Balancing Sport Coaching with Personal Life. Is That Possible?

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Abstract

The sport coaching profession is characterized by demanding environments that affect work-life balance. Accordingly, there is a need to examine the challenges coaches face in balancing their professional duties with their family and/or personal interests. This study aimed to gain a better understanding of the different experiences of work-life conflict that Spanish coaches face and how they perceive the support provided by their sport organizations in terms of work-life balance. The study was based on semi-structured interviews with a sample of seven male and eight female coaches in Spain. The results showed that the coaching profession had a negative impact on their personal and social lives, and coaches often prioritized their work. Family and friends' support (mainly wives for men and friends and grandparents for women) allowed coaches to continue in the profession. Organizations also implement actions to balance work and family/personal spheres, such as offering personal and financial support, adjusting schedules, and condensing training sessions. These results can help professionals better identify strategies to reduce work-life conflict among sport coaches.

Keywords: coaches' career, gender, organizations, work-life conflict.

Introduction

Sport coaches are a key component of the sports system and play a significant role in emotional and informative support provided to athletes (Porto et al., 2021). Nevertheless, how sport organizations may assist on coaches' career development has not been widely studied (Dawson & Phillips, 2013).

The coaching profession is often characterized for long and unorthodox hours and specific working conditions of the profession, such as fulfilling multiple roles and coping with a range of stressors (e.g., overload, job insecurity, expectation of others) (Fletcher & Scott, 2010; Norris et al., 2017). Furthermore, coaches often have a blended professional identity (combined with other [paid] jobs) and the opportunity for remuneration is low (Duffy et al., 2011; Viñas & Pérez, 2014). To support coaches' career pathways, there is a need to explore the challenges that coaches face when attempting to *balance* their professional role with their family duties or personal interests.

Accordingly, there has been an interest in examining the work-family conflict of coaches (Bruening et al., 2016; Dixon & Bruening, 2005; Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Graham & Dixon, 2017; Joncheray et al., 2019; Sisjord et al., 2022). Work-Family Conflict (WFC) has been defined as a type of inter-role conflict where some work and family responsibilities are not easily compatible and consequently, it can have a negative effect on the conflicting domains (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). WFC has been considered to have consequences for both work-related outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, job performance, intention to turnover) and non-work-related outcomes (e.g., life satisfaction, family satisfaction) (Allen et al., 2000). For instance, previous research has highlighted the negative impact of WFC on coaches' intention to leave the profession (Kamphoff, 2010), and for those coaches who have children, the impact on their relationship with them (Dixon & Bruening, 2007).

Previous researchers have suggested the analysis of the complexity of the work–family interface through a multisystem model which include individual, organizational and sociocultural levels (Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Sisjord et al., 2022). According to this model, the individual level considers how coaches differ in their experiences of WFC, depending on personal factors such as personality, work values, family structure, coping strategies and gender. The organizational level focuses upon workplace characteristics (e.g., job pressure, working hours and scheduling, organizational culture) and how these characteristics interact with individual behaviour. Thirdly, the sociocultural level focuses on social meanings, norms, and values associated with, and the larger social interpretations of, work and family. This level assumes that the work, life and family interface is embedded into a larger system of social meaning that impacts on coaches' life (Dabbs et al., 2016).

For instance, traditional gender ideologies that attribute housework and childcare as women's responsibilities can influence in coaching (Hinojosa et al., 2018, 2020; Knoppers, 1992; LaVoi & Dutove, 2012; OECD, 2020). Academics have examined barriers and supports that female coaches perceive (Hinojosa et al., 2018, 2020; LaVoi & Dutove, 2012; Stirling et al., 2017). The "two-person, one career" model (Knoppers, 1992) makes the claim that the coach (usually a man) has their own time and energy to dedicate to the profession and also the time and energy of the female partner, who will attend games and take care of the children and the domestic duties (Dixon & Bruening, 2005; Knoppers, 1992).

In this context, while most of the previous research has focused on the difficulties that father or mother coaches encounter, there is a gap of knowledge on the work and personal life adaptations faced by the coaching workforce without children (Taylor et al., 2019). In the Spanish context, a recent study found that 61.8 % of men coaches and 84.6 % of women coaches had no children (Hinojosa et al., 2018, 2020). Consequently, in the present study, the experiences of both men and women coaches with and without children in the family structure where taken into consideration. Accordingly, the term Work-Life Conflict (WLC) was used with the intention to incorporate a broader conceptual meaning of the conflict between work, personal life and family life (Hill et al., 2010).

Therefore, the aim of the present study was to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the different experiences of WLC that Spanish coaches encounter, and how they perceive the organizational support that the sport organization offers in terms of work-life balance. In doing so, the present study also sought to contribute to the understanding of coaches with children and without children in the family structure.

