi-structured Interview Guide for Social Validation Focus Group

#### Focus Group Interview Guide

##### **Significance of the goal**

1. As a coach, do you think your emotional abilities (i.e., emotional intelligence) are important?
  - Why are they important/not important?
2. Do you think workshops that address emotional ability development are of value to you?
  - Why do you think its valuable/invaluable

##### **Social appropriateness of procedures**

3. Did you find the content of the workshops informative and useful?
  - Why informative/not informative?
  - What was most beneficial to you?
  - What was least beneficial/not useful to you?
  - Were they relevant to your coaching practice?
  - Were they enjoyable?

##### **Future development of programme**

4. Do you have suggestions for how they workshops could be developed?

##### **Social importance of the effects**

5. Do you think taking part in the workshops has changed your coaching in anyway?
  - Have you noticed any differences in your behaviour/other outcomes?
  - Have you applied the skills into your coaching practice?
6. Do you think your involvement has contributed to your personal development as a coach?
7. Would you recommend these workshops to other coaches?
8. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## **Appendix E: SPSS Outputs for Study Three**

MSCEIT

CES

CART-Q

CBQ

## Appendix E: SPSS Outputs for Study Three

### MSCEIT

#### Descriptive Statistics

		Statistics																					
		PreTotEI	PostTotEI	FUTotEI	PerceivePre	PerceivePost	PerceiveFU	UsePre	UsePost	UseFU	UnderstandPre	UnderstandPost	UnderstandFU	ManagePre	ManagePost	ManageFU	ExperientialPre	ExperientialPost	ExperientialFU	ReasoningPre	ReasoningPost	ReasoningFU	
N	Valid	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		94.4667	99.6167	101.5667	97.7500	113.4000	114.1500	102.0000	102.4000	103.0333	94.9667	98.1167	99.0500	91.5500	93.4667	94.5333	99.8000	106.0333	107.3833	107.3833	91.7167	94.4667	95.3667
Std. Error of Mean		4.62484	3.81011	3.18859	4.44453	10.98156	10.81415	5.93290	2.88039	3.18294	2.42661	4.53280	3.51746	2.51220	4.22932	1.94228	6.32213	4.35298	5.00029	2.72708	4.41389	2.41629	
Median		94.1500	96.6000	99.0500	97.8000	103.1000	103.5500	100.9000	100.3000	103.2000	93.2500	97.7000	102.8000	89.6000	93.0500	95.3500	99.3500	105.3500	104.9000	89.5500	91.3500	93.2000	
Std. Deviation		11.32849	9.33283	7.81042	10.88683	26.89922	26.48915	14.53258	7.05549	7.79658	5.94396	11.10305	8.61597	6.15362	10.35967	4.75759	15.48599	10.66258	12.24817	6.67995	10.81178	5.91867	

#### Friedman Test

##### Total EI

###### Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

N	6
Chi-Square	3.000
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.223
Exact Sig.	.252
Point Probability	.068

a. Friedman Test

##### Perceive Emotions

###### Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

N	6
Chi-Square	4.957
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.084
Exact Sig.	.093
Point Probability	.021

a. Friedman Test

##### Use Emotions

###### Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

N	6
Chi-Square	.333
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.846
Exact Sig.	.956
Point Probability	.216

a. Friedman Test

##### Understand Emotions

###### Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

N	6
Chi-Square	1.333
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.513
Exact Sig.	.570
Point Probability	.141

a. Friedman Test

##### Manage Emotions

###### Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

N	6
Chi-Square	1.652
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.438
Exact Sig.	.524
Point Probability	.082

a. Friedman Test

##### Experiential Area

###### Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

N	6
Chi-Square	2.333
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.311
Exact Sig.	.430
Point Probability	.177

a. Friedman Test

##### Reasoning Area

###### Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

N	6
Chi-Square	1.333
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.513
Exact Sig.	.570
Point Probability	.141

a. Friedman Test

## Appendix E: SPSS Outputs for Study Three

CES

### Descriptive Statistics

		Statistics													
		PreTestTotalCEmean	PostTestTotalCEmean	FollowUpTotalCEmean	PreTestMotivationmean	PostTestMotivationmean	FollowUpMotivationmean	PreTestStrategymean	PostTestStrategymean	FollowUpStrategymean	PreTestTechniquemean	PostTestTechniquemean	FollowUpTechniquemean	PreTestCharacterBuildingmean	PostTestCharacterBuildingmean
N	Valid	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		7.4653	8.0417	8.0972	7.1667	8.0238	8.0952	7.2143	7.6905	7.7381	7.8333	8.1944	8.3333	7.8750	8.4583
Std. Error of Mean		0.44376	0.22872	0.23040	0.52348	0.25399	0.22335	0.53293	0.29833	0.36962	0.39675	0.25246	0.23960	0.40697	0.33177
Median		7.5833	8.0417	8.2292	7.2857	8.0714	8.0000	7.2857	7.6429	7.8571	7.8333	8.2500	8.3333	7.7500	8.8750
Std. Deviation		1.08699	0.56026	0.56437	1.28227	0.62215	0.54710	1.30540	0.73076	0.90539	0.97183	0.61839	0.58689	0.99687	0.81266

### Friedman Test

#### Total CE Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

N	6
Chi-Square	6.348
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.042
Exact Sig.	.042
Point Probability	.009

a. Friedman Test

#### Motivation Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

N	6
Chi-Square	4.333
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.115
Exact Sig.	.142
Point Probability	.069

a. Friedman Test

#### Strategy Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

N	6
Chi-Square	3.600
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.165
Exact Sig.	.191
Point Probability	.029

a. Friedman Test

#### Technique Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

N	6
Chi-Square	2.800
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.247
Exact Sig.	.367
Point Probability	.185

a. Friedman Test

### Character Building

#### Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

N	6
Chi-Square	2.000
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.368
Exact Sig.	.528
Point Probability	.167

a. Friedman Test

## Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

### Total CE

	Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>		
	PostTestTotalCEmean - PreTestTotalCEmean	FollowupTotalCEmean - PreTestTotalCEmean	FollowupTotalCEmean - PostTestTotalCEmean
Z	-1.153 <sup>b</sup>	-2.207 <sup>b</sup>	-.674 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.249	.027	.500
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	.313	.031	.625
Exact Sig. (1-tailed)	.156	.016	.313
Point Probability	.047	.016	.094

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks.

## Appendix E: SPSS Outputs for Study Three

### CART-Q

#### Descriptive Statistics

		Statistics											
		PreTestTo talCARme an	PostTestT otalCARm ean	FollowupT otalCARm ean	PreTestCl oseness mean	PostTestC loseness mean	FollowupC loseness mean	PreTestCo mmitment mean	PostTestC ommitme ntmean	FollowupC ommitme ntmean	PreTestCo mplement aritymean	PostTestC ompleme ntaritymea n	FollowupC ompleme ntaritymea n
N	Valid	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		6.1667	6.5758	6.6667	6.2083	6.5000	6.7083	6.0000	6.6667	6.5000	6.2500	6.5833	6.7500
Std. Error of Mean		0.20918	0.20009	0.17825	0.20833	0.25000	0.18727	0.27217	0.17213	0.22361	0.18257	0.20069	0.15811
Median		6.1364	6.8182	6.9091	6.1250	6.7500	7.0000	6.0000	6.8333	6.6667	6.1250	6.7500	6.8750
Std. Deviation		0.51238	0.49012	0.43662	0.51031	0.61237	0.45871	0.66667	0.42164	0.54772	0.44721	0.49160	0.38730

#### Friedman Test

Total CAR	
Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
N	6
Chi-Square	9.294
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.010
Exact Sig.	.006
Point Probability	.006

a. Friedman Test

Closeness	
Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
N	6
Chi-Square	6.118
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.047
Exact Sig.	.049
Point Probability	.012

a. Friedman Test

Commitment	
Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
N	6
Chi-Square	9.294
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.010
Exact Sig.	.006
Point Probability	.006

a. Friedman Test

Complementarity	
Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
N	6
Chi-Square	7.600
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.022
Exact Sig.	.025
Point Probability	.025

a. Friedman Test



## Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

### Total CAR

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>			
	PostTestTotalC AR - PreTestTotalCA R	FollowupTotalC AR - PreTestTotalCA R	FollowupTotalC AR - PostTestTotalC AR
Z	-2.023 <sup>b</sup>	-2.032 <sup>b</sup>	-1.342 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	.042	.180
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	.063	.063	.500
Exact Sig. (1-tailed)	.031	.031	.250
Point Probability	.031	.031	.250

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks.

