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The use of humor by Swedish sports coaches:

Why, How and When

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Abstract

This study explores the use of humor in Swedish sports coaching, a topic often overlooked in research. Using a mixed-method approach, 13 coaches from eight sports were observed and interviewed to understand how humor is applied in coaching contexts. The findings show that humor is used in various situations before, during, and after practice, as well as in high-pressure moments to enhance focus, reduce stress, and build stronger relationships. Effective use of humor depends on factors such as coach-athlete relationships, team culture, and the coach's personality and leadership style. While many coaches reported humor as a natural trait, it was also recognized as a learnable skill. Humor contributed to a positive training environment, improved communication, and increased motivation. The study concludes that humor, when applied with awareness and sensitivity, can be a valuable tool for fostering engagement, trust, and development in sport coaching.

Keywords: *Humor, sport, coaching, tool, humor tactics*

Introduction

Within the field of coaching, various behaviors and coaching methods have been extensively studied. However, humor has not received as much attention event though it is often used by coaches both on and off the field (Potrac et al. 2013). While traditionally seen as something that happens alongside coaching, Potrac et al. (2013) argue it should be considered an integral part of coaching practice. Similarly, Ronglan and Aggerholm (2014) highlight that humor can play a crucial role in high-pressure or rigid situations.

Coaching

As a coach, many decisions must be made ranging from managing people to handling the pressure to succeed and develop athletes. Collins et al. (2022) explain that every situation and individual is unique, and therefore no single method or model is universally effective. Coaches must be adaptable and flexible, responding to the complexity of their role and the context they operate within. Making well-founded decisions requires a combination of experience, knowledge, and research. According to Collins et al. (2022), coaches also need both declarative knowledge (theoretical understanding) and procedural knowledge (how to apply it in practice) to make sound decisions.

Furthermore, to coach effectively, one must possess both professional and intrapersonal knowledge where professional knowledge includes decision-making related to sport-specific

skills and tactics and intrapersonal knowledge involves the coach's ability to connect with others, maintain self-awareness, and engage in self-reflection (Jowett, 2017). Collins and Collins (2015) also emphasize the importance of reflection in coaching. Effective coaches reflect on their decisions to improve, whether immediately after an event or later upon deeper consideration. As coaches are constantly required to make decisions in diverse situations they must understand not only what to do but also when and how to act. This ability, which includes the skillful use of humor, develops over time and with experience (Ronglan & Aggerholm. 2014).

The use of humor can be considered a form of social competence that contributes to a coach's trustworthiness. However, this does not imply that all coaches must use humor especially if it doesn't come naturally, but its potential benefits should not be overlooked (Ronglan & Aggerholm. 2014).

Coaching and humor

Humor varies widely and is influenced by factors such as culture, ethnicity, age, gender, personality, organizational rank, and status. In sports, every team and athlete is unique, shaped by different subcultures and norms that are created, maintained, and valued within each environment (Potrac et al. 2013). Edwards and Jones (2018) describe humor as a "social lubricant" used by coaches to create and sustain these norms and cultures. Jowett (2017) adds that gender can also play a role in relationship-building; a coach who shares the same gender as the athlete may find it easier to establish rapport through shared experiences and understanding.

That being said, humor is notoriously difficult to define, as it is largely subjective and dependent on individual interpretation. Marenić and Dabo (2023) attempt to define humor as a form of communication aimed at making others laugh or feel uplifted. Potrac et al. (2013) describe humor as a "valuable communication resource", emphasizing that communication is a central aspect of a coach's role. Ronglan and Aggerholm (2014) further describe humor as a multifunctional tool, with different purposes depending on the context. Its impact can be both positive and negative, depending on how it is used and how it is received.

For a coach, it is important to understand these subcultures and to know their athletes well in order to recognize when and how humor can be appropriately used (Potrac et al. 2013). According to Jowett (2017), the quality of the coach-athlete relationship provides valuable insight that can help tailor training to better suit the individual. Understanding an athlete's sense of humor should be taken seriously due to the interpersonal nature of coaching (Ronglan & Aggerholm. 2014). A strong relationship between coach and athlete often fosters mutual respect, trust, commitment, and collaboration. Athletes who experience high-quality relationships with their coaches tend to be more satisfied with their training, instruction, personal treatment, and performance, and often report higher motivation levels (Jowett. 2017). Additionally, Collins and Collins (2015) emphasize the coach's responsibility to support the long-term development of the athlete, not just focus on performance outcomes.

Coaches typically hold the most power and occupy the highest position in a team's hierarchy. In Nordic countries, Ronglan and Aggerholm (2014) note that coaches often use self-irony revealing aspects of their personal selves to appear more approachable and human. This can also help redirect the focus of athletes and create a more balanced power dynamic. Conversely, athletes and individuals in lower positions of power may use humor to address serious topics in a less confrontational way, without challenging the coach's authority (Crawford, 2003).

Previous research has established that humor is present in sport and can have both positive and negative effects, depending on its purpose and application. It influences not only individual athletes but also group dynamics and hierarchical structures. Despite this, humor remains an under-researched area in the field of sport, with no existing strategy, theory, or model outlining how or when it should be used as a coaching tool. With this gap in mind, the present study explores how humor is employed by coaches and under what circumstances, within a Swedish sporting context developing a model of how humor can be used.

