

The Relationship between Career Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction: An Investigation from the Perspective of Efficacy of Football Coaches in Türkiye

Anıl Siyartaş*Turkish Football Federation,
TÜRKİYE**Ebru Ceviz**Bingöl University,
TÜRKİYE

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Abstract

Background: Career and life satisfaction are critical factors influencing football coaches' well-being, performance and future. However, the role of coaching efficacy as a mediator between these two factors remains underexplored, particularly in the context of football coaching in Türkiye.

Aims: The present study examines the mediating role of coaching efficacy in the relationship between football coaches' careers and life satisfaction.

Methods: The research group, which adopted a quantitative approach, consists of individuals with football coaching licences in Türkiye (n=429). The parametric tests were used in the analyses, and a modern approach was adopted for the mediation analysis. Furthermore, ANOVA was applied to the analysis of differences, and the Pearson correlation test was applied to the relationship between concepts. In addition, the difference between the groups was determined by the Tukey test.

Result: The age factor did not affect coaching efficacy. However, experience and license categories were found to be important factors. The structural model constructed for the research was confirmed ($\Delta\chi^2/sd=1.94$; RMSEA=.05; CFI=.95; GFI=.90; IFI=.94).

Conclusion: The study determined that coaching efficacy mediated the relationship between coaches' career and life satisfaction. Coaching efficacy plays an important role not only for the athletes but also for their own lives. Therefore, it is recommended that football coaches give importance to professional efficacy and improve themselves to achieve career and life satisfaction.

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INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to arrive at a universally acceptable scientific definition of a career (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2011). Generally, it is defined as professional development, career advancement or experiences (Çobanoğlu & İlkin, 2023). In studies on careers, it is seen that satisfaction is one of the most frequently emphasized issues (Baidoun & Anderson, 2023; Chang et al., 2020; Dami et al., 2022; Garcia et al., 2020; Huo & Jiang, 2021; Meilanti et al., 2022; Rasmussen et al., 2021). While career satisfaction is considered an important outcome of individuals' careers, it is an important indicator of career success (Sunnyo et al., 2024). Boamah et al. (2022) define career satisfaction as an individual's evaluation of some organizational or job-related factors (promotion, income, etc.) with his/her goals, ideals or expectations. In other words, it can be explained as a person's feelings towards achieving and satisfying career goals (Al-Ghazali & Sohail, 2021). Career satisfaction, which is shaped by personal and organizational factors (Güneş & Oral Ataç, 2022), is also considered to be an important antecedent and component of life satisfaction (Cengiz Güneş & Özcan, 2022; Lounsbury, 2004).

Life satisfaction is an important step for individuals to live quality lives. This concept is described in the literature as a cognitive evaluation process of people's lives according to certain criteria (Sholihin et al., 2022). In other words, it is a general assessment of individuals' satisfaction with their lives in various areas, such as emotional relationships, health and work-life (Kerry et al.,

* Corresponding author:

Siyartaş, A. Turkish Football Federation, TÜRKİYE. anil.siyartaş@hotmail.com

2023). It is stated that life satisfaction varies depending on important factors that concern the person himself/herself (Kim et al., 2021; Haidar et al., 2024). Work-life is one of these factors (Er Ülker & Özdemir, 2021). Considering that people spend a large part of their lives working, the preferred profession and the career journey in this profession are some of the main factors affecting life satisfaction (Tortumlu & Uzun, 2021). Career plays an important role in the entire life of individuals (Dami et al., 2022). Therefore, career satisfaction is expected to be related to life satisfaction (Hagmaier et al., 2018). This expectation strengthens when considering that career experiences, transitions and turning points affect life satisfaction (Dami et al., 2022). Research based on these arguments confirms the relationship between career and life satisfaction (Amdurer et al., 2014; Gopalan & Pattusamy, 2020). For example, one study proved a positive correlation between the phenomena (Hagmaier et al., 2018). Another study found that career satisfaction is reflected in the happiness of individuals (Denizli & Dündar, 2020). The study conducted by (Cengiz Güneş & Özcan 2022) found that career satisfaction significantly increased life satisfaction in individuals. While career and life satisfaction positively affect each other, it is wondered whether there are mediating variables between them.