### Closeness

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>			
	PostTestClosene ess - PreTestClosene ss	FollowupClosene ss - PreTestClosenes s	FollowupClosen ess - PostTestClosen ess
Z	-.921 <sup>b</sup>	-1.826 <sup>b</sup>	-1.890 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.357	.068	.059
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	.500	.125	.125
Exact Sig. (1-tailed)	.250	.063	.063
Point Probability	.125	.063	.063

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks.

## Commitment

	Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>		
	PostTestCommitment - PreTestCommitment	FollowupCommitment - PreTestCommitment	FollowupCommitment - PostTestCommitment
Z	-2.032 <sup>b</sup>	-2.060 <sup>b</sup>	-1.342 <sup>c</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	.039	.180
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	.063	.063	.500
Exact Sig. (1-tailed)	.031	.031	.250
Point Probability	.031	.031	.250

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks.

c. Based on positive ranks.

## Complementarity

	Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>		
	PostTestComplementaritymean - PreTestComplementaritymean	FollowupComplementaritymean - PreTestComplementaritymean	FollowupComplementaritymean - PostTestComplementaritymean
Z	-1.604 <sup>b</sup>	-2.041 <sup>b</sup>	-1.342 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.109	.041	.180
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	.250	.063	.500
Exact Sig. (1-tailed)	.125	.031	.250
Point Probability	.125	.031	.250

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks

## Appendix E: SPSS Outputs for Study Three

CBQ

### Descriptive Statistics

Statistics					
		PreTestEmotionalComposuremean	PostTestEmotionalComposuremean	PreTestNegativeActivationmean	PostTestNegativeActivationmean
N	Valid	6	6	6	6
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.5417	1.1667	1.8095	1.1429
Std. Error of Mean		0.12360	0.05270	0.12599	0.05216
Median		1.5000	1.1250	1.8571	1.1429
Std. Deviation		0.30277	0.12910	0.30861	0.12778

### Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>			
	PostTestEmotionalComposuremean - PreTestEmotionalComposuremean	PostTestNegativeActivationmean - PreTestNegativeActivationmean	
Z	-2.214 <sup>b</sup>	-2.214 <sup>b</sup>	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.027	.027	
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	.031	
Exact Sig. (1-tailed)	.016	.016	
Point Probability	.016	.016	

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on positive ranks.

## **Appendix F: Materials for Emotional Ability Development**

### **Programme (Pilot Study)**

Overview of Workshop Content

PowerPoint Presentation Slides

Participant Workbooks

## **Appendix F: Materials for Emotional Ability Development Programme (Pilot Study)**

### Overview of Workshop Content

#### **Workshop 1: Introduction**

The primary purpose of workshop one was to provide coaches with an introduction into the programme and introduce the role of emotions in coaching practice specifically focusing on coaches' emotional abilities. After providing a brief introduction into sport psychology, group discussion was initiated around the key psychological attributes perceived to underpin coaching effectiveness. Through this discussion an overview of the research findings from study one of this thesis was presented with particular emphasis was directed towards coaches' emotional abilities. A secondary purpose of the workshop was to introduce the concept of emotion and enhance knowledge and understanding of how emotion relates to coaching practice and coaching effectiveness. To achieve this, the concept of emotion was briefly discussed and coaches took part in an activity to encourage them to consider how emotions relate to coaching practice and can influence their own coaching effectiveness. In this activity coaches were given a list of various emotions and asked to, firstly, define what that emotion meant to them and then provide an example of when they had experienced that emotion when coaching. As a group, the coaches then reflected on whether they felt that experience was positive or negative and provided reasons for their answer. Coaches then took part in an activity that aimed to identify coaches' beliefs regarding the characteristics of an effective coach. As a group, coaches then discussed how such beliefs may influence their coaching practice.

## **Workshop 2: Emotional Ability Development**

The primary aims of workshop two were to a) provide an introduction into the key emotional abilities (i.e., emotional awareness, emotional understanding, and emotional management) identified within studies one and two of this thesis, and b) introduce strategies to support emotional ability development. To begin the workshop, an overview of Mayer and Salovey's (1997) ability model of emotional intelligence was presented and discussed in relation to the findings of studies one and two of this thesis. Each emotional ability (i.e., emotional awareness, emotional understanding, and emotional management) was then introduced separately and several strategies were introduced related to emotional ability development.

In relation to emotional awareness, coaches took part in two activities. Firstly, coaches took part in a behavioural tendencies activity that aimed to enhance coaches awareness of how they generally behave (e.g., body language, actions, communication) when experiencing various emotions. Secondly, coaches took part in an activity designed to promote conscious attention to experienced emotions. This activity involved 'checking in' with oneself to identify physiological responses in order to label felt emotions. In relations to emotional understanding, coaches took part in a coach-athlete role play activity that encouraged coaches to consider the causes and consequences of an athlete's emotional response in a specific situation. Finally, coaches were introduced to two emotional management strategies that can be utilised within their own coaching practice. Firstly, coaches took part in a 'forward thinking' activity that involved identifying and responding to 'what if' scenarios. Secondly, coaches took part in an activity to help them develop their own competition routines. Competition routines were discussed in relation to the importance of coach consistency during competitions, and how consistent/inconsistent coach behaviours may affect their athletes' emotional responses.

# Coaching from the inside out

Lets talk about emotion

Laura Hodgson

Sheffield Hallam University Centre for Sport and Exercise Science

## What to expect...

Todays session

- What is psychology?
- Coaches' attributes
- What are emotions?
- Emotions and coaching
- What does an effective coach look like?

## Foundations of psychology

Myth                      Reality

Behaviour    Thought

Emotion

Behaviour    Thought

Emotion

## What psychological attributes do world class coaches possess?

Focus    Attitude

Resilience    Drive for personal development

Athlete-centred    Confidence

Emotional management    Emotional awareness

Emotional understanding

## Emotional awareness

“We would watch other people and I would say ‘they are good at this’ and if they are able to critically analyse somebody else without reflecting back on themselves or whatever it shows that they are starting to think logically and not emotionally”

## Emotional understanding

“It’s just understanding how I am feeling... What influence am I going to have when both people are potentially disappointed?”

“I can be quite matter of fact or I can ball them out, it’s whatever has an impact”

## Emotional management

"It's knowing how to help someone emotionally"

"When she got to the final she was mobbed by 100 people backstage... it was not won at all but all these people were celebrating like it was a carnival, and you're [athlete] just about to [compete] and try and win the biggest [competition] of your life. I went in and I pulled her out, took her to the other side 'forget about all these people' and I talked her through it 'it's just exactly the same as practice'... and by the time she went on she did a good job in getting her head back in the right place, so it worked."

