

**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE EMOTIONAL
EXPERIENCES OF ELITE BRAZILIAN COACHES**

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ABSTRACT

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Coaches of elite athletes often need to work under stressful conditions and therefore may experience moments where emotional intensity is running very high. As a result, their physical and mental well-being may be affected. Nevertheless, little attention has been given to the emotional side of the coaches in current scientific literature (Potrac, Jones, Purdy, Nelson, & Marshall, 2013). With this in mind, the purpose of this study was to explore coaches' stressors and other pleasant and unpleasant emotional experiences related to their coaching performance. Specifically, coaches' awareness of their emotions and situational triggers were examined. Lastly, the mechanisms by which coaches express, suppress and regulate their emotions were studied.

Six highly experienced Brazilian coaches were included in this study. Participants were from three different sports: martial arts (n=3), swimming (n=2), tennis (n=1) and their coaching experience ranged from 7 to 29 years ($M = 18.6$, $SD = 9.35$) at the time of data collection. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to explore and analyze coaches' emotional experience. Content analysis of the participants' answers exposed four major dimensions: coaching stressors and pleasant/unpleasant emotions, coaching expressions of emotions, coaching suppressions of emotions, and coaching regulation strategies.

Findings indicated that the coaches experienced a broad range of unpleasant and pleasant emotions, with the most cited being frustration, sadness, irritation, happiness and pride. All the coaches from this sample shared the belief that they were influential people for their athletes. Hence, expression and suppression mechanisms were highly contextualized varying on the situation and on which athlete the coaches were working with. Coaches frequently suppressed their feelings and used strategies to regulate their emotions in order to not affect their athlete's performance and consequently, to pursue personally relevant coaching goals. Coaching regulation strategies varied significantly across situations and within leading up to the next competition. Coaches used more engagement strategies before the competition, but on the other hand, after the competition they tended to use more behavioral avoidance strategies. Findings suggest that coaching emotion regulation is focused largely on performance-related factors. The answers gathered in this study offer a new perspective into coaches' emotions and ideas on how to enhance coaching effectiveness and awareness. Furthermore, the results can be used to develop educational programs to better serve the needs of future coaches and their athletes.

Keywords: coaching, emotions, regulation strategies, expression, suppression

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1 INTRODUCTION

“It is the coach’s obligation to seek in himself the causes of failure and take responsibility instead of resorting to excuses.”

Bernardo Rocha de Rezende

The quote above is from the head coach of the Brazilian national volleyball team. Since he took up the position, the team has competed in 13 FIVB Volleyball World Leagues, reaching the gold or silver medal in 11 of them. Giving Bernardo’s statement some thought, one can think that the career of a coach can be very demanding and complex. Coaches of elite athletes usually need to work under stressful conditions, such as injuries to key athletes, conflicts between athletes from the same team, and pressure from the head of the club. Therefore, a coach is likely to experience many intense emotions.

Coaches play an important role in the athlete's motivation (Goose & Winter, 2012), can spend a great part of their time involved with them, and in a long term perspective can be responsible for the support of the athlete in life (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003). The coach can be for an athlete much more than just a trainer, he/she can be an educator, someone who they rely on, and use as an example for guidance (Hemery, 1986). In fact, coaches of elite athletes can be one of the most influential people for the athletes (Norman & French, 2013), and the way they demonstrate and regulate their emotions can affect athlete’s lives.

The number of studies that focus on emotion in sport settings has increased. Just to have an idea, as reported by Friesen et al. (2013) when searching in the SportDiscus database, there are more than 180 studies relating to emotion from the year of 2000. Previous research has focused on the athlete’s emotions (Hanin, 2000; Lazarus, 2000; Ruiz & Hanin, 2004; Uphill & Jones, 2013) and on the emotional side of the relationship between coach-athlete (Lafrenière, Jowett, Vallerand, Donahue, & Lorimer, 2008; Stirling & Kerr, 2013; Vargas-Tonsing, 2009). However, little attention has been given to the emotional experiences of the coaches in current scientific literature, save for a few examples (Nelson et al., 2013; Potrac, Jones, Purdy, Nelson & Marshall, 2013;

Potrac & Marshall, 2011). Potrac et al. (2013) stressed that educational research has been more extensively studied than coaching, and both share pedagogical connections making possible to apply its theories in sport settings. Nevertheless, they also acknowledged the necessity for developing coaching emotions literature in its own conceptual language.

According to Potrac and Marshall (2011) coaches experience stressful conditions that are not only cognitive or social, but are emotional experiences that need to be comprehended as such. Likewise, Hargreaves already in 1998 had suggested that coaches' emotions have not received attention and have been handled similarly to any other variable that coaches need to manage correctly so that they can concentrate on technical and cognitive factors of their role. In fact, researchers tend to highlight teaching practice as mainly a cognitive activity (Zembylas, 2005).

Jones (2009) highlighted that coaches are not just a result of educational programs, they are people too and similar to athletes, their emotions will be a constant during their interactions in the sport setting. Hence, in order to investigate how and what to include in coaching programs as well as to get a full picture of the complex nature of coaching, it is important to include who is coaching, more specifically, what are their experiences and perceptions (Jones, 2006). The significance of this study is based on the idea that in order to better develop recommendations for practice and to support coaches to handle the complexity of their work, it is necessary to explore and analyze the role of emotions in practice, more specifically how coaches suppress, express and regulate their emotional experiences in order to achieve their goals (Potrac & Marshall, 2011).

In this paper, there is an attempt to make use of the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) to make sense of coaches' lived experiences, with focus on understanding their feelings and perceptions. Such perspective provides a basis for researcher and reader to uncover the nature of coaching, its dilemmas and ambiguities.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to authors such as Hanin (2000) and Prapavessis and Grove (1991) it is necessary to reach and sustain an appropriate emotional state in order to achieve a successful performance. In other words, emotions play an important role in the success or failure of the performance. Taking this into account, one can think that emotions are an essential part of sport.

2.1 Literature on coaching stressors and emotions

Often coaches' performances are analyzed in relation to the success of their athletes (Gould et al., 2002). However, Thelwell, Weston, Greenlees, and Hutchings (2008) argued that given the technical, physical, organizational and psychological demands involved in the coaching career, coaches should be seen as performers in their own right. Coaches not only have to deal with the athletes, but often it is under their responsibilities to manage and administer sports events, athletes' lodging and other travelling concerns. Thus, coaches work within an environment that can be very demanding and stressful (Fletcher & Scott, 2010). According to the same authors, the contemporary sport has had a fast change, and as a result, the dynamic nature of stress has also transformed. Therefore, the coaching stressors are an issue that needs to be examined and addressed. Especially, because it would allow sport psychologists to enhance their strategies in order to ensure that coaches can improve the effectiveness of their work.

Research shows consistently that coach behaviour influences different aspects of athletes' emotions. Coaches' behaviors are related to feelings of athlete's burnout, anxiety, enjoyment and perceived competence (Price & Weiss, 2000), and those factors are critical for athlete's success in sport. If the coach provides inappropriate feedback, athletes can experience increase of the anxiety level, decreased motivation and may develop negative perceptions towards the coach (Smith, Smoll, & Barnett, 1995). Although significant research has investigated elite athletes' experiences of stress and emotions, little research attention has been given to elite coaches in terms of their own experiences (Frey, 2007; Olusoga et al., 2009). In an attempt to change this reality, Olusoga et al. (2009) focused on identifying stressors in elite coaches in the UK. In this

study it was highlighted that not just athletes may get stressed because of coaches (Gould et al., 1993), but athletes are also a stressor for coaches. Among other things, those coaches described stressors related to pressure and expectations, and reported limited resources and support during their practice. Taking into account those results, one can think that just not athletes but also coaches need to be equipped with tools in order to deal with the sport environment. Moreover, Olusoga et al. (2010) in their subsequent article, emphasized that coaches who experience high levels of stress may go through mental fatigue, decreased motivation and happiness, reduced job satisfaction and even, burnout. As a consequence, coaches' ability to work may be reduced and their mental and physical health may be affected. Hence, coaches are also performers who would benefit from development of mental toughness in order to cope with the demands of a coaching career (Olusoga et al., 2009).

In the research conducted by Frey (2007) it was identified that coaches' experiences of stress were connected to their environment and their personal characteristics. Her findings suggest that coaches experience a variety of demands that originate from different sources, the most notable ones being the interactions with others, coaching related tasks and a result-oriented culture. In addition, Chroni et al (2013) explored what are the demands placed on coaches when in training and in competition. It was found that coaches had more stressors reported for competition days rather than for training, highlighting the need for the preparation of coaches for maintaining composure under pressure. Even though there is evidence to support that coaching is a complex and demanding profession, Bowes and Jones (2006) argued that the contents of coaching programs are often focused on the athlete's achievement, and not on the coaching well-being.

It is essential to take into account how coaches evaluate the work demands and how they respond to them in order to understand the stressors coaches may face (Fletcher & Scott, 2010). However, the stress itself may not be enough in order to understand the full picture of the coaching experience. On the other hand, emotions contain a great deal of information and can affect the way a coach behaves. For example, a coach feeling anxious because of an upcoming competition may experience lack of sleep during some nights. As result, he may not feel energetic enough to prepare an effective training for his athletes. So far there are just few researches that address the issue of coaches' emotions, and not just athletes, in sport settings. Just to have an idea, according to

Kampa-Kokesch (2001), up to the year 2000, there are just seven studies about executive coaching, and only some of those provided data for comparison. The findings highlighted that most of the coaching research has been conducted with a small sample size and no control group. Further, they frequently did not describe the coaching intervention or methodology with enough information for reapplication.

Schmidt (2003) studied success factors in coaching and as a result, one of the most important factors was the involvement of the coach, which means the ability of the coach to create trust within the coaching. The involvement of the coach combined with the responsibility to develop the athlete to the highest potential can bring to the coach situations of happiness. For example, when an athlete achieves the goal established, or frustration, when the coach sees that the athlete is not motivated for the training.

In the study conducted by Gross, Richards, and John (2006) it is emphasized that some emotions that can be harmful for the normal daily life of a person should be managed. Moreover, for some authors like Speedy (2005), negative emotions interfere with rationality, and are considered detrimental to decision making and therefore, should be controlled in the workplace. Thus, emotion regulation is essential for adaptive functioning. In fact, to develop a good relationship with others, a person should be able to regulate, think how she/he is going to experience and express the emotions. For instance, we can think that a coach, who frequently gives positive feedback and celebrates even the small achievements of an athlete, is more likely to have the trust and provide positive experiences to the athlete.

At the same time it is worth noting that emotions, which are considered negative, such as anger and disappointment, can be useful depending on the context they take place in. An illustration of that would be when a coach, frustrated with the athlete that does not seem motivated to do the training, decides to have a meeting to discuss the current situation. As result, realizes that actually the athlete is tired because he is taking care of the brother who has been sick for more than a month. Knowing the actual situation, the coach can start to think about strategies to help the athlete.

Frey (2007) argued that coaches' responses to stress could affect athletes' state-of-mind and performance. Based on Frey's findings, Fletcher and Scott (2010) suggested that coaches' emotions may, to some extent, be transferred to their athletes and thus, future

research should focus on the emotional transferability in the coach-athlete relationship. Emotions can be influenced by the coaches' socialization experiences, their biographies, as well as where and when they are doing something (Schutz, Hong, Cross & Osbon, 2006). In this study there is an attempt to not only acknowledge the coaching emotional experiences but also how those emotions are elicited from cognitive appraisals in relation to self, others, cultural and social context.

Similarly to the study conducted by Nelson et al. (2013), Hochschild's (1979, 1983) literature will be used in order to interpret the coaching emotional experiences. Hochschild was a sociologist who focused on how people obtain emotional rules for the various contexts of activity within a society. According to Hochschild (1983) emotions and behaviors should be associated with the norms and expectations that are found in social context. Each situation requires different emotional responses and thus feeling management.

Hochschild (1983) suggested that our emotions are directed by *feeling rules*, which are: "what guide emotion work by establishing the sense of entitlement or obligation that governs emotional exchanges" (p. 56). In other words, feeling rules are social norms that will direct us in what, when, where, how intense and for how long to feel our emotions. For example, in Brazil it is normal that the suffering caused by a delusion has a peak during the first 24 hours and the following days begins to wane (Herrmann, 2008). Hochschild stated that every time people are evaluating the emotional state, the feeling rule is active.