Research has shown that many factors mediate the relationship between career and life satisfaction (Cabras & Mondo, 2018; Liu et al., 2023). Professional (Coaching) efficacy is thought to be one of these mediating variables (Feltz et al., 1999). Coaching efficacy is inspired by Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory (Myers et al., 2008). Self-efficacy is a concept that refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to carry out the behaviours necessary to produce specific performance outcomes (Mert et al., 2023). From this point of view, coach efficacy has been explained as the state of belief that a coach has in influencing the learning and performance of his/her athletes (Dumangöz & Sanlav, 2021). It is recognized as an important coaching feature that affects the performance of athletes and plays a role in their success (Şağlam & Çeviker, 2022). High-competence coaches can develop training methods to guide athletes to behave or act appropriately (Aksu et al., 2024; Kabir et al., 2025). In addition, coaches can demonstrate higher levels of creativity and be more effective in preparing athletes for various competitive environments and maintaining their focus during competition (Mu'ammal et al., 2022). In addition to its importance for athletes, competence is considered critical for coaches' careers and life satisfaction. Considering that many conditions, such as personal characteristics, and psychological and behavioural mediate between career and life satisfaction, it is thought that (Hayat et al., 2020; Kusumawijaya & Astuti, 2021; Mousavi & Ebrahimi, 2024; Sajilan et al., 2015; Shi & Qu, 2021) coach efficacy may also mediate. When the literature is examined, no research examines the role of coach competence among the mentioned concepts. The current study aims to explore the mediating role of coach efficacy in the relationship between career satisfaction and life satisfaction and to discuss the impact of factors such as age, experience, and license level on football coaches' efficacy.

METHOD

Research Model

The study model created within the research is presented in Figure 1.

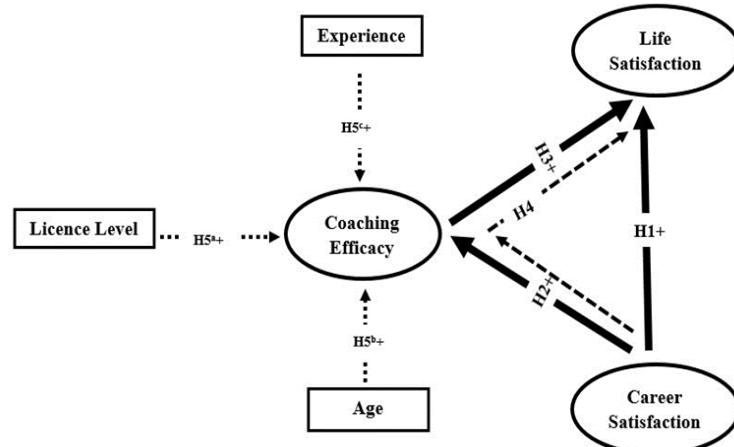


Figure 1. Research Model

Research Group

The study group consists of individuals with a football coaching license in Türkiye. According to records, there are 33,721 licensed football coaches in Türkiye. According to the sampling method, 380 people were required for the research with a 95% confidence interval and 5% margin of error. The convenience sampling method was used in the current research. The questionnaires prepared through Google Forms were sent to the coaches registered with the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) via e-mail. Five hundred forty-seven coaches responded to the questionnaires. However, those who did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded from the study, and the current study was completed with 429 coaches (n=429). The inclusion criteria were determined as follows: Being a Turkish citizen between the ages of 18-65 and having at least 1 year of coaching experience. The study did not include coaches who were not Turkish citizens, younger than 18 years old, older than 65 years old, and had less than 1 year of experience.

According to the findings, the average age of the coaches was $42.19(\pm 10.99)$, and 95.1% were male. It was found that 33.6% of the coaches had a National C license, while 14.2% had a UEFA Pro license. It was determined that 71.1% of these coaches were married, 67.6% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 49.9% had income equal to expenses. Finally, it was determined that the participants had an average of 11.41 (± 9.30) years of experience.