Method

Study design

The chosen method for this study is based on grounded theory, that use a pragmatic philosophical perspective, this approach assumes that knowledge emerges through practical actions and interactions, shaped by the surrounding social context and co-constructed in collaboration with others within that environment (Figgins et al. 2019) and employs an inductive approach to analyze the qualitative data. As Kristensson (2014) notes, grounded theory emphasizes broad and iterative data collection, which facilitates theoretical development throughout the research process. Accordingly, this study employed two complementary methods: cross-sectional observations and semi-structured interviews. Observations enabled direct insights into coaches use of humor in different situations, while interviews provided deeper understanding of their perceptions and intentionality of humor in sports coaching.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 13 coaches (5 women and 8 men) representing eight different sports, across various athlete age groups and performance levels. Most participants are head coaches, although one is an assistant coach and another is a strength and conditioning coach. Their coaching experience ranges from 3 to 30 years. The duration of their relationships with their athletes varies from two months to five years, with the majority having worked with their athletes for over a year.

Coach pseudonym	Sports	Age of players	Coach experience years
JF	Strength and conditioning	15-16	10

PF	Football	11	4
DI	Floorball	18-35	30
DK	Dance	4-16	3.5
SÖ	Football	13	4
MF	Fencing	10-100	20
EH	Horse riding	6-100	14
MÖ	Football	16	8
HF	Fencing	10-100	19,5
HB	Swimming	18-100	10
EB	Swimming	6-18	7
JB	Swimming	6	6
JH	Handball	14-15	4,5

Ethics

The topic of this study is not considered sensitive or high-risk; therefore, ethical board approval was not sought. According to Kristensson (2014), studies that could potentially have psychological or physical consequences for participants must undergo ethical review. In this study, ethical considerations were still addressed (World medical association. 2025): all participants received and signed a written consent form outlining their rights. The coaches were informed of their right to withdraw at any time, as well as their right to rephrase or retract any statements made during the study.

Data Collection

A mixed-methods approach was used to gather data, including both observations and semi-structured interviews. Even if the data collection methods are usually seen as qualitative (Kristensson. 2014), the data will generate both qualitative and quantitative data results, because of the way the data is gathered and processed. Henricson (2014) describes how grounded theory doesn't have a fixed method it is up to the researcher to decide. Prior to the observation, coaches received an information sheet detailing the study (see Appendix 1). The observation took place during one of the coach's regular practices, selected collaboratively by the coach, athlete(s), and the researcher.

During the observation session, the coach wore a microphone to record verbal communication and ambient sounds. The researcher was also present to take field notes, focusing on non-verbal communication such as body language and eye contact, as well as the dynamics within the team and the surrounding environment.

Following the practice session, a semi-structured interview was conducted (in two cases, the interview occurred before the observation). The location for the interview was chosen by the coach to ensure a comfortable and quiet setting. Each interview began with a detailed explanation of the study and a review of the consent form, which was signed prior to recording (see Appendix 2) (Kristensson. 2014). The interview began with background questions regarding the coach's experience, their athletes, and their coaching style. It then transitioned into questions specifically related to the main research topic: humor in coaching (see Appendix 3: Interview Guide). The interviews lasted between 15 and 40 minutes, with most lasting around 20 minutes.

Data Analysis

This study used Grounded Theory to analyze the data, allowing the research questions and collected data to collaboratively develop a theory (Oktay 2012). According to Kristensson (2014), grounded theory requires extensive data and a broad perspective to be effective. Within this method, theory is developed gradually, and additional data may be required until no new insights emerge, this point is referred to as theoretical saturation.

The analysis was divided into two parallel and ongoing processes one for the observations and one for the interviews. This meant that both processes had influence on each other and new ideas and thoughts were developing during the time, something that had an impact on the outcome and results.

Observation Analysis

The analysis of the observations was inspired by a coding scheme focused on counting how often specific humor-related behaviors or words occurred (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). This involved carefully listening to the recorded observations and identifying moments where jokes or humorous acts took place, and how these were used. Humoristic acts were recognized by cues such as laughter, smiles, relaxed body language, or joke-like responses from other coaches or athletes.

Notes taken during the observations were also included in the analysis. These were compared with the audio recordings using time stamps to ensure accuracy in identifying humorous moments. This process resulted in two tables.

Interview Analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using conventional content analysis. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) describe this process as identifying meaning-bearing units from the transcribed text, condensing them, assigning codes, and grouping them into categories. Initial coding was used to assign the codes and then axial coding has been applied, by describing how the categories are linked to each other and finding patterns (Figgins et al. 2019., Kendellen & Camiré. 2019), then into overarching themes which collectively answer the research question and shape the study's findings. This method was applied to all interview data. Themes and categories were further examined to explore relationships and patterns

between them. Tables and mind maps were created to visualize these connections and illustrate how they contribute to the emerging models of how humor is used in coaching.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, participants were purposefully selected from a diverse range of coaching backgrounds to avoid one-sided perspectives and enhance the breadth of insights. During data analysis, careful attention was given to identifying meaning-bearing units and applying systematic coding procedures to strengthen credibility. The use of semi-structured interviews, with standardized questioning across all participants, aimed to minimize interviewer bias and maintain consistency, thereby supporting dependability by reducing variability in responses over time. Furthermore, the study's findings demonstrate transferability, as the insights on humor's role in coaching can be applied to other leadership or management contexts and may serve as a valuable tool in everyday professional interactions (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Results

The study wanted to explore the use and how the data can be turned into a model on how humor can be used more structed. This resulted in 6 parts, constant of; how often humor is used, what types of humor, complexity of humor, why humor is used, when humor is used and how it can be used.