Together with feeling rules there are the display rules, which will tell us when and how expressions of emotions in certain situations will happen (Hochschild, 1983). For example, a coach may "put a happy face on" because he may have learned that it is not nice to show his frustration to his athletes. Hochschild (1979, 1983) suggested that employees may go through *emotional labor*, which is defined as the suppression or stimulation of feelings in order to create the proper state of mind in others. Burnout and stress alienation are just some of the negative consequences that an employee may experience due to emotional labor. This author is particularly important for this research as there is an interest on mechanisms by which coaches express, suppress and regulate their emotions.

2.2 Definition of stress and emotion

So far, it has been presented what has been found in current scientific literature on coaching stressors and emotion. Before presenting the purpose and findings of this paper, it is important to define how key concepts such as stress, emotion, and emotion regulation will be understood in this research. Furthermore, IZOF model will be explained in order to support the research with a sport specific framework.

Lazarus' transactional theory of stress has been readily adopted within the sport psychology literature (Olusoga & Butt, 2009). According to Lazarus (1999) there are four concepts that should be considered in order to describe the psychological stress process. First, it needs to have a stressor, which Lazarus emphasized the person-environment relationship and the relational meaning. Second, an evaluation, which differentiates what is dangerous from what is benevolent. Third, coping strategies to deal with the stressful demands and forth, the stress reaction. Lazarus (1999) considered appraisal, the cognitive mediator of stress reaction. As people have different beliefs and goals, they select what they are going to pay attention to and what in their evaluation they are going to consider. There are three types of appraisals, which are the result of the interaction between the person and the environment. Harm, which is related to the psychological impairment that has already occurred – e.g. the athlete failed in an important competition. Threat, it is when the person perceives that a damage may occur soon – e.g. when a coach realizes very soon before the event that his athlete may not be mentally prepared for the competition. Challenge refers to difficult demands but that we feel confident about changing the outcome. For example, a coach that sees that his athlete is not performing very well an exercise, but who think that he may have tools to teach better his athlete.

Lazarus (1999) proposed that psychological stress should be viewed as a subset of the emotions, as stress is interdependent with the field of emotions. The author highlighted that there are more similarities than differences between stress and emotions. For example, emotions such as anxiety, guilt and sadness are usually provoked by a stressful situation.

Emotions have been defined by many researchers, not just from psychology (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) but also from philosophy (McGinn, 2011) and sociology (Denzin, 1984). Nevertheless, Hanin (2007) emphasized that the definition of emotion remains

unclear and that, for example, the approach often utilized by researchers of distinguishing affective terms such as emotion, mood and affect, does not seem to be an effective strategy. Thus, Hanin suggested that when understanding and examining emotions, one should not only concentrate on the concept, but it is important to focus on defining characteristics, antecedents and consequences. For instance, Lazarus (2000, p.230) suggested that emotion could be understood as “an organized psychophysiological reaction to ongoing relationships with the environment, most often, but not always, interpersonal or social”. When talking about emotions, it should be considered that emotions are not just the feelings, but they also make us feel like reacting to something (Frijda, 1986).

Lazarus (1991) developed a cognitive motivational relational theory of emotion. His goal was to understand the role of cognition in causing emotion. An emotion is provoked by an environmental demand, constraint, or resource and by their combination with a person’s motives and beliefs. Lazarus suggested that we should pay attention on the antecedent variables, which are the environmental conditions (demands, resources) and the personal characteristics (motives, beliefs), which together are going to create appraisals of the person-environment relationship. Second, there are the mediating process variables, which consist of three classes: appraisal, action tendencies and coping. Appraisal is central in this theory, and refers to the evaluation of relevance of the situation in the person-environment relationship for the person’s well-being. Lazarus divided appraisals in two, primary appraisals refer to whether the situation is personally significant (e.g., coach’s goals) and involves three factors: goal relevance (e.g. is my goal important?) goal congruence (e.g. is the situation going how I would like it?), and type of ego-involvement (e.g. how much of “myself” is involved?). In other words, if the situation is not seen as important to the person, there is a small probability for emotions. Secondary appraisals are related to the perceived coping options (e.g., how well can I handle the situation?), comprise evaluation of blame/credit and future expectance.

The combination of primary and secondary appraisals, together with how the person copes with the situation, mediates the type and intensity of the emotion experienced (Lazarus, 1991). Consequently, a situation where a coach believes that a competition is important (goal relevance), but his athlete is not doing well (goal congruence), with secondary appraisal of self-blame (e.g., “I should have trained him better”) and low

problem solving possibilities (e.g., “I can not do anything now to change that”) may result in frustration. On the other hand, the same situation but with a different secondary appraisal (e.g., “At least I tried my best to train him”) may result in relief.

Emotions arise from the “core relational theme,” which is a person’s sense of harm or benefits in a specific person-environment relationship. There is a different core relational theme for each emotion; for example, the core relational theme for anxiety is “facing uncertain, existential threat” (Lazarus, 1999, p.13).

Lastly, Lazarus focused on the outcome of the appraisals and coping process, which are divided into short and long term. Short-term outcome is related to fast response components of emotion (e.g., actions/psychological changes). Long-term outcomes comprise the effects of persistent or chronic emotional patterns.

Lazarus’ cognitive motivational relational theory (1991) has received empirical support in the sport context. For example Uphill and Jones (2007) analyzed antecedents of emotions in elite athletes and results suggested that primary and secondary appraisal components were associated with a range of emotions, such as anger, anxiety, guilt and happiness. Anshel, Raviv, and Jamieson (2001) focused in the way in which skilled athletes interpreted and coped with stress experienced during sport competition. There was evidence that athlete’s selection of coping strategies, at least to some extent, reflects his appraisal of the stressor.

2.3 Theoretical framework — the IZOF model

Not only Lazarus was interested in the study of emotions. Hanin, author of many studies, has also focused on emotions in the naturalistic setting of elite sport. Hanin (2000) suggested that negative and positive emotions could be great descriptors of an individual experience. Thus, emotions could be responsible for the success or failure of an athlete’s performance.

Hanin has focused on the development of the Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning (IZOF). The IZOF model concentrates on describing, predicting, and regulating performance-related states influencing individual and team activity (Hanin, 2000). The IZOF model proposes that emotion is a component of the psychobiosocial state

theorized as a situational, multi-modal and dynamic manifestation of the total human functioning.

In the IZOF model the emotional experiences are divided into three different categories namely trait-like, state-like, and meta-experiences (Hanin, 2004). Trait-like experiences are considered to be relatively stable patterns of emotions. For example, a coach, who is always quite worried, might feel anxious before every competition. State-like experiences are the ones less stable and the emotions experienced are the result of a specific situation. An example would be a coach who is anxious before a competition because he knows that his athlete is injured. Lastly, meta-experiences are based on the emotions and beliefs about previous emotional experiences. For instance, a coach may feel happy because his athlete won a competition that the coach himself participated as an athlete years ago.

IZOF model postulates five basic dimensions of emotion. Form, which can be understood as the manifestation of the phenomenon, and also comprises interrelated form components: cognitive, affective, motivational, bodily, motor-behavioral, operational, communicative and volitional components. Content, which can be manifested in four emotion categories derived from the hedonic tone (pleasure-displeasure) and performance functionality (optimal-dysfunctional) distinctions. Consequently, emotions fall into four different categories of pleasant-optimal (P+), pleasant-dysfunctional (P-), unpleasant-optimal (N+) and unpleasant-dysfunctional (N-). Intensity, includes a range of intensities, and can shape the impact of an emotional experience on performance, leading to optimal, neutral, or dysfunctional effects on performance. Time, which comprises the dynamics of emotional experience and lastly, context, the environment where the emotion took place. The context includes situational, interpersonal, and intra-individual antecedents or consequences, which can determine emotion intensity and content. For example, during training a coach may find helpful to experience certain emotions in a high intensity, but on the other hand, during competition the same emotions need to be low in intensity. The form, content, and intensity categories define the organization of personal experiences, while the time and context categories explain the dynamics of people's personal experiences (Hanin, 2007). Hanin (2000) suggested that the emotion-performance relationship is very

personalized in terms of intensity and direction, regardless if the emotion is pleasant or unpleasant in hedonic tone.

Optimal emotions (pleasant and unpleasant) are usually related to successful situations, whereas dysfunctional emotions (pleasant and unpleasant) are related to failure. The impact of emotion on performance is explained based on the utilization and organization of energy. Dysfunctional emotions usually result in inappropriate generation of energy and it is inefficient. Optimal function may happen when there is generation of enough energy to start and maintain the task execution processes, as well as efficient usage of available resource until the task is completed (Hanin, 2000).

It is important to highlight that emotion-performance related experiences serve as information about an athlete's individual optimal and dysfunctional emotional zones (Hanin, 2000). When an athlete is in the optimal zone, he will be experiencing more functional pleasant and unpleasant, and less dysfunctional pleasant and unpleasant emotions. Whereas being in the dysfunctional zone, the athlete will be experiencing more dysfunctional pleasant and unpleasant emotions and less functional pleasant and unpleasant emotions, which leads to less successful performance (Hanin, 2000). According to Hanin (2007), an athlete should have knowledge about their optimal zone, but most of the time in order to achieve the zone, an athlete needs to develop skills to recognize and regulate their emotions.

The main fundamental of IZOF model is that beneficial or detrimental patterns of pleasant and unpleasant emotions are very personal, which means that emotions can be helpful or not, depending on the content or intensity (Robazza & Bortoli, 2003). Thus, in this model the individual differences in functional interpretation of emotions play an important role (Hanin, 2007). Lane et al. (2011) also suggested that when analyzing whether the emotion is pleasant or not, it is necessary to consider the context and the beliefs that the individual has on the function of the emotion. For example, for one coach the anxiety felt before a competition may be interpreted as helpful as it stimulates his athlete better (unpleasant emotion but optimal result = N+), but for another coach may be detrimental because he forgets what he needed to say to his athlete (unpleasant emotional and dysfunctional outcome = N-). Thus, an emotion may be advantageous for one coach but disadvantageous for another.

2.3 Emotion Regulation

Emotions trigger behavioral, experiential and psychological response tendencies that influence how we react to perceived challenges. When our emotions seem not be right for the situation, we often try to regulate our emotional responses in order to achieve our goals (Gross, 2002). Emotion regulatory processes can be defined as the effort that people make to “influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how these emotions are experienced and expressed” (Gross, Richards, & John, in press, p. 14). Conforming to Gross (2002), some aspects of emotion regulation deserve special attention. First, both negative and positive emotions can be increased, maintained or decreased. Second, it is essential to take into consideration that those processes can be automatic or controlled, conscious or unconscious. Moreover, emotion regulation usually involves a change in the emotion circle. For instance, it can change the duration, behavioral and psychological responses, and the intensity of the emotion. Besides, depending on the goals of the person, the regulation of the emotion may also change (Gross & Thompson, 2007). Finally, emotion regulation is neither fundamentally good nor bad (Gross, 2002). The same strategy used by a coach, breath deeply three times, may not work for another one in the same way.

What differentiates the emotion regulation strategies is the moment they first influence the emotion-generative process (Gross, 2002). *Antecedent-focused* strategies are related to things people do before the emotion response tendencies have been totally triggered and have changed their behavioral and physiological responses. On the other hand, *response-focused* strategies are related to the things people do when an emotion is already happening (Gross, 2002).

Gross (1998) differentiated five emotional regulatory processes: situation selection, situation modification, attention deployment, cognitive change and response modulation.

Situation selection is related to choosing or avoiding certain people, places or objects with the purpose of regulating emotions. An example would be a coach calling a friend to talk about his athlete’s failure. In order to use situation selection one needs to know the situations that trigger emotions in that person, so in the previous example, the coach knows that an athlete’s failure usually elicits emotions such as disappointment and

sadness and in order to not experience that, he decides to call a friend who usually tells a lot of jokes and is funny.

Situation modification involves a situation that potentially provokes emotion. In order to modify the situation, the person makes an effort to alter its emotional impact. For example, as a coach may know that he gets frustrated due to athlete's indiscipline, before the emotion is provoked, he decides to talk about another topic.