Data Collection Tools

In addition to the Personal Information Form, Career Satisfaction Scale (CSS), Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS) and Coaching Efficacy Scale-II (CES-II) were used in this study. *The personal Information Form* was prepared by the researcher and consisted of seven questions to collect information about the personal characteristics of the coaches. *Career Satisfaction Scale (CSS)* was developed by Spurk et al. (2015). High scores from the scale of a single dimension are interpreted as individuals being satisfied with their careers. CFA was conducted to confirm the scale's factor structure (Tuan, 2024). As a result of the analysis, the fit values ($X^2/df=1.92$; RMSEA=.05; CFI=.99; GFI=.99; IFI=.99) confirmed the model. While all factor paths were significant, factor loadings ranged between .67 and .85. The CR value was .88, the AVE value was .60, and the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .87. The findings showed that the scale was valid and reliable.

The Life satisfaction Scale (LSS) was developed by Diener et al. in 1985 to measure the satisfaction level of individuals. High scores indicate high life satisfaction. As a result of the CFA conducted to test the fit of the single-factor structure of the scale with the data, it was seen that some fit indices were not at the desired references. Accordingly, modifications were proposed between items 4 and 5. The analysis was repeated after drawing covariates between the error terms. As a result of the analysis, the fit indices ($X^2/df=3.06$; RMSEA=.07; CFI=.99; GFI=.99; IFI=.89) were within the desired limits. Factor loadings ranged between .51 and .84; all pathways were found to be significant. CR value was .85, AVE value was .55, and Cronbach Alpha coefficient was .84. Therefore, it was confirmed that the scale was usable for the current study.

Coaching Efficacy Scale-II (CES-II) was developed by Feltz et al. in 1999 to measure the efficacy levels of coaches. The developed scale was updated in 2008 by Myers et al. It is interpreted that as the scores obtained from the scale evaluating the coaching efficacy in five different dimensions increase, the level of coaching efficacy also increases. The five-factor structure of the scale was tested with second-level CFA. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the fit values ($X^2/df=2.90$; RMSEA=.07; CFI=.93; GFI=.91; IFI=.90) confirmed the model. Factor loadings ranged between .61-.84, and all paths were found to be significant. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the overall scale was .92, while the CR value was .95 and the AVE value was .52. The findings proved that the scale was valid and reliable.

Ethical Aspects of The Research

Istanbul Topkapı University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Commission has decided that this research is ethically appropriate (25.10.2024/10). Permission was obtained to use the scales, and the research was conducted following the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Participants were given their consent by checking the consent box in the online survey sent to them.

Data Analysis

The research data were analyzed through SPSS 29 and AMOS 26 programs (Wahyuningsih et al., 2024; Fasinu, 2024). The data obtained were analyzed regarding skewness and kurtosis values, and the fit of the scales with the data was tested using CFA. In addition, Cronbach Alpha, CR and AVE values were analyzed for the validity and reliability of the scales (Arhin-Larbi & Owu-Annan, 2023; Fordjour et al., 2024). The fact that the skewness and kurtosis values of all data were between ± 1.5 was accepted as showing normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The model constructed for mediating coaching efficacy between career and life satisfaction was tested with Path Analysis from Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Rauf, 2024). For the assumption of SEM analysis, linearity was examined using missing data, extreme values, and a scatter diagram. It was determined that the data met the assumption of SEM (Çokluk et al., 2021). The fit indices and acceptable reference intervals examined in Path Analysis and CFA, where causal relationships/effects (direct-indirect) are examined, are as follows: $\chi^2/df \leq 5$; RMSEA $\leq .08$; CFI $\geq .90$; GFI $\geq .90$; IFI $\geq .90$. Factor loadings were expected to be at least .32. Cronbach Alpha coefficient $>.60$, CR value $>.70$ and CR $>.70$; AVE $>.50$; CR $>$ AVE conditions were examined (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The mediation analysis adopts the modern approach proposed (Zhao et al. 2010). According to this approach, three significant and two insignificant mediation types exist in a three-variable mediation model. The classification is as follows: (1) Complementary Mediation: Both direct and indirect effects are significant and point in the same direction; (2) Competitive Mediation: Indirect and direct effects are both significant and point in opposite directions; (3) Indirect-only Mediation: Indirect effect is significant but direct effect is insignificant; (3) Direct-only Nonmediation: Direct effect is significant but no indirect effect; (4) No-effect Nonmediation: No direct and indirect impact (Zhao et al., 2010). In addition, while the bootstrap technique with 2000 samples was used in the study, the maximum likelihood estimation method was applied as the calculation method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Table 1. Correlation Results for the Scales (n=429)