## What are emotions?



## Knowledge of emotions

- Was it easy to describe the different emotions?
- Positive or negative?
- Could you think of three alternatives?
- How can you use this with your athletes?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVf0hSBEKf8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StpO1z8PMCU>

## Emotions

The facts:

- An emotion has three components
  - Cognitive
  - Physical
  - Behavioural
- Subjective interpretation
  - You're responsible for how you react
  - How you react may be completely different to someone else
- 6 basic emotions



## Emotions and coaching



How do emotions affect your ability to coach?



Impacts your ability to make decisions



Influences communication



Directs your focus



Impacts how your brain processes information



Impacts your body language



Address emotional reactions in others



"When I've coached the best it's again linked to me understanding what's going on, so I'm not just being too focused on tactics and trying to see where the opponent is making mistakes. Because you can give the player, your player, all the tactical advice in the world but if they're not in control of what they are doing, their emotional control, they're not going to take any notice of it anyway."

## What does an effective coach look like?



## What did you take from this session?

# Appendix F: Materials for Emotional Ability Development Programme (Pilot Study)

## PowerPoint Presentation Slides (Workshop Two)

# Coaching from the inside out

Lets talk about emotion

Laura Hodgson  
[lhodgson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:lhodgson@shu.ac.uk)

# What to expect...

Today's session:

- Defining Emotional Intelligence
- Coaches emotional abilities
- Introducing strategies to enhance emotional abilities

# Emotional Intelligence

What is emotional intelligence?

Who in your sport would you say is emotionally intelligent?

- What makes you think they are emotionally intelligent?
- What qualities do they have?

# Definition of Emotional Intelligence

"The ability to **perceive accurately**, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to **understand emotion** and emotional knowledge; and the ability to **regulate emotions** to promote emotional and intellectual growth"

Mayer and Salovey (1997)

**Effective coaches use their emotional intelligence**

# Elite coaches' Emotional Abilities

```
graph LR; A(Emotional awareness) --> B(Emotional understanding); B --> C(Emotional management)
```

Emotional awareness: "I'm pretty good at reading my athletes emotionally"

Emotional understanding: "It's just understanding how I am feeling... What value can that add to the situation"

Emotional management: "Being prepared and organised helped in my emotional control"

# What is Emotional awareness?

Being able to accurately recognise emotions present in ourselves and others.

Emotionally intelligent coaches have the ability to **identify** the emotions they themselves and the people around them are experiencing **in the present moment**.

**Why is emotional awareness important in coaching?**

## Emotional awareness

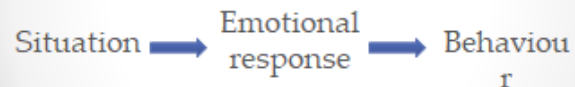
It's important that coaches are able to:

- ✓ Recognise their own emotions and related behavioural tendencies.
- ✓ Accurately recognise and label the emotions of others.
- ✓ Accept emotions without judgment or avoidance.

## Building emotional awareness

Awareness of behavioural tendencies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIajUuRII7Q>



Use past experiences to identify typical responses

## Building emotional awareness

### Situation

When... you are faced with a confrontational situation

### Emotion

You often feel... very anxious and insecure

### Thoughts

You often think... you are being personally attacked

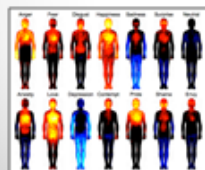
### Behaviour

You often react... by raising your voice, being defensive and walking away from the situation

## Building emotional awareness

Paying attention to emotions

- Step 1. Acknowledge emotion is present
- Step 2. Identify physiological responses
- Step 3. Label the felt emotions



Consciously 'check in' with self

What do different emotions feel like?

Nummenmaa et al. (2013)

## Emotional understanding

What is emotional understanding?

- Understanding relations between different emotions and their complexities.
- Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions.

Why is emotional understanding important in coaching?

## Causes and consequences

Identify the cause(s) of the emotional response

- In self- thoughts, others behaviour, performance outcome etc.
- In others - performance, setback, coach behaviour etc.

Identify the possible consequences

- What effect is the emotional reaction having?
- Is it useful to the situation?
- "You want to go absolutely mental but you know that's not going to be helpful"

Role-play activity

## Emotional management

Anyone can become angry - that is easy, but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose, and in the right way - that is not within everybody's power and is not easy

Aristotle

Why is emotional management important in coaching?

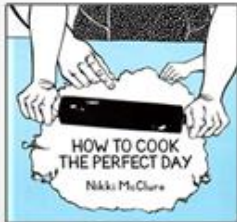
## Emotional management

Two types of management strategy:

1. Strategies used to prevent an emotional reaction
2. Strategies used to respond to an emotional reaction

Prevent	Respond
Being prepared	Relaxation techniques
Forward thinking	Refocus
Direct focus away from self	Emotional expression
Realistic evaluation	Emotional suppression

## Forward thinking



Adversity is a given not a possibility

What if...

"It's kind of that scenario thought process of going round and round in your head"

## Emotional management

### Emotional management:

Consciously regulating emotions to levels perceived to be facilitative for a particular situation.

### Emotional management of others:

Deliberate attempts to influence the emotions of another person for a desired outcome.

- o Causing an emotional reaction
- o Preventing an emotional reaction
- o Responding to an emotional reaction

Previous experiences – what have you done in the past?

## Emotional management strategies

### Sticking to routine:

- Your consistency on competition day is really important.
- Do you have a competition routine?
- What do you need to make sure you stick to?
- Create your own competition day routine.

What did you take from this session?

# Coaching from the inside out

Let's talk about emotions

Workshop 1

Exercise booklet

Laura Hodgson

[l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk)

# Psychological Attributes

What psychological attributes do you think world-class coaches in your sport possess? Provide examples of how you think coaches demonstrate these different attributes in their coaching.

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- 
- 
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-

# Knowledge of Emotions

In the following table:

- Provide a brief description of each emotion, how you would describe it.
- Write down a time you experienced that emotion when you were coaching. What was the situation, how do you think it affected you?
- Write down whether you perceived that emotion to be positive or negative.
- Name three alternative emotions that you think are similar.

Emotion	Description	Experience	Pos/Neg	Alternatives
Excited				

<b>Irritated</b>				
<b>Determined</b>				
<b>Discouraged</b>				



<b>Anxious</b>				
<b>Passionate</b>				

# Emotions and Coaching

How do you think emotions can affect your ability to coach well or coach effectively?

Feel free to give specific examples of different emotions and use your own coaching experiences to provide examples.

**Example:** Emotions can affect my focus and concentration

Being really nervous can take my attention away from what I'm doing when I'm trying to coach, as I get easily distracted.

# What makes an Effective Coach?

Consider what you believe are the qualities of an effective coach. As a starting point, think about how they behave/act, how you think they feel, how emotional/unemotional they are, how they interact with their athletes etc.

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# Coaching from the inside out

Let's talk about emotions

Workshop 2

Exercise booklet

Laura Hodgson

[l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk)

# Emotional Awareness

## Emotions and Behaviours

Write down how you think you generally act/behave when you experience different emotions. Think about your body language, how you communicate and how you interact with your athletes.

When I'm...	I often...
Nervous	
Excited	
Angry	
Frustrated	
Happy	

# Understanding Causes and Consequences

An important part of emotional understanding is being able to understand the causes and consequences of the emotions you yourself experience and those that other people experience. The role-play exercise you are about to do will help you to recognise how thinking about the causes and consequences of emotions can help to inform your decisions and actions when coaching.