It is possible to regulate without changing the situation (Gross & Thompson, 2002). Attentional deployment refers to how someone is going to direct his/her attention within the situation in order to regulate the emotions. For example, a coach may decide to direct the attention towards another athlete in order to not get angry with the other athlete.

The last antecedent-focused strategy is called cognitive change and refers to modifying how a person interprets the situation in order to change its emotional significance. This process can be done in two ways: by modifying how the person thinks about the situation he/she is in or by modifying the interpretation about his/her capacity to manage the demands. An example would be a coach who interprets an athlete's failure in a major international competition as being already a victory for the athlete who has had the chance of competing on such high level.

The only response-focused strategy categorized by Gross (1998) is called response modulation and it happens after the emotion has been generated, and the response tendencies have been already produced. It refers to the process of a person directly influencing physiological, experiential or behavioral responding. Drugs and exercises may be used in order to regulate physiological responses, and a coach may decide to go jogging to change experiential response for example. In this paper there is a particular interest in examining coaching regulation strategies; therefore the emotion regulation strategies categorized by Gross (1998) have special importance as the categories explained above will be used in order to analyze and label the regulation strategies found in this study.

High-performance coaches must not just try to increase the emotional balance of athletes, but they also need to support them emotionally (Rutkowska & Gierczuk, 2012). In order to do so, they need to be in their ideal emotional state, and one way to achieve this is by regulating their emotions.

An extremely important ability for coaches is the ability to make individuals achieve their optimal state even if they are in a difficult situation (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). In addition, a coach should be able to perceive the athlete's feelings, as by doing so, the coach can predict the next behavior or performance, and with this information he/she can use strategies to help athletes to regulate their own emotions. As a result, athletes can have a better outcome in competition or training. Furthermore, the coaches' awareness of their emotions is an essential characteristic for a successful career. For example, a coach that identifies himself as being angry after a bad outcome of an athlete, can decide to wait until the next day before having a meeting to discuss the outcome of the performance. By doing so, he is going to be able to think about the situation and develop better feedback for the athlete, avoiding unnecessary stress and frustration for both parties. Having this purpose in mind, it is important that coaches can recognize and accept their emotions and consequently include this knowledge for decision-making (Chan & Mallett 2011). In the study conducted by Rutkowska and Gierczuk (2012) it is suggested that coaches should go through courses that contain the appropriate knowledge and skills necessary to develop their and the athletes' emotional abilities.

According to Opengart (2005) if you are willing to understand the reason why an emotion is expressed you also need to know the context in which the emotion took place. For the time being, the focus has mostly been on executive coaches, but attention should also be given to coaches who work in other environments as well. We know that the way coaches perceive, regulate and express their emotions may affect athletes' performance and life. Even though examples of coaching emotion regulation strategies were provided in this text, they were created for didactic reasons and the truth is that it is still unclear which strategies coaches use to regulate their emotions, how do they express them and if they are aware of their emotions.

Literature searches revealed that only a few studies have examined coping strategies among coaches (Frey, 2007; Levy, Nicholls, Marchant & Polman, 2009; Olusoga et al., 2009, 2010; Thelwell et al., 2008). Coping and emotion regulation overlap, but coping also comprises non-emotional behaviors to achieve goals (e.g., working extra hours in order to finish an important project). The studies indicated that to cope with stressors, coaches use a variety of cognitive strategies such as focusing on important issues and positive reappraisal, emotional (e.g. visualization, distraction) and behavioral strategies (e.g. exercising, reading). However, to date, there is only one research that has sought to explore the notion of effective emotion regulation among sport coaching populations. In the study conducted by Frey (2007) it was argued that coaches who are better able to deal with their emotions are those that re-focus their attention on sources of enjoyment, visualize themselves under pressure, escape to outside activities, draw on social and psychological support and maintain a balanced lifestyle.

Gathering a comprehensive description of emotion regulation strategies used by coaches may help to establish the degree to which measures and interventions developed in psychology may be applicable for this specific population, besides it may also contribute for evaluating the effectiveness of those strategies (Lane, Beedie, Devonport, & Stanley, 2011).

As indicated in the introduction of this paper, save for a few cases, the emotional experiences of the coaches' work have gone mainly unnoticed. Coaches, similar to athletes, may go through a large range of emotions during their time involved in the dynamic sport setting (Jones, 2009). In addition, Potrac and Marshall (2011) emphasized that athlete-centered coaching programs that do not consider the dilemmas and emotional side of coaches have been popular. However, sport psychologist practitioners are not going to be able to prepare coaches for their complex and demanding work, until they start an extensive exploration of the emotional nature of coaching. Taking those considerations into account, it is important to explore and examine the role of emotions in a coaching job in order to better develop recommendations and support coaches to deal with the complexity of their career.

3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore coaches' stressors and other pleasant and unpleasant emotional experiences related to their coaching performance. Specifically, coaches' awareness of their emotions and situational triggers were examined. Lastly, the mechanisms by which coaches express, suppress and regulate their emotions were studied.

4 METHODS

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative methodology was chosen; more specifically, a phenomenological approach was considered appropriate for collecting and analyzing the information, as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) has the objective to “explore how participants make sense of their experiences; IPA engages with the meaning that experiences, events and actions hold for participants.” (Chapman & Smith, 2002:126). Accordingly, this study has emphasis on an in-depth understanding; the coaches might have features, information and or characteristics that will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the phenomenon, which in this case is emotion regulation (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

Sampling in IPA research tends to be purposive. That is, it explores the experiences of the most appropriate group for the particular research question being answered (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The criteria for selecting the coaches were a) coaching experience (minimum 8 years) and b) competitive level of the athletes (the athlete needed to have participated at least in one major international competition in the last three years).

4.1 Participants

Participants were six highly experienced Brazilian coaches (5 males, 1 female), from 3 different sports: martial arts (n=3), swimming (n=2), tennis (n=1). Their coaching experience ranged from 7 to 29 years ($M = 18.6$, $SD = 9.35$) at the time of data collection. All coaches had university degrees in physical education; in addition, five of them completed a course, workshop or a presentation regarding sport psychology. Furthermore, all the participants have had a career as an athlete, competing at least at the national level, reporting an average athletic experience of 10.33 years ($SD = 1.86$).

4.2 Instrument

An interview guide was developed based on the literature regarding emotions, emotional intelligence and coaching (Appendix A).

The interview guide contained four sections. First, demographic information was collected, (e.g. career as an athlete, relevant training related to emotions) and the introductory question regarding their day-to-day role and responsibilities as a coach was asked. The second section focused on semi-structured, open-ended questions about

lived intense emotional experiences in their coaching career and specific situations that triggered these emotions. This section began with questions concerning their particular stressors; for instance, “What are the particular stressors that you go through in your job?” and “When you are stressed, how do you feel?”. In order to get deeper information regarding their intense emotional experience and also to facilitate recall, participants were requested to remember how they felt in a recent situation in their coaching career. The request to remember a recent situation was also an attempt to decrease the extent to which participants may have reconstructed memories for events over time and distorted possible emotions. The situation could be in a training session or in a competition (day), but it should have been one where they had experienced pleasant intense emotions. Subsequently, the same question was asked, but at this time it should have been a situation where they had experienced unpleasant emotions. The third section consisted of examining the coaches’ suppression or expression of the emotions, with question like: “In the situation that you just described to me, what did you do?” “Did you show this emotion to your athlete?”.

The fourth section focused on questions regarding emotion regulation and coping, through questions such as: “In relation to how you felt in that specific situation, what strategies did you use to influence the way you were feeling?” and “How does it work for you?” These were followed by questions pertaining how they see themselves and the athlete when they are experiencing intense emotions. The final section provided the coaches with the opportunity to talk about the lessons learned throughout their coaching career regarding emotions. Suitable probing questions were used in all the sections in order to guarantee complete understanding of the statements made by the coaches, but also so that the participants could correct or confirm the interviewer’s understanding of what he was trying to express.

A pilot study was conducted with two experienced and successful coaches of similar sports. After each pilot semi-structured interview, the interview guide was reviewed and minor revisions were made according to the feedback received from those interviewed and the field notes made by the interviewer. The pilot interviews also helped the interviewer to develop/practice her interview skills.

4.3 Procedure

Initially, in order to better find coaches who could meet the study criteria, a high-performance center and a sports club were contacted. Coaches were contacted by an introductory email, which contained information about the research topic and interview duration. In the last paragraph, they were informed that they were free to refuse to participate in the interview without any negative outcome. Originally, 14 coaches were in the pool of participants that were fulfilling the criteria of selection. If the coaches declined, a thank you note was sent and they were not contacted further. Nine coaches accepted to participate in the interview, another email then was sent in order to schedule the possible face-to-face or Skype meeting. In the end, six coaches (66,6%) showed interest and availability to be a participant of the interview. The participants received by email and/or printed the consent form, which was also read out loud by the interviewer and thereafter signed by each coach before the interview (Appendix B). Interviews were conducted in a time that was convenient for the coaches and all had the guarantee of anonymity regarding their identity and the club they work for. The coaches talked freely and seemed very open for discussion. Due to the fact that some of the coaches were travelling abroad attending competitions or because they were on the other side of Brazil, which made reaching them in person impractical, three of the interviews were conducted face-to-face and three through Skype. Furthermore, with the consent of each respondent the interviews were taped audio-recorded.

4.4 Data analysis

Smith (2009) developed a set of common steps for guidance when conducting an analysis, considering that first-time Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis researchers may need more guidance in order to find their way through the process. The steps are: 1) reading and re-reading, 2) initial noting, 3) developing emerging themes, 4) searching for connections, 5) moving to the next case, and 6) looking for patterns across cases. Taking into account that this was the first time that the researcher was conducting phenomenological inquiry, the data analysis of this study was based on those suggestions.

First, in order to get the full picture, as well as to look into certain details, the data was read carefully several times. Second, during subsequent readings, the transcript was started to be interpreted with more detail and descriptive notes with comments were written in the margins of the text (notes such as “coach stressors” and “the coach feels

responsible for the career of the athlete”). Third, emergent themes (e.g., “Concerns for own work/performance”) and super-ordinate themes (e.g., “Coach’s stressors”) were created and relevant quotes categorized appropriately. Fourth, a map was developed of how the themes could fit together; lastly, each case was analyzed independently and defined units were derived from the quotes using memos to summarize the nature of the sub-theme. For example, concerns for athletes performance, for own work/performance and interpersonal relations were grouped under the subheading “stressors” which, in turn, included part of the experience dimension. It is important to note that the content of the coaches’ perceptions about their emotional regulation strategies identified were inductively and deductively analyzed (Patton, 2002). Inductively as emerging themes including a similar meaning were identified. Each theme that was understood as an emotion regulation strategy was then deductively analyzed using the concepts of the five emotional regulatory processes proposed by Gross (1998). For the purpose of finding similarities and differences between the cases, the sixth step, a cross-case analysis, was developed. Conclusively, the themes found in all the cases were combined to reproduce the overall results of the study and therefore formed an explanatory framework of the participants’ experience of intense emotion. Lastly, pseudonym names were used in order to guarantee the anonymity of the real identity of the participants.

4.5 Role of the researcher

According to Smith (2003), when conducting a semi-structured interview the role of the interviewer is to guide and help the participant, instead of directing everything that will occur during the interview. Based on this recommendation, an open approach from the researcher was chosen and the questions were asked taking into account what the participants were saying. In addition, it is worth mentioning that, in IPA, the research process is influential with the active role of the researcher. Furthermore, the outcome of the analysis is a product of the combined effort of the participant and the researcher, “the participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world.” (Smith & Osborn, 2003:53). Having this statement in mind, the researcher made the effort of suspending judgment of the previous case as much as possible in order to not affect the analysis of the next one. Moreover, the fact that the researcher is also from the same nationality as the participants contributed to better understanding of their experiences and therefore to more perceptive interpretations of the interviews.

4.6 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of qualitative research is usually questioned because of their notions of validity and consistency cannot be adopted in the same way in naturalistic work. Nevertheless, several authors such as Yardley (2000) and Guba (1981) have showed how qualitative researchers can include measures that deal with these matters. Guba suggests a range of criteria for pursuing trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability. The following section will explain in what way the present study has adopted these criteria.