The Scales	$\bar{x} \pm Sd.$	Career Satisfaction	Life Satisfaction	Age	Coaching Experience
Coaching Efficacy	3.28 \pm .43	.16**	.21**	.07	.10
Game Strategy	3.19 \pm .50	.17**	.16**	.09	.11*
Physical Conditioning	3.14 \pm .63	.12**	.16**	.05	.14**
Motivation	3.31 \pm .49	.14**	.19**	.01	.00
Technical Teaching	3.28 \pm .51	.13**	.17**	.08	.12*
Character Building	3.51 \pm .50	.11*	.17**	.04	.01
Career Satisfaction	3.05 \pm .94	-	.51**	-.03	.01
Life Satisfaction	3.18 \pm .79	.51**	-	.15**	.14**

**p<.01 *p<.05

Table 1 shows the mean and correlation results for the scales. It was determined that the coaches had the highest mean score for "Character Building" (3.51 \pm .50) and the lowest mean score for "Physical Conditioning" (3.14 \pm .63). A positive correlation was found between coaching efficacy and career satisfaction and life satisfaction (p<0.01). Positive relationships were found between coaching experience and teaching game strategies, physical conditioning and technical teaching (p<0.01; p<0.05).

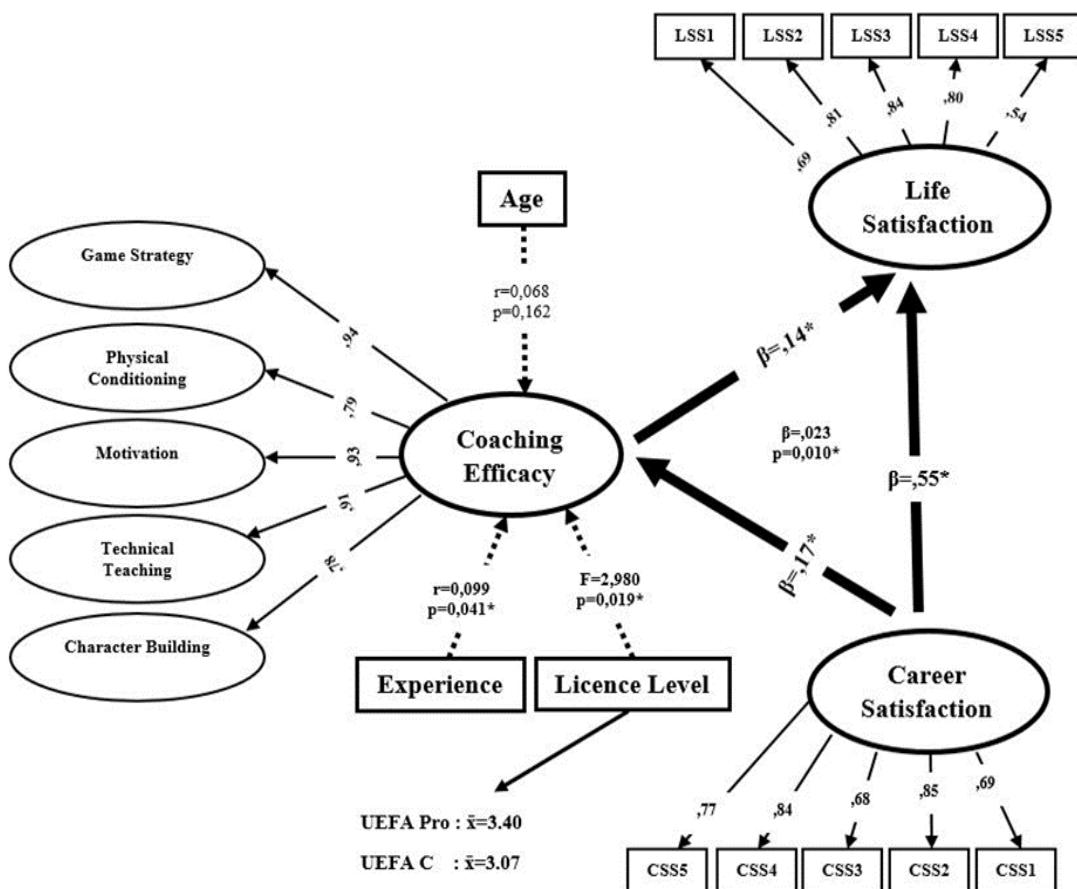


Figure 2. Results Regarding the Model Structure

Figure 2 shows the results of the model constructed within the research scope, while Table 2 presents the values and hypothesis results of these results.

Table 2. Results Regarding the Mediating Role of Coaching Efficacy

Paths Between Variables			D.E. (β)	I.E. (β)	T.E. (β)	p	Conclusion	H1, H2, H3, H4
Career Satisfaction	→	Life Satisfaction			.551		.001*	Complementary Mediation
Career Satisfaction	→	Coaching Efficacy	→	Life Satisfaction		.023	.010*	
Career Satisfaction	→	Coaching Efficacy	→	Life Satisfaction		.574	.001*	
Indexes				Model Fit			Criteria	
$\Delta\chi^2/sd$				1.94			$\chi^2/df \leq 5$	