Table 1, How often is humor used (by the coach)

Sport	**Coaches**	**Training time**	**Use of humor**	**Humor per/minute**	**Humor used on** **Athletes (A)/ Teams/groups (T)/ Coache-colleauge (C)**
Football	PF	90min	15	0,17	6A, 2T, 7C
	SÖ		17	0,19	5A, 7T, 5C
	MÖ		15	0,17	8A, 5T, 2C
Floorball	DI	60min	21	0,35	5A, 8T, 11C
Horse riding	EH	60min	28	0,47	23A, 3T,
Handball	JH	90min	44	0,49	29A, 4T, 11C
Swimming	JB	30min	13	0,43	13A
	HB	55min	29	0,53	11A, 12T, 6C
	EB	75min	9	0,12	5A, 1T, 3C

Dance	DK	60min	20	0,33	7A, 13T
Fencing	1HF 1MF	75min	24 27	0,32 0,36	13A, 11T 18A, 9T
Strengthening & conditioning coach	JF	60min	40	0,67	38A, 5T, 1C
Total	13			0,36 times minute	181A, 67T, 82C

Table 1 shows how many times each coach uses humor during one practice, it also shows how many times humor is used with one athlete, team or another coach. The time for how often humor is used by the coaches combined is every third minute (0,36), but it differs between 2-9 minutes depending on the coach.

Table 2, Humor Categories observed during training sessions

Purpose	**Us of humor**		
To have fun	Play	Playfulness	General Jokes
Relation bildning	Compliments	Check in	Personal Jokes
To de-dramatize	Self-irony	Minimize mistakes/ weird situation	Playful reinforcement/ Encouragement
Give instructions/ Information	Playfully	Metaphors	General/ Personal jokes
Regain focus	Asking funny question	Play	General Jokes
Clarification instructions	Metaphors	General/ Personal jokes	Body language

Play= doing a game, the athlete doing something physical with the body. **Playfulness**= the coach says or does something un seriously. **General joke**= a joke that anyone can lath at, has nothing to do with the close environment. **Compliments**= light joke example locking strong. **Check in**= asking how a person is doing with the intention to make them happy. **Personal joke**= A joke that can be an inside joke or has something to do with the relation or environment. **Self irony**= joke on themself, at their expense. **Minimize mistakes/ weird situations**= using lightness in the communication or to shift focus from what has happened. **Playful reinforcement/ Encouragement**= giving instructions in a positive way. **Metaphors**= using funny ways to describe examples of how to do a technical thing. **Asking funny questions**= using weird or random questions to make the athlete think and focus on the same thing. **Body language**= coach using the body to make funny moves to clarify what's wrong.

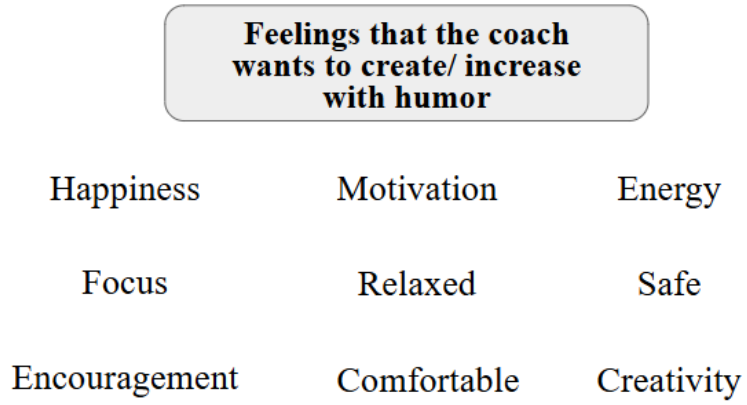
Complexity of Humor

Humor is a complex behavior and tool that is used by all coaches albeit in both similar and distinct ways. It has the capacity to evoke a wide range of emotions in athletes, including happiness, anger, relaxation, insecurity, high or low self-esteem, and excitement. At the same time, humor can help shift an athlete from any emotional state to one of joy and ease. For many coaches, the use of humor is automatic or intuitive, often viewed as a natural part of their personality. However, humor is also something that can be learned and developed. As one coach put it:

“Everyone has their own taste in humor, so all can use humor in their own way.” quote coach HF

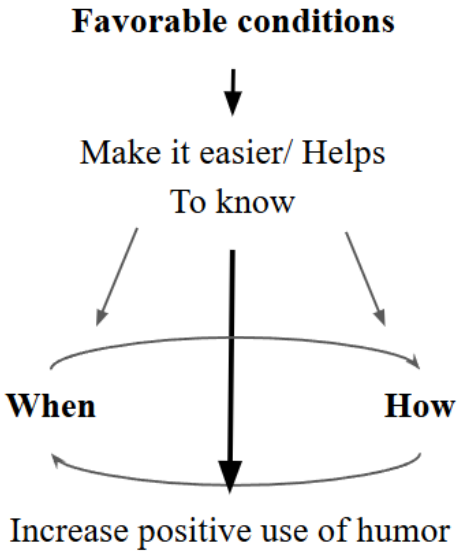
This highlights the individual and adaptable nature of humor in coaching contexts and how everybody has the possibility to use it.

Model 1 Outcome of using humor



In Model 1, coaches describe the feelings, emotions, and outcomes associated with using humor. In many cases, humor is used to help athletes get out of their own heads to relax and shift their focus away from overthinking or stressing about performance. At the same time, coaches commonly mentioned using humor to create a sense of safety both within the coach-athlete relationship and the overall training environment. This dual purpose of humor, as both a mental reset and a relational tool, underscores its importance in effective coaching practice.

Model 2 Favorable Conditions benefits



Favorable Conditions

To use humor effectively and positively, several key favorable conditions emerged from the findings. These conditions help facilitate the use of humor in coaching and include: building relationships, understanding the athletes, creating a balanced environment, and leveraging the coach's behavior and personal strengths.

Relationships

Strong relationships are foundational for humor to be well-received. This involves developing mutual respect, recognizing that coaching is a collaborative effort between coach and athlete, and understanding the hierarchical dynamics without diminishing trust or openness. Coaches who are aware of these dynamics are better equipped to use humor constructively.