After acting out the role-play, answer the following questions.

**How has your athlete responded to this situation emotionally?**

**What has caused their emotional response?**

**What are the potential consequences (positive or negative)?**

**What would you do in this situation to be most effective?**

# Forward Thinking

Adverse situations when coaching can cause intense emotional responses that impact your ability to coach most effectively. Forward thinking is a strategy you can use to help prepare yourself for such situations.

Read the following scenarios and then plan what you would do in that situation to try and handle it effectively. In the final two rows, think of your scenarios that could happen when you are coaching.

Scenario	How would you prepare yourself to be able to handle this situation effectively?
<b>Athlete/team performs better than expected and has confirmed their place in the final of a major competition.</b>	
<b>One of your athletes is just about to compete and they have turned to you and said 'I can't do this, I'm not ready'</b>	

# Competition Routine

Creating a competition routine and using it on competition day can help improve your consistency when coaching at competitions. This routine should include all the important things you need to do on competition day during specific time frames, e.g. pre-competition, half-time, full time etc.

Timeframe	Action points



## **Appendix G: Materials for Emotional Ability Development**

### **Programme (Study Three)**

Overview of Workshop Content

PowerPoint Presentation Slides

Participant Workbooks

## **Appendix G: Materials for Emotional Ability Development Programme (Study Three)**

### Overview of Workshop Content

#### **Workshop 1: Introduction**

The primary purpose of workshop one was to provide coaches with an introduction into the programme and introduce the role of emotions in coaching practice specifically focusing on coaches' emotional abilities in relation to perceived coaching effectiveness. Initially, this workshop gave a brief introduction into sport and performance psychology and explored through open discussion why sport psychology and psychological development is just as important for coaches as it is for athletes. Group discussion was initiated around the key psychological attributes found to underpin coaching effectiveness with particular emphasis directed towards identifying and understanding coaches' emotional abilities. An overview of Mayer and Salovey's (1997) ability model of emotional intelligence was presented and discussed in relation to coaching practice. A secondary purpose of the workshop was to introduce the concept of emotion and enhance knowledge and understanding of how emotion relates to coaching practice and coaching effectiveness. To achieve this, the concept of emotion was briefly discussed and coaches took part in two activities to encourage them to consider how emotions relate to coaching practice and can influence their own coaching effectiveness. For example, in one task coaches were given a list of various emotions and asked to, firstly, define what that emotion meant to them and then provide an example of when they had experienced that emotion when coaching. As a group, the coaches then reflected on whether they felt that experience was positive or negative and provided reasons for their answer. At the end of the session coaches were asked to complete an observation task before the next scheduled workshop by observing another coach's practice (real life observation or video observation). The intention of the task was to encourage coaches to continue to actively think about how emotions can influence coaching practice and coaching effectiveness.

## **Workshop 2: Coaches' Knowledge**

The primary aim of workshop two was to enhance coaches' intra- and interpersonal knowledge by addressing three key concepts (i.e., values, beliefs, and personality). Specifically, these concepts were discussed in relation to how coaches' awareness and understanding of such factors in themselves and their athletes can influence their coaching practice and their ability to coach most effectively. Firstly, coaches took part in two activities that encouraged them to explore their own core coaching values and think about how such values can influence their coaching practice. For example, one activity required coaches to identify and define their coaching values while also recognising attitudes and behaviours associated with each value. Coaches' beliefs were discussed in relation to identifying an ideal coach persona. Specifically, coaches took part in an activity that aimed to identify the perceived characteristics of an effective coach. As a group, coaches then discussed how such beliefs may influence their coaching practice.

The final aspect of this workshop was directed towards enhancing coaches' awareness and understanding of their own personality characteristics as well as the personality characteristics of their athletes. To explore coaches' awareness and understanding of their own personality characteristics all coaches completed the Mayer-Briggs online personality test before taking part in an activity that aimed to explore such characteristics in more detail. In the following activity, coaches were then encouraged to think about their athletes personality characteristics in order to provoke discussion and understanding centered on athletes individual needs. At the end of the workshop, coaches were asked to create one or two coaching objectives and an action plan of how that objective could be achieved before the next scheduled workshop.

### **Workshop 3: Emotional Awareness**

The primary aims of workshop three were to provide coaches with the opportunity to broaden their understanding of how emotional awareness relates to coaching effectiveness, and to also provide strategies that can be used to help coaches develop their own emotional awareness skills (i.e., ability to recognise one's own emotions accurately, ability to recognise others emotions accurately). In this workshop coaches were encouraged to discuss why they felt it was important to be aware of emotions and how emotional information can be recognised and identified within their coaching environment. The remainder of the workshop focused on introducing several strategies coaches could use to help develop their own emotional awareness skills. In relation to their own emotions, coaches took part in an activity designed to promote conscious attention to experienced emotions. This activity involved 'checking in' with oneself to identify physiological responses in order to label felt emotions. In addition, coaches took part in an activity to help build awareness of their behavioural tendencies when experiencing different emotions and also situations that can elicit certain emotional responses.

The strategies discussed in relation to emotional awareness of others (i.e., their athletes) included developing observational techniques (i.e., identifying sources of emotional information, recognising triggers) and communication techniques (i.e., questioning style, active listening). Coach-athlete role-play exercises were used to allow coaches to have the opportunity to practice utilising the techniques discussed in a 'real life' scenario. At the end of the workshop coaches were encouraged to think about how they could implement some of the strategies discussed in the workshop into their own coaching practice. Coaches were then asked to create one or two coaching objectives and an action plan of how that objective could be achieved before the next scheduled workshop.

## **Workshop 4: Emotional Understanding and Emotional Management**

Workshop four was delivered with two primary aims, a) to provide coaches with an introduction into what emotional understanding means and how it can be developed and b) to define emotional management and discuss emotional management strategies that coaches can use to help manage their own emotions. Emotional understanding was discussed in relation to being the most cognitive emotional ability involving knowledge of emotions and the ability to form evaluations. To provoke discussion on the complex nature of emotions, coaches completed a knowledge of emotions activity that required coaches to organise various emotions based on similarities and differences. The importance of understanding the causes and consequences of emotional reactions was then discussed and coaches took part in a coach-athlete role-play activity. Specifically, in pairs, coaches were instructed to act out a given scenario where one coach played the role of the athlete and the other played the role of the coach. The coach was then required to identify the emotions being experienced by their athlete and the cause of the emotional reaction. Coaches then discussed how they would potentially respond in that situation, as a group.

In relation to emotional management, coaches were presented with several strategies that can be utilised to help them manage their own emotions more effectively. Strategies involved within the workshop included, cognitive reconstruction, forward thinking, preparation, and redirecting focus. The cognitive reconstruction activity involved coaches identifying common negative thoughts, identifying thought stopping strategies, and, reframing negative thoughts. Forward thinking was discussed in relation to identifying and responding to ‘what if’ scenarios. In relation to preparation coaches were required to develop a pre-performance preparation plan, and redirecting focus involved coaches developing individual refocus routines. At the end of the workshop coaches were asked to create one or two coaching objectives and an action plan of how that objective could be achieved before the next scheduled workshop.