RMSEA				.05			$\leq .08$	
CFI				.95			$\geq .90$	
CFI				.90			$\geq .90$	
IFI				.94			$\geq .90$	

D.E.: Direct Effect; I.E.: Indirect Effect; T.E.: Total Effect; H: Hypothesis $p<0,001$

According to the findings, the direct ($\beta=.551$; $p=0.001$) and indirect ($\beta=.023$; $p=0.010$) effects of career satisfaction on life satisfaction were significant. In other words, coaching efficacy was found to have a complementary mediating role between career and life satisfaction. The model fit values ($\Delta\chi^2/sd=1.94$; RMSEA=.05; CFI=.95; GFI=.90; IFI=.94) were found to meet the specified criteria and the model was validated.

Table 3. ANOVA and Correlation Results

		\bar{x}	F/r	Sig.	η^2	Differences	Hypothesis			
Coaching Efficacy	Licence						5 ^a	Acceptance		
	UEFA Pro	3.40	F= 2.980	0.019*	.02	UEFA Pro v UEFA C				
	UEFA A	3.33								
	UEFA B	3.23								
	UEFA C	3.07								
	National C	3.27								
							5 ^b	Rejection		
							5 ^c	Acceptance		

p<0.05*

The results of the factors that affect coaching efficacy in the research model are presented in **Table 3**. The findings showed that the license level of the coaches was an important factor affecting their efficacy, and Hypothesis 5a was accepted ($p<0.05$). The efficacy level of the coaches with UEFA Pro license ($\bar{x}=3.40$) is higher than that of the coaches with UEFA C license ($\bar{x}=3.07$). The effect size ($\eta^2=.02$) showed that this difference was low. There was no significant relationship between the efficacy levels of the coaches and their ages, and Hypothesis 5b was rejected ($p>0.05$). Finally, it was found that coaching experience positively affects coaching efficacy ($p<0.05$) and Hypothesis 5c was accepted.