Credibility is first evident in this study when the researcher, before each data collection session gathered background information by consulting the coach's website and other online sources. In addition, in order to build the rapport between the parties, preliminary visits to the place where the coaches work were done when possible. Furthermore, this study employed investigator triangulation, which means that more than one researcher from the same field assisted to interpret the data (Patton, 2002). A second coder who was familiar with the research topic helped to support the transparency and replication of the study by checking the similarities and differences in readings and interpretations of the data. Meetings were conducted to compare results and discuss issues related to theme development.

Third, to ensure the honesty of the coaches, they were given the opportunity to refuse to participate in the study without negative consequences. Moreover, member check was developed to guarantee that the topics raised by the participants were an actual representation of their experiences. An email with a copy of the interview was sent to the participants in case they wanted to include more information; furthermore, the coaches were encouraged to review the transcript and send it back with comments. Only one participant suggested the addition of further information in his transcript.

According to Guba (1981), in order to pursue the criteria of transferability the researcher needs to provide enough contextual information to facilitate the reader to make a transfer. In this study, there was an attempt to provide significant amount of verbatim quotations from participants to support the arguments and to enable the reader to check the interpretations.

The criterion of dependability, which refers to replicability or repeatability, is addressed

by describing the steps of the research process. The reader can find in this paper a track of record of the research process: plan for data collection, annotated transcripts, tables of themes and relevant quotes.

Finally the criterion of confirmability, which is related to the assumption of objectivity, can be evident in the in-depth methodological description. In addition, the reader can find the acknowledgment of shortcomings in study's methods and their potential effects in the limitation section. Moreover, in the study there is effort to connect the findings to the existing literature, as well as consider implications for practitioners.

5 RESULTS

In total, 43 pages of single-spaced text were produced, out of which, 203 raw themes (i.e. phrases and/or sentences) were recognized and 196 of them were organized into emerging lower-order categories (7 pieces of raw data were not included in any category). Content analysis of the participants' answers exposed five major dimensions to examine coaches' experience of emotions: (a) coaching stressors and emotions, (b) coaching expressions of emotions, (c) coaching suppressions of emotions and (d) coaching regulation strategies. These dimensions have been further divided into super-ordinate and sub-ordinate themes; moreover they will be presented in details here in the order of frequency.

5.1 Coaching stressors and unpleasant/pleasant emotions

All the coaches reported getting stressed with regard to athletes and their own performance as well as staff work, while few coaches also mentioned finances and preparation for major events as stressful situations. Stress related to athlete performance and own work/performance were the ones of the most prominent sources for this group of coaches (Table 1).

5.1.1 Concerns for athlete's performance

Athlete's performance was the main source of stress for those coaches. All the coaches described the stress they feel when their athlete fails to deliver in training and/or competition. They also mentioned athlete's professional behavior not being as optimal as it should be, lack of commitment and athlete's injury, which as a result usually decreases levels of performance. Themes under this category included statements like: *"It really stresses me when I see that the athlete has more potential than he is currently showing"* (Michael) and *"My purpose there, is to help the athlete, to make him to see what he is not seeing, and when I can see but the athlete can not put into practice, I get stressed, a lot"* (Anna).

Even though the coaches mentioned different stressors in their career, when they were asked about specific situations that trigger intense unpleasant and pleasant emotions, coaches reported experiencing a variety of strong, predominantly unpleasant emotions in regard to athlete's performance. Many of the coaches felt that stress could have a negative effect on their emotions.

Table 1. Coaching stressors and unpleasant/pleasant emotions

Dimensions	Super-ordinate themes	Themes
	Athlete's failure in competition	Frustration (4) Sadness (4) Irritation (1) Nervousness (1)
Concerns for athlete's performance (6)	Athlete's failure performing to potential during training	Frustration (2) Anxiety (2)
	Athlete's undesirable behavior	Sadness (3) Irritation (3)
	Athlete's success/progress	Happiness (4) Pride (6)
Concerns for own work/performance (6)	Before and during competition	Anxiety (2) Nervousness (1) Fright (1)
	Being a coach	Fright (1) Frustration (1) Happiness (6)
Concerns for Staff's performance (2)	On the day of competition	Irritation (2)
Other concerns (3)	Preparation for major events	Unpleasant emotion – but it was not specified (2)
	Finance	Unpleasant emotion – but it was not specified (1)

Note. The number of coaches who discussed each theme is indicated in parentheses. Total n=6

This emotional reaction naturally had a subsequent influence on the way of expressing their emotions as well as their ability to regulate and adequately cope with the situation. Coaches reported feelings of frustration, sadness, irritation and anxiety in relation to different situations involving the athlete's performance, such as athlete's failure, athlete fails to perform up to his potential and athlete's undesirable behavior.

Athlete's failure in competition

All coaches reported experiencing unpleasant emotions due to athlete's failure. The emotion that was most mentioned was frustration. About frustration, one coach described:

"He lost in the first round against an athlete whose technical abilities were much worse than his. And I felt there a very intense frustration. After an athlete's failure there comes a moment of frustration associated with many questions related to what happened, where was the mistake. Did I do something wrong? Should I give different training sessions for that athlete?"
(Paul)

It is notable that this coach associates the loss of his athlete with possible mistakes that he might have made as a coach. Coach James also mentioned questioning the reasons leading to the mistake (because of the athlete, the environment or the coach) and consequently feeling relief after realizing that the athlete failed not due to a coach's mistake; this inquiring seemed to be an important strategy to regulate the unpleasant emotions. He explained:

"Sometimes you start analyzing the situation, and you notice that it was not the fault of the coach, the athlete did not do everything that was required, he came late to the training session several times for example, and then you feel relief."
(James)

The second unpleasant emotion they reported was sadness. Four coaches described feeling sad, and two even reported feeling depressed when their athlete failed. One coach stated:

"I felt really sad, even a little bit of depression, I felt really bad, everything went down, I was always on top and then I went down." (James)

It is clear that even though it was the athlete who lost the competition, the coach seems to transfer this failure to himself, also experiencing the loss of the athlete.

One coach highlighted the fact that the intensity of the sadness is related to emotional attachment. Anna said, *“Of course, we always have athletes who we are more connected to, with them the stress is higher, I get much sadder if the situation goes wrong.”* She continues saying that when she does not have familiarity with an athlete she does not feel sad; she does not feel guilty, for example, when the athlete fails.

Anna also stated getting irritated when an athlete fails and James reported getting nervous. According to the coach, sometimes the athlete gets nervous because he could not perform to his potential but, in the same way, the coach also gets nervous due to the athlete’s failure.

Athlete fails to perform up to his potential

Coaches went through two different emotions, frustration and anxiety, in situations where the athlete has more potential than what was being shown. Michael mentioned feeling extremely frustrated when his athletes could not do what he required, especially because he may not have other strategies to teach the technique to the athlete. He remarked:

“My heart beat goes very high, because to be honest, in certain moments I start to get desperate, you know that the athlete has the potential but he cannot show the right move, and sometimes I don’t know other ways to teach the technique.”

John reported having the same concerns as James; according to him the possibility of his coaching abilities being directly involved in the athlete’s poor performance caused him anxiety. It is interesting to note that even though those coaches reported similar situations, the emotions elicited were different.

Athlete’s undesirable behavior

All coaches mentioned the athlete’s undesirable behavior as a situation that triggers intense unpleasant emotion. According to Michael and James, they felt really sad when they witnessed an athlete that has the ability to be successful but did not have the

discipline, mentioning even questioning if they still wanted to stay in that career. On the other hand, Peter reported feeling irritated:

“An elite athlete should be disciplined, but sometimes it seems that they don’t know how to behave, they miss training or get late to the gym.”

Athlete’s success/progress

When the coaches were asked to recall how they felt in a situation in their coaching career where they experienced pleasant intense emotions, all of them easily remembered at least one situation. However, the coaches reported altogether just two situations, athlete’s success/progress and being a coach. On the other hand, in scenarios that triggered unpleasant emotions the number was higher and five different situations were cited.

All coaches reported feeling pleasant intense emotions during moments where their athletes improve in their career and/or win a competition. Four coaches mentioned feeling happy when their athlete makes an improvement in their technical, tactical or psychological skills. For those coaches, winning was not the most important aspect of a competition. As one coach described:

“I always feel very happy if my athlete competes well, no matter the result of the competition, for me that is enough, I am already happy. Sometimes my athlete loses one competition, but I noticed that he had improved. I saw that he achieved the technique that I was expecting, even though the outcome of the fight was not the best for him.” (John)

Even though the coaches mentioned feeling happy with the development of their athletes despite the result of the competition, two coaches stated that the intensity of the emotion happiness was higher in the case of a victory. Anna explained, *“When my athlete wins a competition I get much happier, I feel extremely happy, I get euphoric”*.

All the coaches stated feeling pride when their athlete wins a competition. Although those coaches were not athletes anymore, they described to still win via the success of the athlete. As James said, *“When the athlete stands on the podium, I feel as if I stand on the podium as well”*. Anna also mentioned, *“When my athlete won, I felt as if I had*

won as well”.

For the coaches, the successful result of their athletes meant that they did a good job, and they felt like being a big and an important part of the victory. Anna reported, *“When I saw my athlete on the podium, I got really emotional, and I felt I was important on that moment, I thought I was important for her”*. Michael stated:

“I felt 100% proud, mission accomplished, I considered myself very responsible for the achievement of the athlete. There is no one else that wants more the positive result of the athlete than the coach.”

If one only looks at the emotions and stressful situations identified here, these do not appear to be that different between training and competition. However, when one looks deeper into the coaches statements, these clearly suggest that the intensity of the emotions are higher and longer when in competition, as stated by James *“I felt really sad, even a little bit of depression”*, Anna *“the duration of my frustration lasts longer if an athlete fails in a competition”*, Peter *“of course I get happier if my athlete wins a competition rather just makes a progress during training”*. Nevertheless, athlete’s undesirable behavior was shown to be a frequent concern for the coaches. The coach-athlete relationship is important for athlete’s development as well as for coaches’ well-being.

5.1.2 Concerns for own work/performance

All the coaches indicated getting stressed due to the pressure and expectations placed upon them by themselves and others. For example, one coach stated, *“Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night thinking what can I do to get better, to improve myself”* (James). Coaches also discussed the pressure they felt when they could not help the athletes to improve their performance. As one coach described, *“My stress is huge when I cannot get from the athlete 100% of what he can actually give”* (Paul). One coach also mentioned the pressure placed upon them by the club or sports department to get results, and also pointed the fact that the funding of the athlete is related to the coach’s work. He said, *“The salary of the athlete is closely related to what I am going to do with him”* (James).

Four coaches described that before and during competition, as well as the responsibilities of being a coach, were situations that elicited emotions such as anxiety, fright and nervousness. Before a competition coaches reported to still have the same emotions as they had when they were athletes. They also mentioned that the career could be sacrificing but it is still worth to be a coach.

Before and during competition

The main emotions felt by the coaches were those of anxiety, nervousness and fright. Two coaches stated feeling anxious, losing the desire for sleep one or two nights before the event. For example, James said:

“I keep rolling on the bed, thinking if the athlete is going to swim nicely, if he is going to perform perfect movements, in the last minute I always have some doubts, something that maybe I could have changed, taught differently.”

John stated feeling the same emotion, adding that the anxiety felt by the coach is actually the same that is felt by the athlete, especially because he was an elite athlete himself. John also reported feeling fright before the competition, questioning the amount of training hours. He stated:

“I always feel frightened before the competition, I am very strict about the number of training hours, but still I feel frightened because I don't know if what was trained is going to be enough to win.”

Anna highlighted how intense her unpleasant emotions can be before and during competition. She explained, *“I get very stressed, very nervous, it is hard for me to feel that way, I don't like”*.

Being a coach

Anna reported that a coaching career could provoke unpleasant emotions. She explained that the coach is an instrument, helping the athlete to achieve maybe something that she already reached as an athlete or even something bigger in her career and she cannot expect anything in return. She described:

“I will dedicate myself to the athlete, and not always will get something in return. If the athlete wins, even though I helped her, the victory is hers.”