## **Workshop 5: Emotional Management**

The aim of workshop five was to continue discussions into the importance of emotional management with a particular focus on strategies coaches can utilise within their own coaching practice to influence the emotional management of their athletes. Specifically, emotional management in others was described in relation to deliberately causing, preventing or responding to emotional reactions for desired outcomes. In the first activity, coaches were encouraged to think about how they can create and facilitate an emotionally supportive environment for their athletes. The second activity was directed towards discussing the importance of coaches' behavioural consistency in relation to athletes' emotional responses. To help promote behavioural consistency coaches were encouraged to develop their own competition routines that highlighted key action points required at different timeframes (e.g., pre-competition, half-time). Situation reappraisal was then introduced as an emotional management strategy that encouraged coaches to think about how they can help athletes to alter their perceptions of situations that are causing detrimental emotional responses. Several athlete scenarios were presented where coaches were required to detail how they would respond to that particular situation to help their athlete reappraise the situation.

The remainder of the workshop provided an overview of the programme and the key concepts discussed within each individual workshop with the opportunity for questions and open discussion. For the last activity of the workshop coaches took part in a reflective exercise that aimed to connect the emotional abilities discussed within the workshops. Specifically, coaches were required to reflect on a recent situation by answering several questions related to each emotional ability. The intention of this activity was to encourage coaches to reflect on their own emotional experiences.

# Appendix G: Materials for Emotional Ability Development Programme (Study Three)

## PowerPoint Presentations Slides (Workshop One)

# Coaching from the inside out

## Emotion in Coaching

Laura Hodgson  
[lhodgson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:lhodgson@shu.ac.uk)



Sheffield Hallam University | Centre for Sport and Exercise Science

# What to expect...

Programme overview:

- Introduction into sport and performance psychology
- Identifying the psychological attributes of coaches
- Developing key psychological skills
- Interactive workshops
- Feedback

# Sport and performance psychology

- Perform consistently at your best
- Set foundations for optimal performance



# Foundations of psychology

Myth | Reality



# Why is psychology important for coaches?

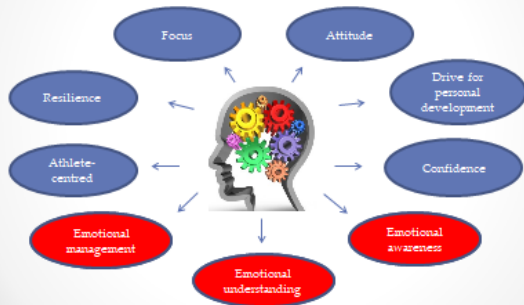
Coaches are performers too!

- Handle pressure
- Make quick decisions
- Feel confident
- Deal with unanticipated situations
- Stay focused

You can't coach with an empty head!



## What psychological attributes do world class coaches possess?



## Emotional Intelligence

What is emotional intelligence?

Who in your sport would you say is emotionally intelligent?

- What makes you think they are emotionally intelligent?
- What qualities do they have?

## Definition of Emotional Intelligence

“The ability to **perceive accurately**, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to **understand emotion** and emotional knowledge; and the ability to **regulate emotions** to promote emotional and intellectual growth”

Mayer and Salovey (1997)

**Elite coaches use their emotional abilities**

## Emotional Intelligence

It's important that coaches:

- Are able to recognise their own emotions, in the moment.
- Use strategies and techniques to help them recognise others emotions.
- Understand how emotions relate to thoughts and behaviours.
- Understand how emotions can change.
- Are able to manage their own emotions most effectively.
- Are able to help other people manage their emotions effectively.

## What are emotions?



## Emotions

The facts:

- An emotion has three components
  - Cognitive
  - Physical
  - Behavioural
- Subjective interpretation
  - You're responsible for how you react
  - How you react may be completely different to someone else
- 6 basic emotions

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVf0hSBEKf8>





# Emotions and coaching



How can emotions affect your ability to coach?



Impacts your ability to make decisions



Influences communication



Directs your focus



Impacts how your brain processes information



Impacts your body language



Address emotional reactions in others

## What did you take from this session?

## Before next workshop

- Finish off any unfinished work from the session.
- Can you recognise emotionally intelligent/unintelligent behaviour?
  - Observe: Behaviours, reactions, outcomes.
  - Effective/ineffective?
  - What would you do in that situation?

# Appendix G: Materials for Emotional Ability Development Programme (Study Three)

## PowerPoint Presentations Slides (Workshop Two)

# Coaching from the inside out

## Emotion in Coaching


Laura Hodgson  
[l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:l.hodgson@shu.ac.uk)

## What to expect...

Today's session:

- Understand different factors that drive performance
- Develop intrapersonal knowledge (i.e., self-awareness)
- Develop interpersonal knowledge (i.e., awareness of others)

## Performance drivers



Behaviour

Thoughts  
Emotions  
Beliefs/Attitudes  
Core values  
Personality

## Performance drivers

**It's important that coaches:**

- Understand how their own values, beliefs and personality traits can influence their emotions, thoughts and behaviours.
- Are able to recognise when their values, beliefs and personality traits are impacting a situation.
- Understands the values, beliefs and personality traits of others and uses this information to guide thinking and action.

## Understanding values and beliefs

**Values:** What we believe to be of the greatest importance and highest priority in our lives.

**Beliefs:** An idea, a principle accepted as true, especially without proof.

What are your core values as a coach?

## Understanding beliefs

**Beliefs about ourselves**

- I am a people person
- I am a terrible public speaker

**Beliefs about others**

- He doesn't try hard enough
- She is an emotional person

**Beliefs about the world**

- You have to work hard to achieve anything in life
- If you treat others with kindness, it will be reciprocated

## What does an effective coach look like?



## Understanding beliefs



'false beliefs'

## Understanding beliefs

### Scenario:

One of your athletes is getting frustrated that they are unable to perform a particular skill successfully. As they get more frustrated and annoyed with themselves they start to say things like:

"I can't do this, it's too difficult"

"This is too hard for me, I'll never get it right"

### Coach response:

What would you do in this situation to try and respond in an effective way?

## Understanding personality



Personality refers to the characteristics that make a person unique

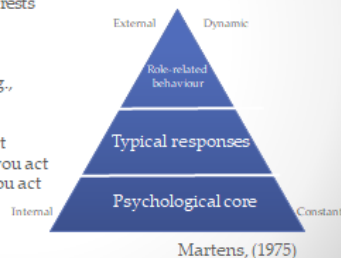
Why is it important to understand your personality?

## Understanding personality

**Psychological core:** 'the real you', made up of your values, beliefs, attitudes, interests etc.

**Typical responses:** How you usually respond to the world around you (e.g., typically shy and quiet).

**Role-related behaviour:** How you act based on your social situation (how you act as a coach may be different to how you act with your friends)



## Understanding personality

What are your personality traits?



What are the strengths and weaknesses of your personality?

How can you use this information intelligently?

## Understanding personality

Why is it important to be aware of your athletes  
personality characteristics?

What are your athletes personality characteristics?

How do they differ from yours?

How can you use this information intelligently?

### Key points:

- Don't put people in boxes
- No personality is the right personality
- How can you work with your athletes personality to get the best out of them?

What did you take from  
this session?

# Appendix G: Materials for Emotional Ability Development Programme (Study Three)

## PowerPoint Presentations Slides (Workshop Three)

# Coaching from the inside out

## Emotion in Coaching

Laura Hodgson  
[lhodgson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:lhodgson@shu.ac.uk)

## What to expect...

Today's session:

- What is emotional awareness and why is it important?
- Strategies to develop emotional awareness skills

## What is Emotional awareness?

Ability to accurately identify emotions present in ourselves and other people.

Emotionally intelligent coaches have the ability to **identify** the emotions they themselves and the people around them are experiencing **in the present moment**.