Discussion

This study aims to determine whether coaching efficacy mediates the relationship between football coaches' career satisfaction and life satisfaction in Türkiye. It was also aimed to determine the effect of some variables that coaches have on their coaching efficacy. Career satisfaction ($\bar{x}=3.05$) and life satisfaction ($\bar{x}=3.18$) of the coaches in Türkiye were found to be moderate. Regarding the coaching efficacy, the highest was "character building" ($\bar{x}=3.51$), and the lowest was "physical conditioning" ($\bar{x}=3.14$). The role of coaches in developing the performance or skills of football players and teams is undeniable. Each coach has strengths and weaknesses in terms of the coaching efficacy they possess. In the literature, studies have examined the efficacy of coaching in different branches. In the studies conducted, it was seen that coaching efficacy on the career development of athletes was better than other coaching efficacy (Feltz et al., 2009; Keatloletswe & Malete, 2019; Lee, 2013; Sullivan et al., 2012). However, it was also found that among the coaching efficacy, the technical teaching had a higher level (Iancheva & Prodanov, 2018).

On the other hand, this study found that football coaches' physical conditioning efficacy in training athletes was at a low level. Fitness coaching in football is seen as a different specialization. The coaching team in top football always includes athletic performance, fitness, or conditioning coaches. Therefore, coaches may not have developed themselves in the conditioning field and may have left this task to fitness coaches.

Age variable did not affect coaching efficacy. Aksu et al. (2024) conducted a similar study on the competence of soccer coaches in Türkiye. This study found no relationship between age and CES-II and its sub-dimensions. Although the literature supports the current study's findings, the findings are not as expected. Because it was thought that the competence characteristics of coaches would increase with age. Therefore, it is recommended that this hypothesis be tested again in different studies. However, coaching experience affected coaching efficacy. As seen in the correlation results in **Table 1**, there was a positive correlation between experience and game strategies and between physical conditioning and technical teaching efficacy. In other words, it is understood that as the experience in the coaching profession increases, both the leadership behaviours in match/training

and the ability to improve athletes' athletic performance increase. Adegbesan et al. (2014) conducted a study examining the efficacy of Nigerian coaches. Coaching experience was shown as the strongest predictor of coaching efficacy. In another study by Karahan (2016), coaching experience was a significant predictor of all dimensions of coaching efficacy. Another study by Kavussanu et al. (2008) found that years of experience of coaches in English university teams positively predicted technical teaching efficacy. More research supported the findings (Feltz et al., 2009). The results show how important every minute coaches spend on the green pitch is. Because coaches may face several situations in the competitions in the sports organizations in which they participate. While there are many technical and tactical experiences, individual development can be achieved regarding game strategy and player development. However, the findings did not show a significant correlation between coaching experience and, motivation and character-building efficacy. This may be because motivation and character-building are individual characteristics. After all, individual characteristics may differ from individual to individual.

Coaches are classified according to their license level in their country. This classification is a journey that starts at level C in UEFA-affiliated countries and goes up to the Pro License. The hypothesis was tested to reveal each license's impact on coaching efficacy. The findings confirmed the hypothesis that coaching license levels impact coaching efficacy. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that there was a difference between the lowest level (UEFA C) and the highest level (UEFA Pro). In other words, it was discovered that the coaching efficacy increased as they increased their license levels with the training and courses they received. The importance of training and courses, such as coaching experience, has emerged. The literature also supports this finding. Malete and Feltz (2000) found the effect of coaching education programs on coach efficacy to be significant. Another study found that coaching education significantly affected the multidimensional construct of coaching efficacy (Sullivan et al., 2012). Jannat and Mea (2014) demonstrated the positive impact of courses attended by coaches at a high level on coaching efficacy. Smith (2011) examined the effects of US Soccer Federation first-level coaching courses on the efficacy of volunteer youth football coaches. In the study conducted by Aksu et al. (2024), a difference was found between the license levels of football coaches. The study conducted by Ermiş et al. (2019) found that as the diploma levels of tennis coaches increased, their efficacy levels also increased. The results of the research showed that there was a significant increase in the efficacy levels of the coaches after the course. Both the literature and the findings of this study suggest that coach education programs are a reliable predictor of coaching efficacy.