Being a coach was the only category that appeared triggering both unpleasant and pleasant emotions. According to the participants, being a coach can be very stressful and requiring sacrifices, but on the other hand, they all mentioned to have a profession that they love and care about. Peter explained:

“The most important thing is that I love what I do and I am recognized for that. Even though I experience unpleasant emotions, in general I can say that the emotions I feel are mainly good.”

During the interviews, it was interesting to notice that although these were highly experienced coaches who have many years of career behind them, four coaches mentioned still having a mixture of emotions about being a coach vs. an athlete. Anna stated, *“Sometimes my emotions as a coach get mixed with the ones from the time when I was an athlete”*. Peter also explained:

“Sometimes they are emotions that I have had with me since I was an athlete, some are negative, such as frustration, but there are positive ones as well, like happiness.”

5.1.3 Concerns for staff’s performance

Two of the six coaches emphasized how the staff’s performance can be a source of stress for them; for example, Peter described a stressful moment he had due to staff’s work where he felt irritated, *“The bus company we had hired gave us another bus, much worse than the one we had originally chosen for our competitions. This was very stressful and I was irritated”*.

5.1.4 Other concerns

In addition to the other themes, three coaches identified stressors associated with other concerns such as: preparation for major events, as a coach described, *“I am responsible for the registration of athletes, accommodation and arrangement of the travel plan and those are things that I usually get stressed with”* (Peter). Another coach explained how

stressful it can be when they don't receive the salary on the day agreed. He said, *"To begin with, the salary is not high, but it would be already better if I was sure that at least I would receive it on the day agreed with the department"* (Paul).

Overall the coaches were well aware of their emotions; they all could remember and reflect on them, focusing not just on their performance and in tune with athlete's emotions, but they were also able to have a critical view regarding their own emotions. Even though in the question it was not specified, the coaches talked about both, stressors in training and competition. Coaches also emphasized the importance of the programs that focused on teaching a coach how to be aware of their emotions, as they could not just understand themselves but also the athletes. As Michael said, *"we are important for athlete's development and accomplishments, knowing better ours and athlete's emotions are very important for that process."*

5.2 Coaching expressions of emotions

Five coaches reported expressing, to some extent their emotions to their athletes, even though they feel more comfortable expressing only the pleasant ones. Three themes were found under this super-ordinate category. The swimming coaches reported to express the whole range of emotions to their athletes, as they believe a good athlete-coach bond is based on sincere communication. On the other hand, there was one coach who prefers to express only pleasant emotions as it empowers the athletes' beliefs and attitudes. There were still those who chose to express the emotions depending on which athlete the coaching is working with.

5.2.1 Express pleasant and unpleasant emotions to the athlete

The two swimming coaches reported expressing all emotions to the athlete. This was done based on the belief that it may strengthen coach-athlete relationship, as James explained:

"If you know how to show to the athlete what you want, be sincere with him, if you tell him exactly what you are feeling to him, he is going to respond well."

Those coaches also admitted that sometimes they were feeling the unpleasant emotion, but had difficulties changing it. As Peter explained, *“Sometimes it comes from inside, and when it comes I just show what I am feeling, I don’t know how to control.”* James also mentioned similar behavior, *“Sometimes I am annoyed, and I realize that, but sometimes I can not change and then I may say things which I will regret later.”*

It is important to note that even though the interviews were not conducted together, both coaches work for the same sports club, are of about the same age and have the same amount of experience. Peter explained, *“I always try to be clear regarding my emotional state, I don’t try to mask it too much. Sometimes if I am upset the athlete knows that it is with him that I am pissed off with”*. James also mentioned expressing all emotions to his athletes, highlighting that his athletes usually already know his feelings even before he talks about them. This coach also believed that the athletes train better when he is serious. For example:

“There are some days that I get close to the edge of the pool and the athletes already say ‘today is not a good day for you, right?’ Then, they do everything right, in silence, usually the outcome of the training session is really good.”

5.2.2 Express pleasant emotions to the athlete

There was just one coach who preferred expressing only pleasant emotions to the athlete. According to him it is a way to reinforce and recognize the successful behavior of the athlete. As he described:

“I always try to show in a naturally way my positive emotions to the athlete, if he won it is a moment to be recognized and to be celebrated, because the achievement is a result of a lot of hard work.” (Paul)

Paul also highlighted that the positive emotion expressed by the coach acts as psychological support for the athlete. According to him, when he shows that he is happy with the performance of the athlete, the athlete will feel confident, in his words, *“it is an enforcement for them”*.

5.2.3 Express the emotions depending on which athlete the coach is working with

All three coaches of martial artists seem to be careful expressing their emotions depending on the age and level of training of their athletes. Those coaches seemed to have similar coaching style, and reported ability to adapt their coaching techniques varying on the athlete or situation they are working with. For Michael, *“day after day they start to know me better and I learn about them, so we start having the opportunity to understand our limits”*. John reported to be especially careful close to a competition event, *“there are athletes that for example, if I show my anxiety they will keep that with themselves, they will be thinking and over thinking, they may think that I believe they will lose, and because of that they might lose their confidence.”*

Coaches explained that each athlete responds in a different way depending on the emotion and due to this fact, they express their emotions based on the athlete they are working with. Anna stated:

“I have athletes who I need to yell at, to shake them, so that they feel awake and energetic, and yet I have athletes with whom I have to speak calmly, so based on that I always behave depending on the need of my athlete, with some athletes I can express any emotion for them, and they will take it just fine, with others they would not cope well, so with those I hide my emotions.”

5.3 Coaching suppressions of emotions

In an attempt to maintain the well-being and performance of athletes and similarly to preserve themselves, four coaches reported suppressing their emotions during training and competition. The coaches reported to suppress their unpleasant emotions and just one stated suppressing his pleasant emotions.

5.3.1 Suppress unpleasant and pleasant emotions

Four coaches reported suppressing the unpleasant emotions, as they believe that expressing those emotions make the situation worse, as the coach's emotions could influence negatively the athlete's emotions, (e.g., *“If I am anxious, the athlete can get*

anxious because of me”). For those coaches the athletes see the coach’s emotions as a result of the athlete's performance. As Paul stated,

“The athletes associate the perception and reaction of the coach with their development, so they tend to believe that if I am sad, it is because it is related to their poor progress, they may believe that they are doing something wrong, or if I am anxious and show that close to the competition they may lose confidence, so that is one of the reasons why I don’t show my unpleasant emotions to my athletes.”

Anna stated that showing her unpleasant emotion would not help the athlete to see the mistake; instead, she tries to be clear and objective with the instructions. She suggested, *“Just showing that I am upset with her is not going to change her performance”*.

The coaches from Martial Arts reported to suppress unpleasant emotions in order to not harm the athlete. John explained, *“It is very complicated, because when we get close to the tatami, the athlete goes in but I stay, and I need to be sitting in a chair close by, controlling myself as maximum as I can, because nowadays, you can not express all the time as it used to be”*. Michael further illustrated how important is for the coach of martial art to have emotional control during the competition:

“If you show that you are feeling irritated with the refereeing, it is the athlete that receives the penalty, not the coach. So the coach’s emotional control is very important in order to help the athlete.”

Just one coach reported to suppress the positive emotions as well, as he believes that the over evaluation of the achievement can disturb the athlete. For him, the athlete cannot spend a long time celebrating the winning, as he may still have other goals for the career. As the coach explained,

“I am a perfectionist, when an athlete is champion I try not to celebrate a lot, of course I enjoy the fact, I usually say ‘nice, congratulations’, but that’s all. After all, tomorrow is going to be already two days after; I know what the athlete wants to achieve, I know what to do to help him to reach the goal, and I think if

you celebrate too much it is going to disturb the athlete. I just celebrate when the athlete wins a competition and after that he is going to retire.” (John)

5.4 Coaching emotional regulation strategies

All the coaches stated to use a set of automatic or controlled processes involved in the initiation, maintenance and modification of the occurrence, intensity, and duration of their feelings. In an attempt to come to terms with the consequences of stressful coaching situations, coaches made use of a variety of regulation strategies. The emotion regulation strategies in this study were grouped into five general dimensions based on the categories developed by Gross (1998): 1) Situation Selection, 2) Situation Modification, 3) Attention Deployment, 4) Response Modulation and 5) Cognitive Change (Figure 1). In addition to that, it was interesting to notice that all of the coaches talked about the impact of emotions on decision-making, even though this was not asked by the interviewer.

5.4.1 Situation Selection

James reported taking actions that make it more likely that he will end up in a situation that he expects will give rise to desirable emotions, avoiding in this way the situation that would trigger unpleasant emotions. He said,

“I know that usually I get anxious some days before the competition, so nowadays, I try to avoid that, I go out, go to the movies or to a bar with friends. I really like to do craft work as well, and then I don’t get anxious.”

Anna also explained that, before experiencing the unpleasant emotion, if she starts realizing that the athlete does not listen, does not pay attention to what she is trying to say and if he does not put into practice the exercises during training, before experiencing the unpleasant emotion, she stops giving attention to that person. As she said, *“obviously I stop putting effort in an athlete that does not want to train, I have so many other athletes to take care of, and I see no reason to be frustrated because of such an athlete”*.

5.4.2 Situation Modification

Two coaches stated trying to modify the potentially emotion-eliciting situations. Anna said that she usually emphasizes technical aspects when she starts to feel that she could get frustrated with the performance of an athlete and John mentioned giving space for the athlete to talk,

“What I learned about emotions is that you need to listen the athlete. Before I start to feel the unpleasant emotion, I stop and talk with my athlete about the situation in question. I really liked the changes that happened with me, now I am interacting more with my athletes.”

5.4.3 Attention Deployment

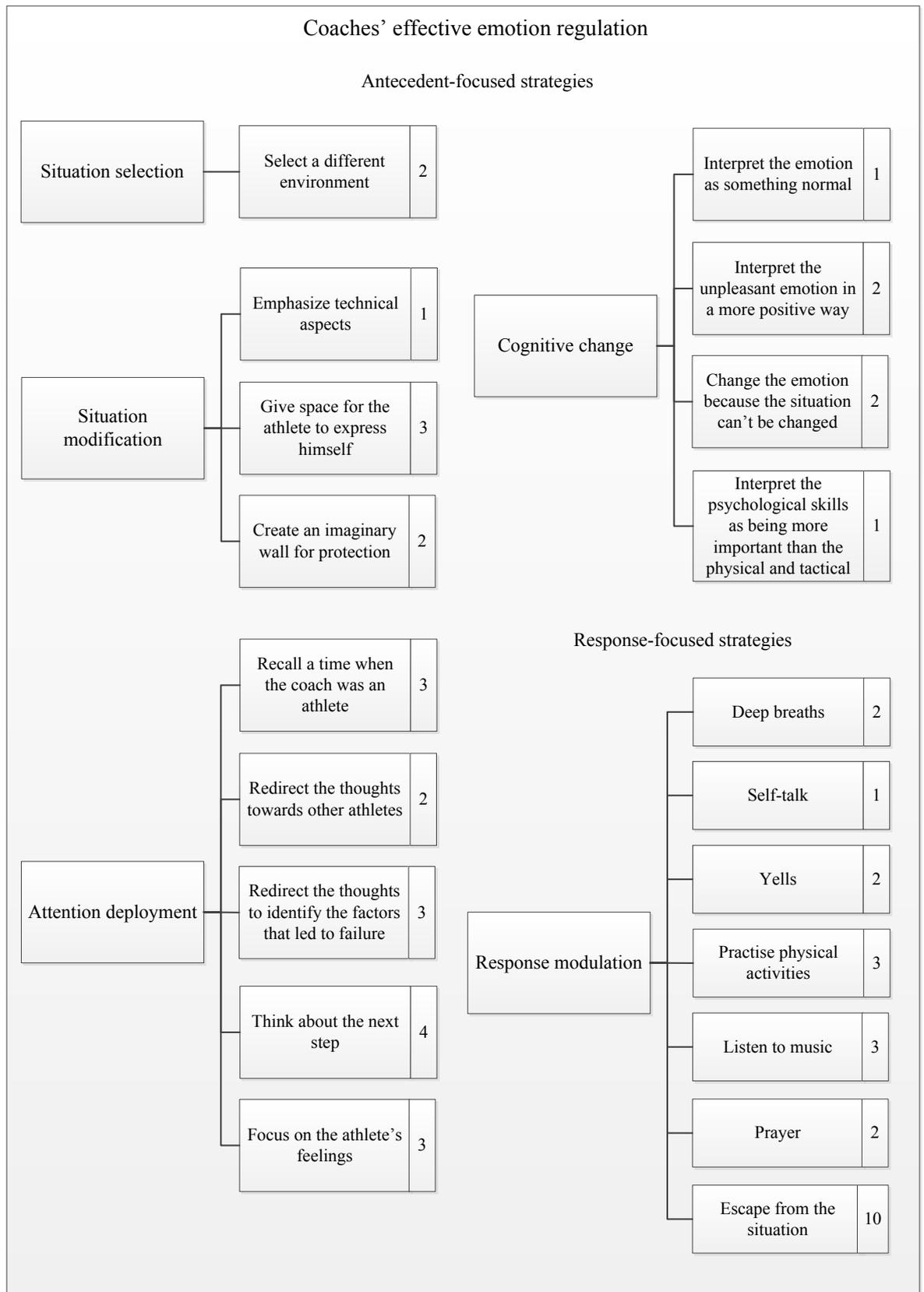
Coaches referred to directing their attention within a given situation in order to influence their emotions. Anna reported using recall as regulation strategy. When the athlete loses, she remembers the time she was an athlete:

“I try to be today what made the difference for me as an athlete, as I know how bad is for the athlete to loose, and when that happens you need to help him, to talk to him calmly, and that’s what I try to do, as an athlete I did not like when my coach was putting his frustrations on me.”