**Why is emotional awareness important in coaching?**

## Emotional awareness

It's important that coaches are able to:

- Recognise their own emotions and related behavioural tendencies.
- Accurately recognise and label the emotions of others.
- Accept emotions without judgment or avoidance.

## Emotional awareness

"It's being able to say **what are you feeling right now**. To describe your emotion, and it's not I feel great or I feel [rubbish], it's to actually go into **what it is that you are actually feeling...** My feelings are that I normally get sweaty palms, I get this feeling in my stomach and I know that I'm going to explode"

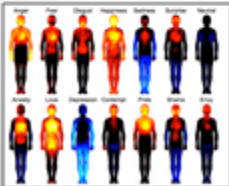
**Strategies to build your own emotional awareness:**

- Pay more attention to emotions
- Build awareness of behavioural tendencies
- Develop emotional integrity

## Building emotional awareness

Paying attention to emotions

Step 1. Acknowledge emotion is present  
Step 2. Identify physiological responses  
Step 3. Label the felt emotions



Consciously 'check in' with self  
What do different emotions feel like?

Nummenmaa et al, (2013)

## Building emotional awareness

Awareness of behavioural tendencies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFajUuR117Q>

Situation → Emotional response → Behaviour

Use past experiences to identify typical responses

## Building emotional awareness

### Situation

When... you are faced with a confrontational situation

### Emotion

You often feel... very anxious and insecure

### Thoughts

You often think... you are being personally attacked

### Behaviour

You often react... by raising your voice, being defensive and walking away from the situation

## Building emotional awareness

Emotional integrity

The ability to acknowledge your true emotions and feelings without judging them.

"In London 2012... The biggest competition that I've ever coached in and my heart was pumping and I thought 'I'm not even playing'... I think **its being accepting** and saying to myself that **it's ok to be nervous, it's what I do when I'm nervous that's important**"

**Honesty and Acceptance**

## Building emotional awareness

### Sources of emotional information:

- o Facial expressions
- o Body language (e.g. posture)
- o Reactions to environment (i.e. behavioural responses)
- o Communication (e.g. pitch, rhythm and tone of voice, what's being said)

### Strategies to build emotional awareness of others:

- o Observation
- o Communication
  - Questioning
  - Active listening

## Observation



"It's seeing how they are reacting to points, their body language, the comments that they are making"

**What's normal what's not normal?**

## Observation

### Recognising triggers

- Behavioural changes
- Situational/environmental changes

"I have learnt the markers and the triggers that cause that to happen (emotional reaction), so as soon as I get a feel for those I'll try and address the issues"

**Accurate observations provide information for decisions and actions**

## Communication

Depending on when you debrief depends on what they will get out of it... it was about **when I felt they [athlete] were in the right state** to actually be reflective. So we would watch other people and I would say 'they are good at this' and if they [athlete] are **able to critically analyse** somebody else without reflecting back on themselves or whatever it shows that they are starting to **think logically and not emotionally**. So it's almost how emotional are they? How raw is it?

## Communication

### Effective questioning

**Open questions** – An invitation to explore, consider options and find solutions "What just happened there?"

**Probing questions** – Go beyond the initial answer, explore in greater depth "Tell me more about that"

**Evaluating questions** – Appraisal of the situation "What could you try and do next time?"

## Communication

### Ineffective questioning

**Closed questions** – Elicit yes/ no responses or gather information "Is that affecting you?"

**Leading questions** – Elicit a desired response, and can come across as judgmental "You're angry aren't you, what's the matter?"

**Why questions** – Asking why can provoke defensive responses "Why did you just react like that?"

**Complex questions** – Asking more than one question at the same time "What can you do next time to handle the situation better, and how is it going to help your performance?"

## Communication

### Communication blockers

- **Quick reassurance** - "Don't worry about that"
- **Advising** - "I think the best thing to do is..."
- **Interrupting** – Shows a lack of interest

## Communication

**Active listening:** Concentrating on what is being said, rather than passively 'hearing' the speaker

### Non-verbal messages

- Facial expression
- Eye contact
- Gestures/body language
- Mirroring
- Distraction

### Verbal messages

- Questioning
- Reflection
- Summarising

**The biggest communication problem is we do not listen to understand. We listen to reply.**

What did you take from this session?

# Appendix G: Materials for Emotional Ability Development Programme (Study Three)

## PowerPoint Presentations Slides (Workshop Four)

# Coaching from the inside out

## Emotion in Coaching

Laura Hodgson  
[lhodgson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:lhodgson@shu.ac.uk)

## What to expect...

Today's session:

- What is emotional understanding and how can it be developed?
- How can you manage your own emotions effectively?

## Emotional understanding

**What is emotional understanding?**

- Understanding the relations between emotions and their complexities
- Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions
- Understanding the relationship between emotions, cognition and behaviours.

Why is emotional understanding important in coaching?

## Relations between emotions

**Similarities and differences**

- Understanding the similarities between different emotions
- Understanding the differences between different emotions

**Emotional complexity**

- Combinations of emotions
- Experiencing 'mixed emotions'

**Emotional progression**

- Understanding how emotions change, develop and progress
- Predict the emotional future

## Relations between emotions

	Negative	Positive
Intense		
Passive		

## Causes and consequences

**Identify the cause(s) of the emotional response**

- In self- thoughts, others behaviour, performance outcome etc.
- In others - performance, setback, coach behaviour etc.

**Identify the possible consequences**

- What effect is the emotional reaction having?
- Is it useful to the situation?
- "You want to go absolutely mental but you know that's not going to be helpful"

### Role-play activity



## Emotion, cognition and behaviours

### The power of words and actions

- Understand how your words can affect your athletes emotionally
- "I think carefully about whether my athletes will like what I am saying"
- Understanding how your actions/behaviours can affect your athletes emotionally
- "If the coach loses it, the team loses it"



## Emotion, cognition and behaviours

**Scenario:** Your athlete has just underperformed and been knocked out of an important competition in the first round

### Coach response:

- Shout at them
- Consolidate and support
- Motivational pick up
- Walk away without speaking to them
- Analyse performance

**What else?**

**Understand what your athlete(s) needs**

## Emotional management

Anyone can become angry - that is easy, but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose, and in the right way - that is not within everybody's power and is not easy

Aristotle

Why is emotional management important in coaching?

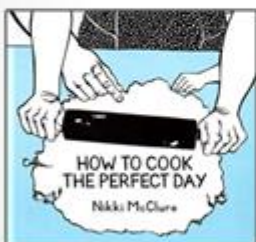
## Emotional management

Two types of management strategy:

1. Strategies used to prevent an emotional reaction
2. Strategies used to respond to an emotional reaction

Prevent	Respond
Being prepared	Relaxation techniques
Forward thinking	Refocus
Direct focus away from self	Emotional expression
Realistic evaluation	Emotional suppression

## Forward thinking



Adversity is a given not a possibility

What if...

"It's kind of that scenario thought process of going round and round in your head"

## Preparation

"By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail"

Benjamin Franklin

Physical preparation	Mental preparation
Routines	Positive self-talk
Familiarity with venue	"Less is more"
Daily schedule/written training plan	Goal-setting
Analyse competition	Imagery

"I wasn't nervous because I knew there wasn't anything I hadn't done"

"Being prepared helped me a lot in my emotional control"

## Positive self-talk



## Refocus

"You can't dwell on your loss, you're focusing on the next game"

### Refocus strategy:

**Step One:** Acknowledge emotions and what you are thinking about

**Step Two:** Identify what is most important in the situation

**Step Three:** Refocus your attention/thoughts to what is most important

What did you take from this session?