Method

This study made up one stage of a large research project in Spain regarding the work environment of sport coaches. A qualitative approach was used in the design of this particular stage of the research project.

Participants

We adopted a purposive sampling approach in order to ensure the representation of men and women coaches with different family structures, years of experience and sports context. The initial criteria were people with at least three years of experience in coaching and who were actively coaching. Fifteen participants were interviewed (7 men and 8 women aged between 26 and 60) from a larger group of coaches who, in a previous study, had completed a quantitative questionnaire about their psychosocial work environment ($N = 1{,}420$), and who subsequently agreed to participate.

The result was a sample with coaches who had been coaching in a diversity of sports, for an average of 17 years, and in different coaching positions (ranging from head coach to assistant coach) in different levels. The sample was also diverse in terms of family structures and contractual conditions (see Table 1).

Procedures

Following the approval from the Ethics Committee of the Sport Administration of Catalonia (05/2016/CEICEGC), active sport coaches that previously agreed to participate were sent an e-mail that contained a full description of the present study and were given the opportunity to volunteer to participate in face-to-face interviews. Informed consent was obtained from the participants before the study began. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide based on the dimensions proposed in Dixon and Bruening's multilevel framework (2005) (individual, organizational, and sociocultural). The interview guide covered biographies and pathways to coaching, details about the coaching career, recruitment/employment, barriers and supports to become a coach (e.g., "Could you describe your daily life as a coach and what does it involve?" and "How do you plan and manage your work?"). Interviews were conducted with each of the coaches at a time and location convenient to the participant, ranged from 35 to 90 minutes, and were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. We provided a pseudonym for each participant to protect their identity.

Data Analysis

The thematic analysis followed the analytical guidance recommended by Sparkes and Smith (2014) identifying and categorising the themes following six steps: (1) familiarisation with the data, which included transcribing and reading the interviews; (2) generating the initial codes based on previous research and, subsequently, some of the codes were identified as the data was analysed through an inductive approach; (3) grouping the codes in main themes, the data was grouped into a more inclusive and meaningful whole (not segregating each level, but looking for the coherence of the narratives of coaches); (4) reviewing the themes; (5) defining and naming the themes, and (6) producing the report. Software Atlas.ti 7 was used to organize data codification and interview analyses. According to these steps, for this article, the authors selected the data set that had some relevance to WLC. Moving back and forward between the entire data set, the initial related codes were "family structure", "work and life values", "organizational culture", and "supportive mechanisms". Then, the different codes were sorted into potential themes that were refined into the final ones. For each individual theme a detailed analysis was conducted, and also each theme was considered in relation to others. The most significant statements from participants were identified to exemplify the themes in the results section.

After data saturation was reached, trustworthiness and credibility were established through the following three verification strategies (Creswell & Miller, 2000): (1) rich and thick descriptions using quotations from the participants (to be presented in the results and discussion); (2) peer review or debriefing (the research team discussed the initial list of codes and the codes that arose from the interviews); and (3) external audits (two external researchers verified the process of identifying and finalising the themes).

Table 1
Characteristics of the sample.

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Co-habiting or married	Number of children	Age of children (years)	Sport	Years of experience	Current role	Weekly workload	Job besides coaching
Andrés	Man	26	no	0	-	Swimming	9	head coach	25	student
Ana	Woman	34	yes	2	6, 9	Gymnastics	8	head coach	10	yes
Jaume	Man	60	no	3	adults	Football	34	technical director	40	no
Josep	Man	54	yes	5	3, 8, 13, 13, 21	Football	11	head coach	6	yes
Irene	Woman	30	yes	0	-	Volleyball	6	technical director	35	no
Ferran	Man	46	yes	1	adult	Basketball	20	head coach	11	yes
Sonia	Woman	56	no	2	adults	Basketball	40	technical director	25	yes
Albert	Man	36	yes	1	5	Basketball	15	head coach	8	yes
Jesús	Man	58	yes	1	adult	Volleyball	43	technical director	6	yes
Jordi	Man	31	yes	0	-	Swimming	3	head coach	15	yes
Mar	Woman	26	no	0	-	Basketball	12	technical director	30	student
Manuela	Woman	33	no	0	-	Football	12	head coach	6	yes
Cristina	Woman	34	no	0	-	Gymnastics	16	assistant coach	24	yes
Mercè	Woman	32	yes	0	-	Football	7	head coach	10	yes
Ainhoa	Woman	49	yes	1	15	Swimming	29	technical director	40	no

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Results and discussion

An examination of the coaches' experiences of attempting to balance work and life roles provided an understanding of the variable and complex situations that coaches encounter. Three main themes were identified: "Coaching or family and friends?", "Family and friends' support" and "Organizational support".