A common strategy used by the coaches seemed to be redirecting the thoughts towards other athletes. According to Anna, when a fight ends, no matter the result, she has other athletes to take care of. John reported using the same strategy, as he explained that usually there are multiple athletes that he needs to assist during one event and all the athletes need his full attention. He explains,

“Sometimes after a fight I have just two to five minutes to assist another athlete, and this athlete also needs me there, completely focused, calm, smiling. It would

Figure 1. Coaching emotion regulation strategies



not be fair if my emotions from the previous fight would disturb my next athlete.”

In order to regulate the unpleasant emotions that could be elicited due to athlete's failure, all the coaches reported to try to redirect their focus of attention on identifying the factors that led to the failure. Coaches understand that a failure is usually multifactorial and they highlighted the need to know the variables in order to change the situation in the future. Paul said:

“When an athlete fails during competition, I focus on trying to identify where was the mistake and if there was any mistake to begin with, then I analyze if it was my or the athlete's mistake and what are the other variables involved. That usually helps me a lot; I start getting calmer after that.”

Four coaches stated to think about the next step as a way to regulate their pleasant and unpleasant emotions. According to them, they try not to think too much about the achievement. For example, when their athletes get a medal in an event, they already start planning the next one. James usually says to his athletes, *“You stood on the podium, got the medal, now it is time to start thinking about the next goal”*. The same way works for a situation where the athlete fails, for Paul, when there is a failure it is important to think about the next goal: *“You cannot get stuck with the bad feelings, you need to move on, and thinking about the next step makes me change my emotions for better ones”*.

Anna, the only female participant of this research reported to focus on the athlete's feelings in order to influence her own emotions. She stated regulating her emotions because she knows that the athlete is in a more delicate situation than her. Even though she may be anxious before the competition, she understands that the anxiety of the athlete is probably higher as he is the one that is going to perform. She said,

“I control my emotions because I focus on the athlete's feelings, he needs me and I am there to help him. It is not fair that I allow my emotions to change my behavior, and as a result, make the situation worse for the athlete; he is already probably experiencing many intense emotions.”

5.4.4 Cognitive Change

The coaches informed to change the way they appraise the situation in order to change their emotional experience. Peter stated to interpret both pleasant and unpleasant emotions as normal, *“I try to understand the emotion as normal, I try not to maximize it, and I wait that the time changes how I am feeling”*. Another two coaches reported to change the emotion due to the fact that they feel powerless to change the situation. As Michael explained:

“Over the years, you learn that you cannot change your emotions dramatically because of other people or because of situations that you cannot modify; when those situations happen I prefer to change how I am feeling.”

5.4.5 Response Modulation

Coaches mentioned trying to regulate their emotions by influencing psychological, experimental or behavioral responding as directly as possible. The most prominent strategy cited by the participants was to escape from the situation that triggered the unpleasant emotions. According to them, after an athlete’s failure, for example, they understand that if both (athlete and coach) are experiencing intense unpleasant emotions the conversation between them may reach a bad outcome. As explained by James,

“If the athlete does not swim well, I escape for a while, put my thoughts in place, breath a bit, there is no point of talking to the athlete straight after the competition, we are both frustrated and sad, talking to him, may just increase even more my feelings.”

Peter said that coaches are similar to athletes and also need some time to cope with the situation as well. He recalled a situation where he completely isolated himself for a while: *“I just left the field, I did not talk to the athlete, I started walking until I found a place close to a swimming pool, and I was there for maybe 30 minutes or even an hour trying to ‘digest’ the situation”*. Here it is notable that even though it might be expected that coaches talk to athletes after a competition, they may not be prepared for that, as they may also be experiencing intense unpleasant emotions.

John was the only coach who mentioned escaping from the situation when he is experiencing pleasant emotions; further he was also the only coach who said to suppress pleasant emotions. He said *“I don’t know, it might be weird, but it is my way, when I am having a good emotion I also escape from the situation, I need to have some time alone to regulate the feeling”*.

Most of the coaches (four) reported using physical activity as a tool to decrease psychological and experiential aspects of emotions such as cycling and practicing the sport of coaching. Coaches also mentioned deep breaths (*“I give a deep blown, try to loosen up the air”*), self-talk (*“I try to change the situation, talk to myself, I say - change”*) and yelling (*“I walk alone and yell, that calms me down”*) as regulation strategies.

Two coaches found through music a way to regulate their emotions. Paul stated, *“If I need to change how I am feeling I get my cellphone, put a song and listen until the emotion modifies, through the music I can change what I am feeling for a better emotion”*. Michael reported being a very religious person and using prayer as a tool to regulate his unpleasant emotions. He mentioned, *“I pray a lot and I think it is the only way that I can easily modify what I am feeling”*.

Two coaches encountered situations where they experienced ineffective emotion regulation. They reported feeling energetic but not having a place where they could use that energy. John explained that the energy, created by the anxiety that the athlete has before the competition it is also experienced by the coach, but the athlete uses that energy during the event unlike the coach, who retain the anxiety. He said, *“For me, it is very hard to sleep after the competition”*. James also reported to *“wake up in the middle of the night, and being awake for hours thinking about the competition”*.

5.4.6 Impact of emotion in decision-making

Three coaches discussed that experiencing an intense emotion (either pleasant or unpleasant) can be harmful when making a decision. All of them reported waiting before making a decision in case they are experiencing intense emotions. As Paul stated,

“When deciding something, I really try to be fully conscious of my emotions, I try to be totally rational, I know that emotions – being positive or negative – can interfere on the way you analyze things, so I always wait, breath, think carefully before.”

Overall the coaches were well aware of their regulation strategies and they all reported to do something regarding the way they were feeling. It is interesting to notice that in a way, coaches are behaving similarly to their athletes, but the way their effectiveness is evaluated is different. Besides, the interaction with their athletes is central in their emotion regulation strategies. Coaches discussed the fact that over the years during their career (as athletes and coaches) they could improve their emotion regulation skills, as evidenced in the statements: *“With time, you start learning about yourself and the others, and based on that you also learn how to change your emotions”*, *“I learned that usually after an athlete’s failure I need two to three days to recover”*, *“There are things I used to do during the beginning of my career that I don’t do anymore”*. Coaches once again mentioned how useful and important are the programs that focus on teaching regulation strategies. As informed by Michael, *“If we could learn better how to change our emotions, we could not just improve ourselves but also the athlete”*, Anna also stated, *“The career of a coach can be very stressful, it would be nice if we could know better how to deal with those situations”*.

6 DISCUSSION

The research questions aimed to answer in this study complement the scientific literature by providing a deeper look into pleasant and unpleasant emotional experiences related to coaching performance, as well as the mechanisms by which coaches express, suppress and regulate their emotions.

6.1 Findings

Findings indicated that coaches experienced a broad range of unpleasant and pleasant emotions, with the most cited being frustration, sadness, irritation, happiness and pride. Interview data not only support the idea that coaches experience a variety of positively and negatively valenced emotions, but they also provide some insight into how discrete emotions may arise. The coaching stressors found in this research, which includes: concerns for athletes' performance, concerns for own work/performance and concerns for staff's performance, share the same stressor themes as the ones reported by Chroni et al. (2013). Moreover, those results also share similarities with the finding described by Frey (2007) and Olusoga et al. (2009), providing further support to the stressors identified, regardless the country the research was conducted. These findings reinforce the notion that coaches operate within a highly demanding environment, and extend previous research by explicitly identifying the specific emotions coaches may experience during their career.

It was interesting to notice that even though coaches mentioned different stressors in their career, when they were asked about specific situations that trigger intense unpleasant and pleasant emotions, situations in relation to athlete's and their own performance were the ones mainly reported. This may be explained by the fact that those elite coaches spend most of their time with their athletes and their main coaching goal is to prepare the athletes to win competitions. During competitions, coaches may feel the pressure to succeed and to justify work invested in them and in their athletes (Chroni et al., 2013). Moreover, the determinants for winning a competition are usually the athletes as well as their own performance and not the staff's performance or coaching financial situation. Another point that needs to be emphasized here is that those are very successful Brazilian coaches who usually have a team working for them,

such as assistant coaches and secretaries. As a result, it may not be necessary for those elite coaches to focus, for example, on administrative and travelling issues.

It was clear that although there was a question regarding two different emotional experiences, pleasant and unpleasant, coaches tended to describe more situations in which they had unpleasant emotions. Coaches reported six situations that triggered intense unpleasant emotions; on the other hand, only two situations that elicited pleasant emotions were cited, which indicates that coaches may spend more time experiencing unpleasant rather than pleasant emotions during their working time. Alternatively, the unpleasant emotion experienced may be increasingly memorable; one can also question if coaches are more aware and focused on the negative experiences. A coaching career can be rather emotionally challenging, as most of the time their goals seem to depend on the athlete's performance, which can certainly be very unsuccessful. This information may provide insight regarding their person-environment relationship and should be looked at more detail in future research. Olusoga et al. (2010) emphasized that coaches who perceived high levels of stress may also experience a variety of negative physical and mental health consequences such as decreased enjoyment and motivation, increase of fatigue and, in extreme cases, burnout. Given the results from this study, which showed that those elite coaches reported to face more situations where they experience unpleasant emotions, it is essential to develop coaching programs that focus on their demands and stressful situations that they might encounter in their daily job.

The emotions, such as frustration, sadness and even depression, elicited in situations where the athlete fails were similar as the ones experienced by athletes (Uphill & Jones, 2007; Ruiz & Hanin, 2004), demonstrating that even experienced coaches may still transfer the athlete's failure to themselves. The intensity of the emotions experienced by the coaches seemed to be related to emotional attachment; therefore, coaches who spend long period of time with their athletes may encounter more intense emotions than others, which may be the case of elite coaches who usually have extended training and travelling hours with their athletes during tournaments.

None of the coaches reported feeling angry in the situations described during the interviews. This may be explained by the fact that those experienced coaches don't feel angry anymore when facing the situations described above, or they cope better with

those moments. It can also be explained by the fact that they prefer not to mention anger during the interview for personal reasons. It is also probable that some appraisals may occur without a coach's conscious awareness (Lazarus, 1991).

Considering the emotions (frustration and anxiety) experienced by the coaches when an athlete fails to perform to potential during training, it is important that sport psychologists provide techniques in order to help those coaches to learn different ways to teach and communicate with their athletes. Additionally, coaches reported experiencing a variety of affective states (nervousness, irritation, and frustration) not considered by Lazarus (1991) to be discrete emotions. An advantage of using qualitative interviews to explore the connection between coaches' appraisals and their emotions was the detailed and rich data acquired.