Understanding the Athlete

Every athlete is unique, with different backgrounds, personalities, and preferences in humor. Age, skill level, and individual disposition all play roles in determining what type of humor is appropriate and effective. Being attuned to how each athlete thinks and feels allows coaches to tailor their humor to support motivation and performance.

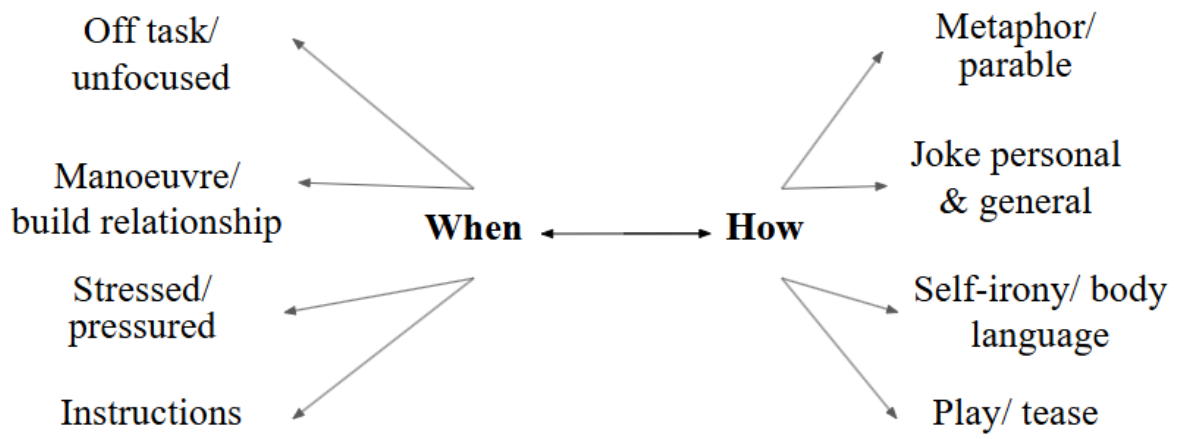
The Training Environment

The environment plays a critical role in when and how humor can be used. All participating coaches emphasized that while humor should never overshadow the goals of practice, it can help create a balanced atmosphere where it is both acceptable to share a laugh and focus on development. A safe and supportive environment enables athletes to feel comfortable being themselves and discussing sensitive topics. Such a setting fosters motivation, engagement, and sustained effort.

Coach behavior and leadership

Ultimately, the coach is responsible for shaping both the tone of communication and the team culture. The coach's personality, leadership style, and ability to read the room directly influence how humor is used and received. Coaches who invest time in getting to know their athletes can use humor more effectively, adapting their approach to match the needs and dynamics of the group. Communication skills is needed to apply these insights, effective communication is essential. Coaches must be able to engage openly with both athletes and fellow staff, fostering a culture where individuals feel seen, heard, and accepted. Within this climate, humor becomes a confident and strategic tool not just for lightening the mood, but for building connection and enhancing performance.

Model 3 When and How humor is used



When is Humor Used?

Coaches incorporate humor in a wide range of situations and environments. It is used before, during, and after practice, as well as in high-pressure settings such as competitions and matches. Humor often appears in moments of instruction or when providing feedback and information, helping athletes to maintain focus and engagement. Additionally, coaches use humor to:

- Refocus attention during practice or instruction
- De-dramatize mistakes and ease tense or intimidating situations
- Build relationships and strengthen team culture
- Relieve stress and create a more relaxed training environment

Humor serves both practical and relational purposes, acting as a bridge between performance demands and emotional well-being.

How is Humor Used?

The use of humor depends on the coach's understanding of the athlete, the context, and the situation. When these elements are well understood, humor becomes a valuable tool for enhancing learning and performance. Different forms of humor may be more suitable depending on the specific moment or athlete:

- Metaphors can be useful for giving technical corrections in a lighthearted way.
- Jokes can both be personal inside joke and general meaning most people would understand the joke.
- Self-irony and body language may make feedback feel more relatable and less intimidating.
- Playful teasing and jokes can foster a fun atmosphere and strengthen bonds within the team.

Using humor effectively requires a certain sensitivity and intuition, to assess what type of humor is most appropriate and beneficial in a given moment. Coaches must read the room, consider individual differences, and adjust their approach to suit the emotional and developmental needs of their athletes.

Discussion

The following discussion, discusses both the method used for the study, how Swedish coaches use humor in their practice and what contexts have an impact on humor and its user.

Method discussion

Participants

The decision to include coaches from various sports, with differing levels of experience and across a range of ages, was made in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how humor is utilized by Swedish coaches. This diverse sample provides a broader perspective on the state of coaching in Sweden, highlighting potential variations in humor use across different contexts (Henricson, 2014). The diversity of participants enabled the identification of both unique challenges faced by individual coaches and recurring patterns in how humor is employed in coaching practice.

Data Collection

To address the research question, a mixed-methods approach was employed to examine both the coaches' awareness of their use of humor and their perceptions regarding it. The observational component followed a standardized format across all sessions, with each successive observation becoming more refined based on insights gained from previous ones. These refinements primarily focused on accurately identifying the type and manner of humor used, while eliminating irrelevant notes in order to ensure a more targeted and precise analysis. A potential limitation is that the assessment of humor was conducted by a single observer, which may raise concerns regarding subjectivity. However, a strength of this

approach is the consistency in evaluation, as all coaches were assessed by the same individual, ensuring uniform criteria and equal treatment.