Coaching or family and friends?

This theme described the situation that 5 women and 3 men coaches experienced when they felt that they had to choose between their personal or professional life. The participants in this study highlighted that they often prioritised their work over other aspects of their life. Thus, many of the coaches decided to increase the time they spend on coaching, choosing this over their social time, such as spending time with their families and friends. Sonia recognised that she prioritised her work as a coach and, as a consequence, she had no free time and could not enjoy other life interests:

"The truth is that I have left my personal life and my home life behind (...). I have no time for anything. I have an apartment in the countryside and I don't go there anymore, because I have competitions." (Sonia, 2 children, basketball)

Cristina, an international assistant coach in gymnastics with over 16 years' experience, also stated:

"At present, officially I work 24 hours per week. Unofficially, I arrive every day at 9 am and leave at 8 pm, every day. I'm trying to adapt to the schedule, but when you're with a group that do double training sessions and you are preparing for important competitions, you have to be there. If you're not there, you'll lose too much..." (Cristina, no children, gymnastics)

In the case of Cristina, an organizational factor such as the results-oriented culture of her organization influenced her individual decision to focus primarily on coaching. Although she had a part-time contract, she was present full-time at the sports club. This decision was also influenced by her high occupational commitment as previous research has described (Cunningham et al., 2001). As a result of this, many of the coaches felt that there was no room for other activities other than coaching. They described spending a

disproportionate time training and attending competitions (their own competitions, and also other colleagues and opponents' competitions), which directly and negatively impacted their personal time. This overwhelming and time-consuming routine, which is very common in the Spanish context, had consequences on coaches' work-life interface.

In addition, four participants admitted that they had broken up with their partner because of their involvement and commitment to coaching. Jaume, a full-time international head coach, explained that being a football coach was the main reason for his divorce:

"Well, in football and especially when you are a coach, it's complicated to manage your family life. I separated from my wife because of football... Yes, maybe some of the problems and fights with my ex-wife were because she didn't understand this way of life, which was normal for me because I was born in and grew up in this environment." (Jaume, 3 children, football)

Cristina had similarly experienced the time constraints when trying to balance her role as a coach and her role as a partner:

"I was living with a stable partner 5 or 6 years ago. And one of the reasons why I left the relationship was that I could not manage it with the demands of coaching. Coaching invaded my personal time and he was not willing to accept it and it was one of the reasons why we broke up." (Cristina, no children, gymnastics)

Jesús, a technical director and regional part-time coach in volleyball, gave another example of how relationships were affected by a heavy-time commitment towards coaching:

"For me it was hard because it also affected my social or family life. At that time I wasn't married, but I already had a partner and we broke up for this reason, because I spent many hours at the club." (Jesús, 1 child, volleyball)

The circumstances of coaches may be different, but the main reason for relationship breakdown was due to the way of life expected of coaches, which pushed them to prioritise coaching over their personal life.

When the schedule was not accommodated to coaches, they suffered from an overwhelming and heavy workload

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and felt that there were no boundaries between their personal and professional life. As Irene, a full-time national volleyball coach, states:

> *"Well, there is one thing that I consider unfair and I would like it to be changed in the future. It's about the working hours, because people leave their work and this means that work has finished, but the coach has to take the work home. A match does not last only as long as the score is in progress, it lasts the hours before, the injured player that you take to the doctor... All these things are not valued. For me this is the unfair part of the profession."* (Irene, no children, volleyball)

In this sense, the demands of coaching are high and sometimes coaches struggle to balance personal, social and professional commitments. The individual outcomes such as job dissatisfaction resulted from working long hours and their difficulties to separate their working time from their free time. The concept of workaholism arose from coaches' voices who were putting more effort than expected in coaching while they disregarded their life outside coaching. As previous research has evidenced, sport careers, such as coaching, are more susceptible to workaholism (Taylor et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, the WLC can also lead to quitting the job. Jesús, the volleyball coach, after his first experience, chose to quit a coaching job and looked for another one in order to prioritise his current family life:

> *"There was a time in my life that I was coaching with full dedication. In the previous club I worked from Monday to Sunday, but I was single and I spent many hours there. Being married, and coaching in another club I was expected to do too much and I decided not to continue in that club."* (Jesús, 1 child, volleyball)

This finding highlights how WLC is relevant for, and influential on, coaches' intention to leave the club or the profession. As described by Fletcher and Scott (2010), this study also shows that coaching is characterised for demanding long and unorthodox hours, high commitment (coaches feel the need to be connected 24/7), and a results-oriented culture. And these organizational factors affected the coach's personal life until he confronted the choice between family/life and coaching. Then, coaches feel the need to constantly choose between two spheres (e.g., work and family). Regardless of coaches' age, gender, competitive level and working hours, coaches described the work and life/family interface as independent elements that comprise a dichotomy.