# Appendix G: Materials for Emotional Ability Development Programme (Study Three)

## PowerPoint Presentations Slides (Workshop Five)

# Coaching from the inside out

## Emotion in Coaching

Laura Hodgson  
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# What to expect...

Today's session:

- Emotional management in others
- Overview of programme
- Reflection of your experience on the programme

# Emotional management strategies

**Types of emotional management strategies:**

- Strategies used to prevent an emotional reaction
- Strategies used in response to an emotional reaction

Prevention strategies	Response strategies
Creating an emotionally supportive environment	Distraction/refocus
Feeding forwards	Situation reappraisal
Sticking to routine	Situation evaluation
Preparation	Situation modification

# Emotional management

**Emotional management:**  
Consciously regulating emotions to levels perceived to be facilitative for a particular situation.

**Emotional management of others:**  
Deliberate attempts to influence the emotions of another person for a desired outcome.

- Causing an emotional reaction
- Preventing an emotional reaction
- Responding to an emotional reaction

**Previous experiences – what have you done in the past?**

# Emotional management strategies

**Creating an emotionally supportive environment:**

- **Educate:** Reveal emotions for what they are
- **Normalise:** Talk about emotions regularly
- **Communicate:** Listen and discuss, open and honest
- **Challenge:** Confront and question emotional reactions
- **Reflect and evaluate:** Moving forward

What are the potential benefits of creating an emotionally supportive environment for your athletes?

# Emotional management strategies

**Sticking to routine:**

- Your consistency on competition day is really important.
- Do you have a competition routine?
- What do you need to make sure you stick to?
- Create your own competition day routine.

# Emotional management strategies

## Situation reappraisal:

- Attempts to alter an athletes perception of the situation.
- Reappraise the situation in a more positive, realistic way to change the emotional impact.
  - E.g. view mistake as learning curve rather than failure

## Situation modification:

- Altering elements of a situation to alter/ elicit an emotional response
  - E.g. altering objectives of a training session

# Scenario

You're running a physical fitness training session for your athletes. Half of your athletes really enjoy these sessions and you can see they are excited and motivated to get started. Some of your other athletes really don't enjoy fitness training and you can already see they are demotivated for the session.

**How could you handle this situation in an effective way?**

# Scenario

Your athlete is warming up for a competition and the routine they have just done is quite different to what they would normally do. You have asked them if everything is ok and they've said to you 'no not really, it just doesn't feel right today, I don't know what I'm doing'.

**How could you handle this situation in an effective way?**

# Programme overview



## Intra- and interpersonal knowledge

- Values
- Beliefs
- Personality characteristics

## Emotional Awareness

- Accurately identify emotions present in self and others

## Emotional Understanding

- Relationship between emotions
- Causes and consequences
- Influence of emotions

## Emotional Management

- Emotional management of self
- Emotional management of others

# Group reflection



**What did you take from this session?**

# Coaching from the inside out

## Emotion in Coaching

### Workshop 1

#### Exercise booklet

Laura Hodgson  
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# Psychological Attributes

What psychological attributes do you think world-class coaches in your sport possess? Provide examples of how you think coaches demonstrate these different attributes in their coaching.

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# Emotional Intelligence

Think about someone in your sport who you think is emotionally intelligent. Write down what qualities you think they have that makes them emotionally intelligent.

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# Knowledge of Emotions

In the following table:

- Provide a brief description of how you would describe each emotion.
- Write down a time you have experienced that emotion when coaching, what was the situation? How do you think your emotions affected you?
- Write down whether you perceived that experience to be positive or negative

Emotion	Description	Experience	+/-
Excited			
Angry			



<b>Passionate</b>			
<b>Irritated</b>			

# Emotions and Coaching

How do you think emotions can affect your ability to coach well or coach effectively?

Feel free to give specific examples of different emotions and use your own coaching experiences to provide examples.

**Example:** Emotions can affect my focus and concentration

Being really nervous can take my attention away from what I'm doing when I'm trying to coach, as I get easily distracted.

# Coaching from the inside out

## Emotion in Coaching

### Workshop 2

### Exercise booklet

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# Values

Your core values are the guiding principles that direct your behaviour and your actions. They form the foundation for how you choose to conduct yourself, how you interact with others, and how you coach. We have many different values but some are more primary and most important to us, these are your core values. Answering the following questions may help you identify your core coaching values.

1. Why do you coach?
2. Write a big list of things that are important to you as a coach: (**Example:** Having fun, staying focused, pulling together, giving 100% effort, self-development, having respect, being open-minded, trusting others, being creative).
3. Looking at your list, group together things that you think relate to each other. Can you label what you have included in your group under one core value? (**Example:** Trusting others, communication, working as a team, pulling together, may be grouped under the core value: Building strong relationships). Try and make sure your values are **unique** and **personal** to you, summed up in 3-5 words.

4. Once you have your core values, provide a description of what that value means to you and then decide which value is most important to you (1-5).

Core Value	Description	Importance
<b>Example: Commitment to excellence</b>	Unshakeable belief in what I do and the persistent commitment to produce the highest quality in my work that accounts for all the 1%ers.	1

5. Now that you have identified your most important core value think about specific attitudes and behaviours that you relate to that value. Then, on a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on how well you believe you currently implement your chosen attitudes and behaviours into your coaching practice.

Attitude	Self-rating	Behaviour	Self-rating
<p><b>Example: Mistakes are not failures and they do not define me.</b></p>	7	Ask others for feedback and actively look for new educational opportunities	4

6. For those that you scored lowest, think of two action points (what you can change) that will help your coaching practice to better reflect your values.

**Action point 1:**

**Action point 2:**

# Beliefs

Your beliefs can have a powerful impact upon how you choose to respond to and handle the situations you encounter when coaching. A lot of beliefs we hold are in fact 'false beliefs' that do not provide us with an accurate reflection of the truth. These types of beliefs can have negative consequences and affect how you handle particular situations. For this activity, think about false beliefs you hold yourself, then 'reframe' this belief into a belief that is more positive and empowering.

False Belief	Empowering Belief
<b>Example:</b> "Anxiety is not a normal response, I have to get rid of it"	"It's ok to feel nervous, it just means I care"



# Beliefs

Can you identify 'false beliefs' that you regularly hear your athletes using. Write down what the false belief is, then consider how you as a coach would respond the next time you hear your athlete expressing this belief. Can you think of an empowering belief you can help your athlete to adopt in place of their current false belief.

False belief statement	Coaching response	Empowering belief statement

# Beliefs about Effective Coaching

Consider what you believe are the qualities of an effective coach. As a starting point, think about how they behave/act, how you think they feel, how emotional/unemotional they are, how they interact with their athletes etc.

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# Personality

Now that you have completed the personality test, answer the following questions based on what you know about your personality type.

What are the strengths of your personality?

How can your personality characteristics positively influence your coaching?

Can you think of a past experience where your personality characteristics have positively influenced your coaching?

What are the potential weaknesses of your personality?

How can your personality characteristics negatively influence your coaching?

Can you think of a past experience where your personality characteristics have negatively influenced your coaching?

# Personality

Think about one of your athletes in particular, can you think of 5 different personality traits that, you think, describes your athlete. Write down how your athlete displays these particular characteristics.

Personality characteristic	Description

# Personality

Now that you have identified your athlete's personality characteristics, answer the following questions.

What are the strengths of your athlete's personality characteristics?

What are the potential weaknesses of your athlete's personality characteristics?