Life satisfaction is a goal that people have always wanted to achieve since birth. Career satisfaction is one of the primary goals achieved during working life. Since both phenomena are desired to be achieved throughout life, the situation affecting the other has been the research subject. Hagmaier et al. (2018) argue that both phenomena can be influenced by each other and that there is a positive relationship between them. This research supports the results. However, it is curious whether coaching efficacy plays a mediating role in the relationship between career satisfaction and life satisfaction. Research has shown that some factors mediate and show important links between these two phenomena (Lounsbury et al., 2004). This situation was analyzed from the perspective of coaching efficacy, which is seen as one of the most important characteristics of coaches. The model constructed within the scope of the research was tested with path analysis. As expected, the current study found that coaching efficacy mediates the relationship between career and life satisfaction. Coaching efficacy was determined to be complementary between the two variables. This situation also shows that other variables mediate the relationship between career satisfaction and the life satisfaction of coaches.

Research Contribution

The current research emphasizes the importance of coach competence for football coaches' career and life satisfaction. It is emphasized that coaches need to develop their efficacy characteristics to achieve the desired career and life satisfaction. In addition, it is understood that coaching experience is an important factor for coaching efficacy. In other words, it is understood that football coaches should stay on the green field as much as possible. Football coaches are classified according to their license levels. In addition, the current research emphasizes that this classification is an important factor in coaching efficacy.

Limitations

When the limitations of the current study are examined, although the number of participants is considered sufficient for the current study, the fact that 429 coaches participated can be considered a limitation. In addition, almost %95 of the participants were male coaches. The current study has a limitation in terms of gender. Among the coaches, coaches with at least 1 year of experience were included in the study. Experience is a continuous variable, so this can be considered a limitation. The current study examined only age, coaching license level, and experience information as independent variables for football coaches. Therefore, the study may have created a limitation regarding the socio-demographic information of football coaches.

Suggestions

In the current study, most participants were male soccer coaches. The number of female soccer coaches in Turkey is limited. Therefore, in future studies conducted in different cultures, female soccer coaches can be included in the research, and coaching competence can be compared between genders. In addition, it is suggested that the effect of variables such as educational status, marital status, income level and the category (academy or first team) on the coaching efficacy of soccer coaches should be examined in future studies. As emphasized, career satisfaction and life satisfaction are important for soccer coaches. The current study examined the mediating role of coaches' efficacy between these two phenomena. In future studies, a model can be constructed and examined on the effect of different characteristics of soccer coaches on career and life satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The current study concluded that part of the effect of career satisfaction on life satisfaction is mediated by coaching efficacy. Coaching efficacy affects the performance or behaviour of football players in training and matches. However, it has become clear that coaching efficacy is not only effective on players' performance. Coaching efficacy also mediates between coaches' career satisfaction and life satisfaction. Therefore, it is inevitable for football coaches to develop their competence characteristics. The present research has also shown factors that can positively influence coach efficacy. It was seen that the experience and license levels of the coaches had significant effects on coaching efficacy. It is recommended that coaches attend training programs to increase their license levels and continue their development both on and off the field. Because every coach training program they attend can contribute to their mental and social development in addition to technical and tactical aspects, to increase the coaching efficacy, different ways can be sought for courses and personal development. One of these ways is by organizing certificate programs by different institutions. Another factor that increases the efficacy of coaches is football organizations. Coaches can have much more experience in technical and tactical aspects as their participation in organizations increases. Therefore, it is recommended that coaches participate in competitions as much as possible after obtaining their licenses. Another benefit of football organizations is that coaches can develop various game strategies. Every football match has a different story. Each game leads to a different strategy. This is how coaches can improve their game strategy skills. All these efforts are aimed at improving coaching efficacy because the current study concluded that part of the effect of career satisfaction on life satisfaction is mediated by coaching efficacy.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

AS was responsible for the design and conceptualization of the current research and the drafting of the manuscript. EC was responsible for analyzing the data and discussing the findings. The researchers co-authored the manuscript.

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