The interviews followed a consistent structure, with minimal deviation from the interview guide. This consistency was intentional, as it allowed for the participants' responses to emerge naturally, minimizing external influence and ensuring that the responses remained focused on the intended research topics. This approach was essential to maintain the integrity of the data and prevent any unintended bias from shaping the responses (Kristensson. 2014). Due to the implementation of two complementary data collection methods, a substantial amount of data was gathered, resulting in both quantitative and qualitative results.

Data Analysis

A substantial amount of data was collected through both interviews and observations, providing a multifaceted view of humor in coaching and its various applications. The use of coding schemes for data analysis has its advantages and limitations (Hsieh & Shannon. 2005). On the positive side, the iterative process of reviewing each statement made by the coaches multiple times allowed for a deeper familiarity with the data. However, this also required significant time and effort to process, as distinguishing between humor-related content and broader coaching themes or unrelated topics proved to be a challenging task. Despite these challenges, the analysis yielded valuable insights into the ways humor is employed in coaching settings.

Result discussion

Complexity and the Swedish Context

Being a coach involves many different responsibilities just like using humor does. To use humor effectively in coaching, both experience and knowledge play an important role. As Jowett (2017) highlights, having different kinds of knowledge is valuable, but when it comes to humor, interpersonal knowledge is especially important. This means understanding people, relationships, and social dynamics.

Humor is influenced by power structures, team culture, and the coach’s position within the group. In most teams, the coach holds the most power and helps shape the team environment (Ronglan & Aggerholm. 2014., Potrac et al. 2013). In Nordic countries, coaches often use humor, especially self-irony and body language, to come across as more relatable and reduce the power gap between themselves and their athletes (Ronglan & Aggerholm. 2014). This was also noticeable in both the interviews and observations, where coaches used humor to connect with their teams in a more human and approachable way. As Crawford (2003) points out, humor can also help open up discussions about sensitive topics. Many coaches in this study confirmed that having a playful atmosphere made it easier to talk about more serious or difficult issues.

Reflection

According to the findings, most coaches view humor as something natural and spontaneous. However, as Collins and Collins (2015) suggest, effective coaches reflect on their actions to improve. This includes reflecting on the use of humor why it's used, how it affects the athletes, and whether it has the desired effect. By thinking about these things, coaches can turn humor into a useful tool, rather than something that just happens by chance. With reflection and awareness, humor can become part of a deliberate coaching strategy.

Use and Outcome

Humor can serve many functions, but most of all it's a form of communication (Marenić & Dabo. 2023). It can help build relationships, shape the training environment, and create positive emotions that boost athlete performance whether in training or competition. However, humor is highly individual and situational (Collins et al. 2022). What works in one context may not work in another, so coaches must learn to adapt their use of humor to fit the moment and the athletes they're working with. By working on the favorable conditions, the coach has an enhanced strategy of when and how to use humor appropriate.

All coaches in the study used humor, but the opportunities varied depending on the setting. For instance, some coaches managed large groups of 20+ athletes, while others had smaller teams of around 10. In sports where one exercise continued for a long time without breaks, there were fewer chances to use humor during practice. In those cases, coaches made use of time before or after practice to build relationships and bring a lighthearted tone to the environment, the observations did not take that into account. Which can be unfair of how funny a coach is in the eyes of the athletes, this can be viewed as a limitation to not know what and how the athlete feels about humor and their coaches. Ultimately, for coaches, how and what you say can make a real difference in how athletes feel, perform, and connect with the team.

Conclusion

This study highlights the complexity of humor and the various external factors that influence its use in coaching. Consistent with Ronglan and Aggerholm's (2014) characterization of humor as a multi-functional tool, the findings demonstrate that Swedish coaches employ humor in diverse ways to navigate relationships, emotions, and situational demands. Coaches' awareness and reflective practice regarding humor can enhance its positive impact on athletes' emotional states and performance. Humor serves not only to alleviate stress but also to create a supportive environment conducive to learning and motivation. Given the nuanced role of humor, future research should explore methods for effectively teaching humor as a coaching skill, examine its use across different cultural contexts beyond the Nordic countries and if this study was done again, it would be interesting to get the athletes perspective. Such studies would deepen understanding of humor's potential as a strategic resource in sport coaching worldwide.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Hej, Jag heter Linnea Svanholm och studerar på Göteborgs universitet.

Under vårterminen ska jag skriva min masteruppsats. Uppsatsen kommer att undersöka tränares beteenden kring positivitet och glädje under träningspasset.

Som tränare använder man sig av många olika strategier för att framhäva olika beteenden hos de aktiva. Därför undrar jag om jag skulle kunna få observera dig som tränar samt hålla en kortare intervju efter observationen, om vad du tycker om just positivitet och glädje under ett tränings sammanhang, om det är något som man bör göra eller inte.

Observationen går till på så sätt att jag kommer och befinner mig i närheten av tränaren för att se kroppsspråk samt se hur spelarna reagerar på det som sägs. Observationen kommer även att spelas in med ljudupptagning för att sedan kunna gå tillbaka och höra sådant jag missar under observation. (Inget av de spelarna säger kommer att vara med i studien, samt att alla tränare kommer att vara anonyma). Därefter kommer det vara en intervju som också kommer att spelas in. Där kommer vi gå djupare in på vad du som tränare tycker om ämnet. Intervjun väntas vara mellan 15-30 minuter beroende på svärdslängd.

PS: Det är frivilligt att delta, samt hoppa av när som helst eller ändra eller ta bort något som sagts. All data kommer att raderas när studien är klar, tränaren/föreningen/spelarna kommer att vara helt anonyma och studien kommer inte använda sig av citat som skulle kunna sammankoppla tränaren till citatet.

Skulle gärna komma i kontakt med tränare som skulle kunna tänka sig att delta i studien.