The findings illustrate that the individual outcomes that coaches experienced such as emotional toll, relationship breakdowns or coaching turnover were influenced by the organizational and sociocultural factors that characterise the coaching profession. According to Dixon and Bruening (2007), when individuals make choices about work and family, they do not have an unlimited set of options, since the structural conditions interact with the individual choices. In the Spanish sociocultural context, which is characterised by minimal measures and policies on work-family reconciliation (OECD, 2020, Valiente, 2000), WLC has an important influence on coaches' career development, especially for women. Accordingly, the family and friends' support, as well as sport organisations, play a key role in determining how coaches manage their WLC. We develop this in the following themes.

Family and friends' support

While trying to balance life and work, most of the coaches highlighted the importance of family support in order to pursue a career in coaching. Coaches described how their family was a key source of support. Unlike the experiences described in the previous theme, there are coaches who were not forced to choose between spheres (work or life/family), as Jordi, a local water polo head coach, explained:

> *"My wife met me as an athlete, so she already knew that sport was very important for me. And somehow, she understood it and accepted it."* (Jordi, no children, water polo)

In most cases, for those male coaches who were married or co-habiting with a partner, the partner played an important role in supporting them. The support of the wife was a key factor for Albert to continue his career as a coach, especially when there were children in the family structure:

> *"My support is basically my wife. If she had not supported me, I couldn't have continued coaching."* (Albert, 1 child, basketball)

Consequently, family support at the individual level was an important factor in leading coaches to a positive outcome such as job satisfaction or life satisfaction. The findings highlight that these coaches expected their family to get involved with coaching, and to be supportive within their family and coaching roles:

> *"When my wife was pregnant, I was already coaching teams and they (wife and child) already followed me. And when my daughter was born, they continued following me with the baby in the buggy. Of course, the problem of a coach who doesn't leave the profession is that the family must follow him. And I'm lucky that my wife has understood that coaching is part of my life."* (Jesús, 1 child, volleyball)

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In all these cases, men coaches were basically supported by their spouses or stable partner. Furthermore, these findings illustrated the structure of the "two-person, one career" model that has been previously described in the coaching profession (Dixon & Bruening, 2005; Hinojosa-Alcalde et al., 2020; Knoppers, 1992; LaVoi & Dutove, 2012). This connects to mostly the male participants' experiences but not to female coaches.

In contrast, women coaches more often described other types of supportive mechanisms than their spouse or stable partner. For instance, Sonia, a basketball regional part-time head coach, explained:

"While I was coaching, the mother of my daughter's friend would keep them to do the homework and when I finished the trainings, I would pick my daughters up and go home." (Sonia, 2 children, basketball)

Ana, a part-time gymnastics coach, also highlighted the role of her children's grandparents in terms of balancing coaching with their personal life:

"My father and mother help me with the children a lot while I am coaching, but it is difficult to manage. Sometimes I have to find other options or hire a babysitter." (Ana, 2 children, gymnastics)

This situation showed that the supportive mechanisms from the partner facilitated the male career development as coaches and reduced the feelings of work-life conflict, but not for women.

Accordingly, the results of this study highlight how gender ideology at the sociocultural level also influence coaches' career development, as previous research has revealed (Hinojosa et al., 2018, 2020; Knoppers, 1992; LaVoi & Dutove, 2012; OECD, 2020; LaVoi & Dutove, 2012; Stirling et al., 2017).

Furthermore, it implies that the sustainability of coaching has a high dependency on and is determined by supportive family and friends' mechanisms. Cristina, who has no children, stated:

"If I had children, then I would need help to continue coaching, but now I am not aware of having help, but I think I do not need it either." (Cristina, no children, gymnastics)

The participants' experiences showed that the supportive mechanisms (family or friends) allowed coaches to continue in the profession and reduced the feeling of WLC, as

described by Sisjord et al. (2022). Then, the concern arising from these particular findings is the dependence on this support and its impact on coaches' life/family interface, which suggests that any change on these individual supportive mechanisms would lead to greater WLC. Accordingly, measures to lower the dependency on external supportive mechanisms in sport organizations are relevant for coaches to access and progress in the profession and also to retain those coaches' who may not have this dedication from the family environment, especially women.