Sadness was not just related to Lazarus (1999) core relational themes "having experienced an irrevocable loss", coaches also reported feeling sad when an athlete has the ability to be successful but does not have the discipline. Coaches may feel sad because they realize that their goal (improve athletes performance, for instance) may not be achievable. This statement supports Levine's (1996) argument that sadness is a response to goal failure. In agreement with the research developed by Uphill and Jones (2007), which also used Lazarus' cognitive motivational relational theory (1991) as a framework to analyze their data, the frustration of the goal provoked by athlete's failure in competition and/or training, did not seem to have special significance for coaches' ego identity. Even though it may have had significance, they did not recognize it, as demonstrated in the transcript. On the other hand, the frustration elicited by being a coach, explicitly indicated significance for ego-identity.

According to Zembylas (2003) the social-historical context is going to influence how particular emotions are constructed, and when they are expressed. For instance, currently in Brazil, sports are in focus due to the fact that Brazil is going to host the next World Cup and Olympic Games. Thus, those coaches are situated in a context where they are in focus and may have been experiencing pressure to show successful results in those major events. After all, it is the first time that a South America country is going to host an Olympic Games. It will be the opportunity for thousands of Brazilians to watch such games live. As a result, this focus of attention may provoke an increase in

emotions such as anxiety and fright. The pressure of being a coach in a country that it is going to host the Olympic Games is just one of the reasons why social-historical contexts influence emotions (Schutz, Hong, Cross & Osbon, 2006).

In relation to pride, rather than taking credit for a valued object or achievement, they associated pride with a perception of successful work with their athletes and/or recognition of being an important part of the success of the athlete. Even though taking credit for achievement happened in some instances, ascribing credit to the self may not be enough to justify all explanations of pride in sport. In agreement with the findings from Uphill and Jones (2007) the above example highlights the necessity of considering individual appraisal components. It is worth noting that core relational themes may define some emotions better than others (Uphill & Jones, 2007).

Lazarus (1999) mentioned how important is to know what it means to live each emotion since it provides an understanding of how it was caused. With this in mind, this study attempted to conduct interviews that explored the coaching emotional experiences, as it would help psychologists or sport psychologist practitioners to comprehend the dynamic of the coach's adaptational life.

All the coaches during their coaching practices reported to suppress certain emotions and to engage in different behaviors in order to achieve their working goals (competitive success). In agreement with the findings from Nelson et al. (2013), those coaches felt that a positive persona would facilitate the establishment of an environment for success. Similar to the findings reported by Frey (2007), the coaches felt that their negative reaction to stress would affect their athlete's performance and experiences with stress. Thus, all the coaches share the belief that they were influential people for their athletes and they frequently suppressed their "real" feelings in order to gain the optimal performance from their athletes.

Even though most of coaches stated to suppress intense unpleasant emotions, Rovio et al. (2012) argued that showing one's feeling and thoughts to others facilitates team-building. Moreover, expressing feelings clarifies and enhances interactions, and gives justification to them; therefore, it was suggested that expressing feelings is useful to better understand one's own emotions no matter if you are a coach or an athlete.

In this study, no standardized instrument (such as Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-INTE) was used to evaluate coaches' level of emotional intelligence. Nevertheless, based on the interviews, one can interpret that those elite coaches were well aware of and understood their own emotions (first and second branch of the Emotional Intelligence framework). They were also aware that their emotions may influence their athletes' performance, and because of that, they consciously decided not to show them to their athletes. This demonstrates that those coaches were using emotions to facilitate thinking and managing them in order to achieve their goal (third and fourth branch of EI framework). Based on those coaches, who not necessarily expressed their emotions, one can argue that expressions of emotions are not the only way to understand one's own emotions. It is worth noting that two coaches experienced difficulties in suppressing and/or presenting certain emotions to their athletes, even though they were aware that suppressing it would benefit the situation. Moreover, three coaches highlighted that even though they might want to suppress their emotions, their athletes were able to see their real emotions; similar results were also found in Nelson et al. (2013).

Both expression and suppression mechanisms used by those elite coaches seemed to be based on learning of previous experiences. Moreover, those mechanisms were highly contextualized, with all of the coaches emphasizing that they will express or suppress an emotion depending on the situation and on which athlete they are dealing with (Nelson et al., 2013). Thus, those coaches also highlighted the importance of having an extended knowledge about their athletes as well as their optimal performance state. It is clear that the participants constantly engaged in appraisals, evaluating the characteristics of the environment and the transitions that occurred in the context that would benefit their goals (Lazarus, 1991; Nelson et al., 2013).

The research provides support for Hochschild's (1983) theory of emotional labor, as often coaches decided to suppress their real emotions in order to create the right state of mind in their athletes, and as a result, achieve their coaching goals. It is important to pay special attention to coaches' emotional labor as the state of discrepancy between the emotion which was felt and the displayed emotions (emotional dissonance) is considered to be detrimental to one's psychological well-being and it can have serious psychological costs such as burnout (Bakker & Heuven, 2006). According to the research developed by Richard and Gross (2000), suppression of emotions may increase

the level of stress, be harmful to communication and is cognitively demanding. Besides, research shows that people who experienced more negative emotions may have the consequence of developing a weaker immune system (Barak, 2006). As a result, for example, a coach may have a bigger probability of getting ill beyond coaches who experience pleasant emotions.

Gross and John (in press) found that suppression was connected with lower levels of positive emotions and expression. Similar to their findings, in this research it was found that the more coaches reported to suppress their emotions, the more negative emotions they reported to feel.

In the research conducted by Gelderena, Bakkerb, Konijnnc and Demerouti (2011), it was found that suppression of negative emotions is more harmful for employees' exhaustion than the suppression of positive emotions. In this study, coaches reported to mostly suppress unpleasant emotions, and just one coach stated to suppress pleasant emotions, but for this unique coach the suppression of pleasant emotions had the negative consequence of leaving him sad. When suppressing the emotion after a successful competition, he was feeling weird and not part of the society, even saying "*is there something wrong with me?*". As according to this coach, in his culture when people are happy, they usually express it. Clearly the suppression of pleasant emotions for this coach had a negative effect.

Even tough studies suggest that there are harmful effects when suppressing unpleasant emotions, during the interviews the participants stated, overall, to feel happy with their job. One of the explanations for this contrast may be based on the fact that those coaches are elite and successful ones. Although they are suppressing emotions, their main goals are still being achieved and they are being rewarded for that (their athletes are still winning major international competitions). Another reason may be in accordance with the findings from Gelderena et al. (2011), where it was indicated that suppression of unpleasant emotions may not be necessarily harmful to the employees' well-being. According to their results, suppression of anger may have stronger effects in the short term, whereas the suppression of sadness may have more detrimental effects in the long term.

The fact that all the coaches were previously athletes seemed to have an important role in all of the sections during the interviews. Nieuwenhuys et al. (2011) described meta-emotional beliefs as the knowledge that someone has about her/his previous experiences. The fact that those coaches were also athletes, who had experienced moments of successful and failure, helped them to better understand the emotional needs of their athletes. As athletes, they also needed to deal with their coaches, and based on that, the participants reported to understand how their coaching emotional experiences could influence the athlete's emotions and consequently performance. Those coaches not only needed to interpret and manage their emotions but subsequently they needed to understand and interpret the athlete's emotional experience (Nelson et al., 2013).

Their previous experiences as athletes, as well as their sport culture and rules, clearly left marks and helped to determine whether they suppress or express their emotions. For example all the coaches from Martial Arts seemed to have an important role during competition. Those coaches reported to suppress unpleasant emotions, as the referee can give a penalty to an athlete in cases where the coach shows the emotion. On the other hand, the swimming coaches were the only coaches to express any emotion to the athletes and consequently showed less emotional control.

Coaches stated to suppress both pleasant and unpleasant emotions in situations where they needed to make a decision, and when possible, they waited until their emotions were not as intense. According to the Social and Emotional Learning model (Lintunen & Gould, 2014), Responsible decision-making is an important skill that coaches should acquire. Responsible decision-making should be based on safety concerns, social norms, ethical standards and respect for others (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2003). The participants seemed to make decisions in a responsible manner, thinking carefully and taking their time so that, neither of them nor their athletes would experience negative consequences. It is important to mention that those coaches stated mostly acquiring decision-making skills based on their experience and years of work. This finding emphasize the importance of having coaching programmes that teach values about taking responsibility and making decisions at the beginning of their career.

In summary, coaches were well aware of how their athletes would interpret and react to the way they were showing their emotions in their presence. They were well situated in their current condition and they could reflect about their emotional experiences, questioning how they wanted to present their emotions to their athletes, and what would be the consequences of certain behaviors.

Strategies used by coaches to regulate their emotions in recent situations of interaction with their athletes were also investigated. Similar to the findings from Lane et al. (2011), the results of the current study highlight the features of emotion regulation in a performance setting, indicating that athletes are not the only ones to use regulation strategies in that context. Findings suggest that coaching emotion regulation is focused largely on performance-related factors, as coaches believe that their emotions have great impact on athlete's performance and those strategies were predominantly related to attention deployment.

In describing attempts to regulate their emotions, many participants reported utilizing attention strategies to regulate the way they were feeling and to keep focused on their goals. Behavioral emotion regulation strategies were also very frequently reported, with escaping from the situation being the most prominent of these, they understand that if both (athlete and coach) are experiencing intense unpleasant emotions the conversation between them may reach a bad outcome. Augustine and Hemenover (2008) found that behavioral strategies are easier to use than cognitive strategies, which require greater emotion regulation ability. Coaches used behavioral strategies closely related with those highlighted by Lane et al. (2011); for example, listening to music and deep breathing. However, they also reported practicing physical activities, which may be explained due to the fact that all of them were athletes and may get pleasure from the activity.

One of the reasons for response modulation being preferred over, for example, cognitive change in this sample, may be explained due to the fact that one of the questions in the interview was related to how coaches felt in a recent situation in their coaching career where they experienced intense emotions. In this way, emotions needed to be already elicited and as a consequence response-focused strategies were used. Even though the subsequent questions were related to situations where the emotions were not still

provoked, coaches may not have remembered as many strategies as in situations where intense emotions were experienced.

Results also revealed that coaches' emotion regulation strategies varied significantly across situations and within the time period leading up to the next competition. One of the reasons is that close to competitions, coaches reported experiencing more intense emotions, and as a consequence, a need for regulating them. As stated by Thomas, Murphy and Hardy (1999) athletes learn to identify what to do to change their emotions previous the competition. Based on this statement, one can think that those coaches currently use regulation strategies learned when they were athletes, such as self-talk, imagery, recall past performance and task-focus (Lane et al., 2011).

The open-ended response format used in this study allowed coaches to provide a breadth of description perhaps not permitted by the closed-response format. For example, one coach explained that the anxiety that the athlete has before the competition it is also experienced by the coach, but the athlete uses that energy during the event unlike the coach who retains it. Besides, coaches also discussed the fact that over the years during their career (as athletes and coaches) they learned how to improve their emotion regulation skills.

All the coaches reported using avoidance strategies, which has the objective of removing the coaches from the emotional situation via the use of situation selection and modification (emphasize technical aspects), attentional deployment (redirect the thoughts towards other athletes) and response modulation (deep breaths). Perhaps through necessity, with a coach task being related to more than one athlete, coaches' responses suggest that in potential situations that would trigger intense emotions they tend to take a break and focus on other athletes. Attempts at avoidance were mainly cognitive; coaches reported that even though they were focusing mentally in another athlete in order to regulate their emotions, they usually stay with the same athlete, as leaving the athlete could be perceived as an impolite behavior, and it could influence negatively the athlete in question. The only three clear examples of behavioral avoidance strategies involved were, talking to a friend days before a competition as well as engaging in hobby activities, or escaping from the environment when the athlete fails in competition in order to regulate the unpleasant emotion elicited. Coaches highlighted

that like the athlete, they need time to “digest” the unpleasant emotion provoked by the athlete’s failure.

It is interesting to note that similar to athletes (Lane et al. 2011), those coaches also used more engagement strategies before the competition. For example, giving space for the athlete to express himself, emphasizing technical aspects, focusing on the athlete’s feelings, and interpreting the emotion as something normal. On the other hand, after the competition, coaches tended to use more behavioral avoidance strategies (e.g., escape from the situation, listen to music, prayer). This may be explained based on the fact that those elite coaches may believe that their goal and work (prepare the athlete to win) ends when a competition ends, they may believe that the athlete does not need them anymore. Another explanation might be the one described by Tamir (2009) where people try to regulate their emotions to levels they believe will help to succeed and achieve their goals. Those coaches may regulate their emotions before the competition based on the benefit of seeing their athletes winning, but when the athletes fail, their goal do not exist anymore, and thus they can focus more on just themselves.