Tack på förhand

Linnea Svanholm

Appendix 2 Consent form (samtyckesblankett)

Samtyckesblankett

Datum: _____/_____ - 2025

Respondent:

_____

Intervjuare:

_____

Plats:

_____

Syfte:

Syftet är att undersöka hur tränare använder sig av humor i sitt ledarskap.

Förutsättningar:

- Respondenten har rätten att avbryta intervjun när den vill
- Respondenten har rätt till att återkalla eller ändra uttalanden
- Respondenten har möjligheten att avbryta sin medverkan i studien
- Respondenten har rätten att se över transkriberingen
- Respondenten har rätten att ta del av uppsatsen när den är klar
- Respondenten kommer vara anonym i uppsatsen
- Intervjun kommer endast användas till detta arbete och därefter raderas

Respondent signatur:

_____

Kontakt till student: Linnea Svanholm: linneasvanholm1@gmail.com

Appendix 3 intervjuguide

Intervjuguide

Syfte: “Syftet är att undersöka hur tränare använder sig av humor och uppmuntrar skratt i sitt tränarskap"

Information: Intervjun kommer att spelas in, den kommer att ta mellan 15-30 min, det finns inga rätt eller fel på frågorna.

Rättigheter: Ändra/ korrigera/ ta tillbaka svaren efter att intervjun är över. Du är anonym och kan när som helst hoppa av studien.

Intervju frågor

- Hur länge har du varit tränare generellt… och för denna grupp/ utövare?
- Vad är din position i laget?
- Vilka är du tränare för?
- Hur ofta tränar du dem?
- Hur skulle du beskriva dig som tränare?
- Hur är dynamiken mellan dig och gruppen, samt gruppen?
- Vad tycker du om att skratta och skoja under träning?
- Vad tycker du om humor i ett coaching sammanhang, (finns det en plats för det)
- Har du någonsin tänkt på humor inom coaching?
- Använder du dig av humor när du coachar?
- Kan humor vara ett verktyg för en tränare, när hur och var?
- Är det en tränarens ansvar att skapa en rolig miljö?

When are you using it the most (of/on pitch, locker room)

Do you have any examples of using humor

- Finns det något du skulle vilja tillägga något gällande ämnet?

Tack så jättemycket för att du deltagit!

Interview guide

Purpose: I am doing my master thesis about humor and coaching, specifically if young leaders are using humor in their practice or if it is something that is not useful.

Information: Going to record the interview, no right or wrong on the answers. It will probably take less than 30 minutes

Rhights: the leader can at any point drop out, correct the answers, take back statements, you will be anonymously,

Questions:

- who are you training;
- Your possession (head coach, ass, physio) ?
- How many times do you train them in a week?
- How long have you been a coach:
- How would you describe you as a coach:
- How is the dynamic to the athletes & group/ How is the environment(strict, laughter, combo, playful)
- *Tränar relationen*
- Have you ever thought about humor in coaching
- Are you using humor in your coaching
- What do you think about humor in coaching (is there places where it is helpful)
- Can you see humor as a tool for a coach (positive/negative) ex make a joke to play down a situation/ exercise
- Do you think it is important to laugh and have fun during practice?
- Is it the coach's assignment to make it fun?
- *When are you using it the most (of/on pitch, locker room)*
- *Do you have any examples of using humor*
- Do you have anything else you want to bring up about this subject?

Thanks so much for dissipating in this study

Metod rapport

Teoretiska referensram

Den teoretiska referensram som denna studie har utgått ifrån är den struktur och de riktlinjer som beskrivs i International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching (IJSC). Detta ramverk utgör en mall för hur en vetenskaplig artikel bör struktureras och presenteras för att bli publicerad i IJSC. Även om detta inte har påverkat själva forskningsprocessen i någon större omfattning, har det varit som ett stöd i att avgränsa och organisera skrivandet på ett systematiskt sätt. Textens struktur har följt den vetenskapliga artikelns vedertagna uppdelning: titel, abstract, nyckelord, metod, resultat, diskussion, sammanfattning, "statements and declarations", etiska överväganden, samtycke till deltagande, finansierings deklaration och referenser. Den aktuella tidskriften har specificerat att artikeln bör innehålla mellan 3000 och max 6000 ord samt inkludera fem nyckelord. Eftersom denna studie inte är avsedd för publicering, då den saknar godkännande från en etisk kommitté, har författaren valt att använda APA-stilen som referenssystem och därför undvikit referenssystemet Vancouver, vilket tidskriften efterfrågar. Detta utgör de två huvudsakliga avvikanden från journalens riktlinjer. Studien följer i övrigt vetenskapliga normer och akademisk praxis, genom tillförlitlighet och användandet av strukturerat framföra forskningens process.

Vetenskapliga grunder

De vetenskapliga grunder som denna studie vilar på utgörs av kvalitativa forskningsmetoder såsom tvärsnittsstudie observationer, semistrukturerade intervjuer, användning av kodningsscheman, etiska överväganden, samt strävan efter hög trovärdighet och tillförlitlighet ofta refererat till som trustworthiness. Studien har även baserats på systematisk datainsamling och datahantering, liksom tidigare forskning inom området, för att stärka dess validitet och kontextuella relevans.

Det huvudsakliga teoretiska ramverket är grounded theory, en induktiv forskningsstrategi där teorier utvecklas utifrån den data som samlas in (Kristensson, 2014). Oktay (2012) beskriver grounded theory som en metod där man inte utgår från färdiga hypoteser, utan där teoretiska modeller växer fram genom en systematisk och fortlöpande tolkning av empiriskt material. I denna studie har metoden möjliggjort en modellutveckling som visar hur humor används i coachingkontexten, samt vilka positiva effekter och konsekvenser detta kan ha på både individ och gruppnivå inom den idrottsliga kontexten.