# Coaching Objectives

Based on tonight's workshop, think about setting yourself two key objectives that you can plan to incorporate into your coaching practice. You should set one objective for yourself and one objective that relates to working with your athletes. Write down an action plan of how you aim to achieve your objectives.

Objective	Action plan

# Coaching from the inside out

## Emotion in Coaching

### Workshop 3

#### Exercise booklet

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# Emotional Awareness

## Emotions and Behaviours

Write down how you think you generally act/behave when you experience different emotions. Think about your body language, how you communicate and how you interact with your athletes.

When I'm...	I often...
Nervous	
Excited	
Angry	
Frustrated	
Happy	

# Emotional Awareness

## Typical Responses

When: Your athlete/team is competing at a major event

You often feel:

You often think:

You often react/behave:

How are others affected?

What's your ideal response?

Would you try and do anything differently in this situation next time?

When:

You often feel:

You often think:

You often react/behave:

How are others affected?

What's your ideal response?

Would you try and do anything differently in this situation next time?

# Emotional Awareness

## Recognising Triggers

Situation/trigger	Athlete emotional response/behaviour	Consequences	Intervention
<b>Example:</b> Athlete/team takes an early lead	Become complacent, start making easy mistakes	Lack of focus and level of communication drops.	Make an early substitute/take a time out.

# Coaching Objectives

Based on tonight's workshop, think about setting yourself two key objectives that you can plan to incorporate into your coaching practice. You should set one objective for yourself and one objective that relates to working with your athletes. Write down an action plan of how you aim to achieve your objectives.

Objective	Action plan

# Coaching from the inside out

## Emotion in Coaching

### Workshop 4

#### Exercise booklet

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# Understanding Causes and Consequences

An important part of emotional understanding is being able to understand the causes and consequences of the emotions you yourself experience and those that other people experience. The role-play exercise you are about to do will help you to recognise how thinking about the causes and consequences of emotions can help to inform your decisions and actions when coaching.

After acting out the role-play, answer the following questions.

**How has your athlete responded to this situation emotionally?**

**What has caused their emotional response?**

**What are the potential consequences (positive or negative)?**

**What would you do in this situation to be most effective?**

# Emotion, Cognition and Behaviour

As discussed, another important aspect of emotional understanding is being able to understand the influence you as a coach can have on other people's emotional responses (e.g., your athletes, other coaches).

Think of one of your athletes in particular, how do you think they would react in the following situation? What affect could your actions (coaching approach) have on your athlete?

**Scenario:** Your athlete has just underperformed at a major competition and has been knocked out in the early stages.

**What emotional response is your athlete likely to experience?**

**Which approach would you take in this situation?**

**How do you think this approach would affect your athlete?**

**Which approach would be most detrimental for your athlete?**

**How do you think this would affect your athlete?**



# Pre-Competition Preparation

Developing **pre-competition routines** is a strategy that can be used to help prevent unwelcome emotional responses from occurring in the build up to a competition. Consistency in routines can help provide familiarity, a sense of control and direct your focus. Physical and mental preparation is just as important for you as a coach as it is for your athletes.

Time frame	Physical Preparation	Mental Preparation
<b>Example: Night before competition</b>	- Email athlete pre-competition check list	- Think about possible scenarios that may happen during the competition

# Positive Self-talk

In order to be able to 'counter' negative thoughts you need to be aware of any thought processes that are negatively framed. You must get into the habit of identifying negative thoughts, stopping them, and reframing them by replacing them with positive ones. As discussed, thoughts should be instructional and motivational (not judgmental!). The following three step process can be used to help you identify and change your negative thoughts into more positive thoughts.

## Step One: Identifying negative thoughts

Spend a couple of minutes reflecting on a recent coaching session (training or competition) where you feel you performed poorly. In the table below, write down what you were saying to yourself in the moment and what you said to yourself after the session.

In the moment	After session

## Step Two: Thought Stoppage

When you identify negative thoughts, you need to work on a strategy for ‘stopping’ them. This could be a mental or physical cue you use to ‘stop’ the negative thought. Use the table below to identify any physical and/or mental cues you can use to help ‘stop’ your negative thoughts.

Physical Cues	Mental Cues
<b>Example:</b> Clicking your fingers to acknowledge you have experienced a negative thought	<b>Example:</b> Say ‘stop’ to yourself in your mind

## Step Three: Cognitive Restructuring

It is not enough to just stop a negative thought, you also need to replace it with something more positive. Complete the below ‘reframing’ activity to counter the negative thoughts you have identified with positive statements.

Negative Thought	Positive Statement
<b>Example:</b> “This is too much pressure, I don’t know if I can do this”	<b>Example:</b> “Enjoy the moment and show everyone what you can do”

# Coaching Objectives

Based on tonight's workshop, think about setting yourself two key objectives that you can plan to incorporate into your coaching practice. You should set one objective for yourself and one objective that relates to working with your athletes. Write down an action plan of how you aim to achieve your objectives.

Objective	Action plan

# Coaching from the inside out

## Emotion in Coaching

### Workshop 5

Exercise booklet

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# Creating an Emotionally Supportive Environment

An emotionally supportive environment is one that provides athletes with a safe learning environment that promotes their emotional development and well-being. This type of environment encourages athletes to feel comfortable and at ease to talk about their emotions and address emotional issues. Write down a list of things that you can do as a coach to help create an emotionally supportive environment for your athletes.

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# Competition Routine

Creating a competition routine and using it on competition day can help improve your consistency when coaching at competitions. This routine should include all the important things you need to do on competition day during specific time frames, e.g. pre-competition, half-time, full time etc.

Timeframe	Action points

# Situation Reappraisal

Situation reappraisal is an emotional management strategy that can be used to help athletes change their perspective of the situation they are in. When an athlete is responding to a situation emotional helping them to think about the situation in a more positive way can influence their initial emotional response.

Think about what you could do in the following scenarios to help you athlete reappraise the situation.

## **Scenario:**

You are conducting the final training session with your athlete before a big competition at the weekend. You can tell that your athlete is distracted and keeps making little mistakes during the session. When you speak to them during a break they tell you that their parents are going to be watching at the weekend and they are worried they're going to go wrong and disappoint them.

## **Coach response:**



**Scenario:**

One of your athletes has recently lost three competitions/matches in a row. You've noticed that your athlete has been a lot quieter in training recently, when talking to them at the end of session they tell you that they don't think they are good enough to compete at that level because they just keep losing, they think they should just give up.

**Coach response:****Previous experiences:**

Think about an experience you have had in the past where you tried to help your athlete see a situation from a different perspective. What happened? Did your athlete change in any way? Do you think it had a positive influence?

# Emotional Reflection

Think about an emotional situation you have been in recently that involved you and at least one other person. Answering the following questions can help you to reflect on the situation and analyse it in an emotionally intelligent way.

What was the situation?

Who was involved?

## **Identify:**

Were you aware of how you felt during this situation?

How did you feel during this situation?

Were you focused on your own feelings, or were you aware of how the other person was feeling?

**Understand:**

What caused you to feel this way?

Describe the intensity of your emotion:

Did you think about how your emotions were affecting you or the other person (e.g. behaviour/performance, body language, thoughts)?

**Manage:**

What did you do?

What was the outcome?

What did you want to happen?

What could you have done differently?

# Coaching Objectives

Based on tonight's workshop, think about setting yourself two key objectives that you can plan to incorporate into your coaching practice. You should set one objective for yourself and one objective that relates to working with your athletes. Write down an action plan of how you aim to achieve your objectives.

Objective	Action plan