Coaches stated recalling a time when they were athletes in order to regulate their emotions and create a connection with their athletes. They reported trying to be today what made the difference for them when they were athletes; they also reported that recalling a past situation in their career gives the believe that the present situation can be handled. Finally, coaches also reported interpreting unpleasant emotions in a more positive way, which goes in agreement described by Augustine and Hemenover (2008) and Lane et al. (2011).

Present findings indicate that elite coaches use many different strategies to regulate their emotions. It is hoped that these results can serve as a guide for sport psychologists and researchers by suggesting a variety of possible regulation strategies and by serving as a basis for future studies related to coaching emotional experiences.

6.2 Limitations

By providing both, coaches’ experiences and the interpretation of those voices within this paper, I hope to encourage further debate and investigation of the issues addressed.

Nevertheless, it is important to examine the results with respect to possible limitations.

First of all, because the sample of elite coaches was reasonably small and because of the demographic characteristics of the participants, it is unclear if similar results would be observed in other coaches working on either the same or different levels. Second, all the coaches from the sample were training athletes who were competing in individual categories. Thus, we did not get information about coaches working with team sports.

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, the interview guide created could not address all the potential factors associated with coaching emotional experiences, such as personality factors and motivation. It is also important to note that one of the main purposes of this study was to investigate emotions elicited by coaching situations during training and/or competition days in relation to the athletes. As a result, administration and other working place issues were not explored in depth, except in situations where the coaches voluntarily decided that those were particular stressors that they experienced in their day-to-day job. Moreover, the focus of this research was on coaches' effective emotion regulation; therefore it was not asked during the interviews what were the coaches' ineffective strategies.

Data gathered in the interviews could be affected by selective memory bias, e.g. coaches remembered better situations where they used response-focused strategies (had already experienced the emotion) rather than situations where they used antecedent-focused strategies (things coaches did before the emotion response tendencies have been totally triggered).

Notwithstanding the described limitations, this study offers a unique contribution in uncovering not only the way that elite coaches experience pleasant and unpleasant emotions, but also the mechanisms by which they express, suppress and regulate them.

6.3 Future research

Many of the coaches in the present study discussed the differences of emotions and regulation strategies by more experienced coaches and not so experienced (young) coaches. Thus it would be useful to interview less experienced and less successful coaches to analyze how their experiences and perceptions of emotions may differ from

those of the elite coaches. In the same way, it would be interesting to gain a better understanding of the influence of personal characteristics on stress and emotions.

The participants presented several emotion regulation strategies, but it is not clear how they learned those techniques. Besides, in this study an area of interest was the strategies that actually worked for the coaches, as one of the goals of this study was to learn effective regulation strategies used by elite Brazilian coaches. Future research should focus on strategies that coaches used but did not find helpful. Furthermore, research could consider employing outcome measures, which may provide a more accurate sign of the criteria underpinning emotion regulation strategies effectiveness. Action research that concentrates in coaches' educational programs would be valuable in order to analyze how coaches have developed helpful emotion regulation strategies.

All the interviewed coaches were also athletes in the past. Future research should verify to which extent this fact may have influence in coaches' expression/suppression mechanisms as well as regulation strategies. Another point that deserves attention is whether coaching emotional experiences change according to the type of sport and if there are differences between individual and team sports. In this study, the only female coach interviewed, clearly developed emotional regulation strategies that were not cited by the male coaches, but the sample size was not big enough for comparison. Future study should focus on emotional experiences specifically on the female coaching population.

Further research with a bigger sample is clearly needed in order to examine coaches' emotional attachment. Additionally, subsequent study should explore the difference between coaches' emotional attachment in individual and team sports. Finally, researchers should continue investigating coaches' emotional experiences in order to expand coaching scientific literature and gather a more complete understanding of this population.

6.4 Practical implications

Four coaches in the present study stated that communication with athletes was a source of intense unpleasant emotions. Accordingly, research has showed that communication

with the coach is also a source of stress for athletes (Fletcher & Hanton, 2003). Thus communication skills training could be constructive with the purpose of improving coach-athlete relationship. Moreover, coaches reported to experience unpleasant emotions such as anxiety and fright before and during competition, which as a result affects their sleeping patterns and effectiveness as coaches. Coaching educational programs that concentrate on interventions that help elite coaches to maintain their efficacy under pressure may be extremely necessary.

As reported by Lintunen and Gould (2014), there is a lot of potential lost in sport because of lack of social and emotional skills. Thus, programs that focus on facilitating awareness and teaching coaches skills in emotional learning, may improve their well-being. Those programs should focus on teaching techniques such as: I-Messages, where the sender only expresses his/her internal reality without evaluations or judgments, and active listening, where the listener tells what he/she understood of what the person has said.

Three coaches reported experiencing unpleasant emotions due to athlete's undesirable behavior and when athletes fail to perform to potential during training. Educational programs that focus on teaching how to give effective feedback can be very beneficial. Lintunen and Gould (2014) suggested the use of techniques such as Positive and Confrontation I-Messages, where first the coach gives a description of the athlete's behavior, then the coach would say his feelings about the situation followed by the effect of the athlete's behavior on the coach.

Based on this study's findings, where coaches reported to use more regulation strategies such as suppression of emotion-expressive behavior rather than, for example, reappraisal, it is suggested that interventions should focus on teaching antecedent-focused rather than response-focused strategies. Suppression decreases expressive behavior but does not decrease the emotional experience itself. On the other hand, reappraisal is known for altering the entire course of the emotional response. As a result, the person goes through less experiential, behavioral and physiological responses. Reappraisal was also associated with greater positive emotional experience and expression (Gross, 2002).

Although the coaches interviewed in this study demonstrated to regulate their emotions well, it is likely that there are coaches who could benefit from emotional skills and emotional intelligence trainings. Gordon (2003) reported that the Teacher Effectiveness Training, which targets teachers and coaches and has the goal of providing tools to enhance their communication and conflict resolution skills, had positive response from the participants. In addition, interventions that concentrate on helping coaches to deal with their emotional experiences are central for the emotional learning of the athletes. Based on their knowledge and experiences, coaches may teach athletes how to improve their emotional skills, which are considered determinants of a good performance (Hanin, 2000).

6.5 Conclusion

This research was an attempt to explore coaches' stressors and other pleasant and unpleasant emotional experiences related to their coaching performance. Specifically, coaches' awareness of their emotions and situational triggers were examined. Lastly, the mechanisms by which coaches express, suppress and regulate their emotions were studied.

Findings indicated that coaches experienced a broad range of mostly intense unpleasant emotions, with organizational, training and competitive origins during their careers. The most cited emotions being frustration, sadness, irritation, anxiety, happiness and pride. Second, all the coaches from this sample shared the belief that they were influential people for their athletes and therefore, they frequently suppressed their "real" feelings in order to gain the optimal performance of their athletes. Moreover, expression and suppression mechanisms were highly contextualized; coaches reported expressing or suppressing an emotion depending on the situation and on which athlete they were working with. These results indicate the importance of paying special attention to coaches' emotional labor, as it is cogitated to be detrimental to one's psychological well-being (Bakker & Heuven, 2006).

Third, coaches not only regulated their emotions in order to feel better, they often engaged in regulatory processes to pursue personally relevant goals, as they believed that their emotions could influence athlete's emotions and performance. Thus, findings suggest that coaching emotion regulation is focused largely on performance-related

factors. The fact that all the coaches were athletes in the past, as well as their sport rules and culture clearly left marks and helped to determine their expression, suppression mechanisms as well as their regulation strategies. Hence, it is essential to consider regulatory processes and coaches' beliefs in order to achieve an optimal sport performance, and also to improve the well-being of coaches.

Given the findings, it is strongly suggested that if sport psychologist practitioners want to better prepare coaches for the demanding, day-to-day realities of practice it is extremely important to better understand the role of emotions. In addition, in order to have an effective coaching program it is necessary to consider not only the preparation and the support of the coaching cognition, but also their emotional experiences.

This research contributed to better understanding of how elite coaches respond to the dilemmas, challenges and ambiguities that they face (Jones, 2009; Zembylas, 2005). In conclusion, the findings and recommendations that have arisen from this study provide an avenue for further research to explore emotional experiences among coaches. Ultimately, such endeavors could encourage coaching educators, sport psychologists and others who might be interested in the topic to learn, consider and teach about the emotional side of coaching.

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APPENDIX A

University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences
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Information Sheet for Participants

A phenomenological investigation of the emotional experiences of elite Brazilian coaches

The purpose of my study is to explore how the coaches regulate their own emotions, whether they are aware of their emotions, which strategies they use, and how they express those feelings to the athletes.

If you agree to volunteer, you will be asked about questions related to how you regulate your emotions. This interview was designed to be approximately one hour in length. However, please feel free to expand on the topic or talk about related ideas. Also, if there are any questions you feel you cannot answer or that you do not feel comfortable answering, feel free to indicate this and we will move on to the next question.

All the information will be kept confidential. If you feel uneasy with any question, you can refuse to answer or stop the interview. Your decision to withdraw will not have any negative outcome for you.

By agreeing to participate, I agree that results may be used for scientific purposes, as long as your anonymity is kept. And there are no known risks associated with participation in this study.

The researcher conducting this study is Caroline Sousa Vieira with Dr. Montse Ruiz. If you have any question or concerns regarding this study, please ask now or if your question arise at later time, you may direct them to the email: carolinesousavieira@gmail.com, or call to the cellphone: (+358) 449274119.

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APPENDIX B

*Consent form***Participant's Agreement:**

I _____, am aware that my participation in this interview is voluntary. If, for any reason, at any time, I wish to stop the interview, I may do so without having to give an explanation. I understand the intent and purpose of this research.

The researcher has reviewed the individual and social benefits and risks of this project with me.

I am aware the data will be used for the masters thesis. I have the right to review, comment on, and/or withdraw information prior to the paper's submission. The data gathered in this study are confidential and anonymous with respect to my personal identity unless I specify/indicate otherwise.

Additional conditions for my participation in this research are noted here:

[Possible conditions: destruction of tape (audio/video), receive a copy of original material(s), receive feedback of the interview.]

I have read the above form, and, with the understanding that I can withdraw at any time, and for whatever reason, I consent to participate in today's interview.

Participant's signature Date

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide

Gender:

Sport:

Number of years working as a coach:

Career as an athlete:

Which sport:

Which level:

Coaching - relevant training:

Section 1

1. *To begin with, I would like to start this interview by asking you to tell me a little bit about your day-to-day role and responsibilities.*
2. *What are the particular stressors that you go through in your job?*
3. *When you are stressed, what do you normally do?*
4. *How does it work for you (the behaviour)?*
5. *On a scale from 1 to 10, how aware of your emotions are you?*

Section 2

1. *What type of emotions are associated to your past successes?*
2. *What type of emotions are associated to your past failures?*

First part:

Please, try to remember how you felt in a recent situation in your coaching career. This could be in a training session with your athletes or in a competition (day), but it should be one where you experienced pleasant (positive) intense emotions. Once you have an event in your mind, please tell me how you felt during that event.

Second part:

In relation to how you felt in that specific situation, what strategies did you use to influence the way you were feeling? It does not matter whether the strategies worked or not, please simply tell me with as many details as possible these strategies that you used.

3. How do you deal with your successes and the emotions associated with them?

4. How do you deal with the failures and the emotions associated with them?

5. How do you feel about feelings like this?

6. In the situation that you just described to me, what did you do?

7. In what way do you think the way you feel affects your athletes?

8. What do you do when you are having those feelings?

9. When you are feeling those emotions, how do you evaluate yourself and the athlete?

10. How do you use the emotions to solve problems?

11. How emotions influence you to make decisions?

12. If you think about emotions and successful coaching, what comes to your mind?

Section 3

This is the space where you can talk about the lessons learned throughout your coaching career regarding emotions. Feel free to express your thoughts as much as possible.