Metoden lämpar sig särskilt väl för sociala miljöer där mänsklig interaktion är central, exempelvis inom idrott och ledarskap. Den ger forskaren möjlighet att vara öppen för nya insikter och justera forskningsfokus under projektets gång, i takt med att ny data samlas in (Henricson, 2014). I detta sammanhang har ett aktivt induktivt förhållningssätt varit avgörande för att minimera forskarens egna förutfattade meningar samt påverkan på deltagarna. För att uppnå teoretisk mättnad har data samlats in nya observationer och utsagor tills det inte längre tillfört ny eller relevant kunskap, vilket säkerställer en djupare förståelse för fenomenet (Kristensson, 2014).

Den kontinuerliga analysen möjliggjordes genom användning av kodningsscheman, där meningsbärande enheter kondenserades till koder och kategorier (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Detta tillvägagångssätt bidrog till att identifiera centrala teman, mönster och variationer i coachernas upplevelser och användning av humor. Resultatet har därefter använts för att skapa modeller, vilka fungerar som praktiska verktyg för framtida tillämpning av humor inom coachning.

Metod

Inom ramen för grounded theory föreligger inga formella krav på specifika metoder för datainsamling, utan forskaren ges frihet att anpassa metodvalet utifrån syftet och det undersökta fenomenet (Henricson, 2014). Detta metodologiska angreppssätt är särskilt fördelaktigt vid studier som syftar till att generera ny teori, snarare än att pröva befintliga hypoteser. Enligt Kristensson (2014) är en av grundtankarna bakom grounded theory att insamlingen av data ska vara bred och flexibel, vilket möjliggör ett kontinuerligt fördjupande och teoribildande under studiens gång. Med detta som grundval har två huvudsakliga metoder använts i denna studie: tvärsnitts observationer samt semistrukturerade intervjuer.

Observationerna valdes som ett initialt steg för att få en övergripande förståelse för hur humor faktiskt manifesteras i tränarrollen i praktiska situationer. Tvärsnittsobservationer innebär att varje deltagare observeras vid ett specifikt tillfälle, vilket ger ett "momentant" tvärsnitt av verkligheten. Detta val möjliggjorde en ögonblicksbild av interaktionen mellan tränare och utövare och hur humor används i dessa sammanhang. Metoden lämpade sig väl för att synliggöra frekvens, timing och sammanhang där humor aktualiserades, samt vilka externa och interna variabler som kunde påverka dess användning (Kristensson, 2014). Dock finns en erkänd begränsning i denna metod, då observation vid ett enstaka tillfälle inte fångar dynamiken över tid. Den bild som skapas riskerar därför att bli situationsbunden, något som beaktats i den efterföljande analysen. Yttre faktorer såsom väder, dagsform eller gruppens sammansättning kan alla ha en påverkan på både tränarens beteende och den sociala atmosfären under träningstillfället.

För att komplettera observationerna och fördjupa förståelsen genom personliga reflektioner, användes semistrukturerade intervjuer. Intervjuer är centrala inom kvalitativ forskning då de möjliggör djupgående samtal där deltagarnas egna erfarenheter och uppfattningar står i centrum (Kristensson, 2014., Henricson, 2014). Intervjuerna fokuserade på tränarnas syn på humor inom coaching, deras användning av humor i olika situationer, samt reflektioner kring vilka effekter de anser att humor kan ha på spelare och grupp. Genom det semistrukturerade formatet av intervjuerna, kunde forskaren anpassa frågorna under samtalets gång, vilket ökade flexibiliteten och gjorde det möjligt att följa upp intressanta resonemang gällande humor. Frågorna (se bilaga 1) var formulerade som öppna för att minimera forskarens påverkan på svaren och för att uppmuntra till utförliga och personliga resonemang.

Deltagarna rekryterades via bekvämlighetsurval, där slumpmässiga tränare tillfrågades utan särskilda krav på nivå, kön eller erfarenhet. Denna strategi valdes för att uppnå en bred

representation och undvika urvalsbias (Kristensson, 2014). Innan varje intervju informerades deltagaren om studiens syfte, genomgång av samtyckesblankett ägde rum (se bilaga 2), och samtycke inhämtas. Intervjuerna genomfördes i miljöer valda av deltagarna själva, ofta i avskilda och lugna lokaler där samtal kunde föras ostört. Varje intervju spelades in och varade mellan 15 och 40 minuter, där majoriteten låg runt 20 minuter. Efteråt gjordes även anteckningar kring stämning och tankar som dykt upp under intervjun. Därefter transkriberades intervjuerna ordagrant för att inte förlora viktiga detaljer eller språkliga nyanser som kan ha bäring på tolkningen.

Den transkriberade datan analyserades genom kodningsscheman där meningsbärande enheter identifierades och kondenserades till koder, som därefter grupperades i preliminära kategorier (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). För att skapa koder användes "Axial coding" som är en analytisk fas inom Grounded Theory-metodologi, där forskaren organiserar och relaterar de koder som identifierats under öppen kodning "initial coding". Målet är att rekonstruera data i ett nytt mönster genom att identifiera relationer mellan kategorier och subkategorier (Figgins et al. 2019., Kendellen & Camiré. 2019). Denna metod anses särskilt användbar, då den möjliggör analys parallellt med datainsamlingen en process som stärker den induktiva ansatsen. Kodningsscheman bidrar även till att öka analysens transparens, trovärdighet och replikationsmöjlighet (Kristensson, 2014). Genom att identifiera likheter, skillnader och återkommande teman i materialet kunde meningsfulla mönster och relationer mellan variabler tydliggöras (Kristensson, 2014). Resultaten har sedan analyserats mot bakgrund av tidigare forskning samt använts för att generera modeller i enlighet med grounded theory-principerna.

Tabell 1 kodningsschema

MeningsBärande Enhet	Kondensering	Kod	Kategori
Tränare …			
Känner känner barnen inte att man får liksom garva lite har lite roligt på så liksom vi som vi gjorde idag.Så blir ofta träningen och mycket sämre kvalitet.	barnen måste få garva och ha roligt precis som vi hade idag. så blir kvaliteten bättre	barn ska ha roligt, det gynnar kvaliteten på träningen	glädje gynnar kvaliteten

Genom att använda flera datainsamlingsmetoder, även om dessa i huvudsak betraktas som kvalitativa (Kristensson, 2014), genererades en omfattande datamängd. Denna data kunde struktureras och analyseras men resulterade i kvalitativa och kvantitativa resultat, vilket har redovisats i resultatdelen genom modeller, tabeller och beskrivande text.

Litteraturöversikt

I syfte att identifiera relevant och tidigare genomförd forskning inom ämnesområdet humor i idrott och coaching genomfördes en systematisk litteratursökning. Söktermerna som användes

inkluderade: sport, coaching, humor, joke, leaders samt athlete. Dessa sökord kombinerades på olika sätt för att maximera träffsäkerheten i de valda databaserna. Sökningen genomfördes i fyra etablerade vetenskapliga databaser: PubMed, SPORTDiscus, Taylor & Francis och Scopus. Totalt resulterade sökningen i sex vetenskapliga artiklar och en bok som bedömdes som relevanta för studiens syfte.

Varje identifierad källa analyserades noggrant, och anteckningar fördes för att få en fördjupad förståelse för hur humor behandlats inom tidigare forskning i idrottssammanhang. Det kunde konstateras att den övervägande delen av existerande forskning om humor fokuserar på andra professionella kontexter, såsom hälso- och sjukvård samt militära sammanhang, vilket visar på ett forskningsglapp inom idrottsfältet. Den forskning som specifikt behandlade humor inom idrott var metodologiskt varierad och inkluderade bland annat kvalitativa intervjuer med elittränare, enkätundersökningar med idrottsutövare, samtal intervjuer med idrottspsykologer, en etnografiskt inspirerad fallstudie där en tränare dokumenterade humoranvändningen inom sitt eget fotbollslag. Dessa studier belyser att humor utgör ett aktivt och medvetet inslag i många träningsmiljöer och att det uppfattas som både ett användbart och riskfyllt verktyg i ledarskapet.

Flera forskare, bland andra Ronglan och Aggerholm (2014), beskriver humor som ett "dubbelsidigt svärd", vilket innebär att humor både kan stärka och försvaga relationer, påverka gruppdynamik samt utmana eller förstärka befintliga hierarkier. Denna ambivalens kring humorens effekter utgör ett centralt motiv för föreliggande studier. Den insamlade litteraturen har därmed inte endast fungerat som bakgrundsmaterial utan har även legat till grund för utformningen av denna studiens introduktion och problemformulering.

Det har även gjorts tidigare litteraturöversikt kring som undersökt vad tränare har för ansvar och uppgifter, för att fördjupa förståelsen kring en tränares arbete. Detta för att ytterligare förstå komplexiteten av tränarens vardag och situationer som tränaren kan hamna i och behöver anpassa sig till. Som artikeln av Collins ad Collins (2015) som beskriver beslutsstande och hur en mall eller modell inte fungerar på alla. Något som väl stämmer överens med humors individuella grund och de anpassningar man behöver göra för att individen och situationen ska uppskatta humorn.

Vetenskapligt bidrag

Det aktuella forskningsprojektet tillför ny kunskap och breddar det vetenskapliga fältet inom idrottsvetenskap, eftersom det till skillnad från tidigare forskning, kombinerar flera datainsamlingsmetoder för att undersöka tränarens användning av humor i olika idrottsliga kontexten. Studien inkluderar tränare från varierande nivåer från barn och ungdomsidrott till elitnivå samt representanter från olika kön och idrotter, vilket ger en bredare och mer mångfacetterad bild än vad tidigare enskilda studier har kunnat erbjuda. Ett centralt fynd är att humor uppträder som en universell del av tränarskapet, oavsett idrottslig nivå eller åldersgrupp. Det framkom tydligt att humor inte endast används medvetet utan ofta är ett naturligt och integrerat inslag i interaktionen mellan tränare och idrottsutövare. Detta

indikerar att humor fyller flera funktioner som att den stärker relationer, skapar positiva inlärningsmiljöer, hanterar spänningar och främjar psykosocialt välbefinnande för både spelare och lagidrotter.

Studien bidrar därmed till att lyfta fram humor som en komplex men betydelsefull komponent i ledarskap och coaching. Genom att belysa humorens roll och konsekvenser inom olika träningsmiljöer förstärks förståelsen för dess pedagogiska, emotionella och sociala effekter. Dessutom har denna studie tagit ett steg vidare genom att presentera en modell för hur humor kan förstås, tillämpas och medvetandegöras i tränarrollen. Denna modell har potential att fungera som ett praktiskt verktyg i tränarutbildningar, vilket skulle kunna bidra till att göra användningen av humor mer genomtänkt och pedagogiskt effektiv.

Mot bakgrund av den begränsade tidigare forskningen inom detta område, särskilt med ett sådant brett urval av tränare, kan studien ses som ett värdefullt komplement till idrottsvetenskapliga fältet. Studien visar även på behovet av fortsatt fördjupad forskning kring humor inom idrott och coaching, som en kommunikativ och relationell strategi, samt hur det skulle se ut i andra delar av världen.

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