Organizational support

The sociocultural factors such as the cultural norms and expectations of the multiple tasks that involve coaching contributed to the low perception of organizational support in most cases. Nevertheless, there are several experiences where coaches perceived organizational support within their sport organization as a way to balance their work-life interface.

Thus, coaches perceived different supportive mechanisms developed by the organizations. For example, the fact that coaches' children could train at the same time and space of work of the coach without an economic cost was perceived as a way to balance work and family spheres.

"When my daughters were little it was the worst time for me to manage the coaching profession with the family. My daughters were like 'balls', because they went from one side to the other and were always with me. (...) My youngest daughter was also training here, because she could come with me and so she was training with my team." (Sonia, 2 children, basketball)

Thus, organizational factors such as a family-friendly culture of the organization led coaches to experience lower levels of WLC.

Moreover, the sport organization can become a supportive mechanism for the coaches when there are personal difficulties. For example, Sonia described how the sport organization supported her when she was considering quitting the profession. In this case, the sport organization offered personal and financial support to the coach:

"When I got divorced it was a hard time for me and I was about to quit coaching. I was lucky with the old organizational board, because they all supported me and they told me not to quit the profession. They told me that if I couldn't afford the bills, they would pay the bills for me, but that I was not going to quit sport." (Sonia, 2 children, basketball)

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The gesture of support of the sport organization board at that critical moment enabled Sonia to continue in the profession. According to Dixon and Sagas (2007), higher levels of organizational support are strongly associated with individual outcomes as job satisfaction and low levels of work-life conflict. Thus, coaches with these supportive mechanisms at an organizational level can then avoid having to choose between the coaching profession or family.

Furthermore, another perception of organizational support was having social support from colleagues in the sport organization. Participants highlighted the importance of the professional relationships and organizational culture. The comparisons between members of the organization and family were recurrent. For instance, Ainhoa, a full-time international head coach, remarked the supportive relations that she experienced in the club:

"With this day-to-day fatigue, sometimes you wish everything would go to hell. But I can also tell you that I have had the support of the club, of all the people at the club, the family, you know? That has been the bedrock of support, which has told me: 'No, no, don't give up and don't move on'." (Ainhoa, 1 child, swimming)

Cristina, a gymnastics part-time assistant coach, highlighted her good relation with the head coach and explained:

"The relationship with him (head coach) is…we seem to be married! We have a lot of confidence. Sometimes sparks fly, but we solve it easily and we understand each other very well. We have a lot of complicity." (Cristina, no children, gymnastics)

Another way in which coaches perceived the support of the organisation was when they had the opportunity to have an open communication between line managers and coaches in order to be able to adapt to the coaches' personal needs. For instance, having the opportunity to adapt the schedule to the coach personal life before the start of the season. Albert, a basketball part-time head coach, was able to compact the training sessions into a fewer number of sessions and having flexible scheduling so that the workload was not consistently heavy. He highlighted that the club needed to adjust his work schedule in order to continue as a coach:

"I have tight schedules and the club knows that if they want me to coach, they must meet some of my requirements. For example, the training sessions of both teams have to be on the same day. Because I need two free days to be at home. So they have to plan it like this. And I also

asked the club to train after 7 pm. At the end if they want me to coach, they have to adapt to this situation. If they didn't want me to coach, they would say no. But that's also a sign that they recognise and value your work." (Albert, 1 child, basketball)

Coaches such as Albert, who are able to demand and negotiate job conditions, were able to better reconcile their personal life with their coaching role. Nevertheless, not all the coaches perceived the support from the organization in terms of work-life balance. More usually women coaches did not perceive they had a power position to demand and negotiate their working conditions (Greenhill et al., 2009; Knoppers, 1992).

Actions implemented by organizations can help coaches to integrate the coaching profession within their life/family duties. According to Carlson and Grzywacz (2008), the integrative perspective is focused on work-family balance. These findings highlight how a variety of aspects of the work and non-work spheres of coaches were integrated and formed one coherent whole (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). In pursuing this integration, balance is a key element. Previous studies have defined integration as an effective way to create a balanced lifestyle (Carlson & Grzywacz, 2008; Mazerolle et al., 2008). Moreover, this supportive environment provides social integration and social acceptance to these coaches which is relevant for their social well-being (Norman & Rankin-Wright, 2016).

These findings reflect the key role that sport organizations play in balancing WLC and the need to facilitate the work-life balance for retaining sport coaches. As previous literature has suggested (Dixon & Sagas, 2007), the organizational support is relevant for coaches in order to balance their work and family spheres and decrease WLC. Dabbs et al. (2016) described that when coaches have a supportive organizational culture, they are more likely to succeed in balancing the work and life interface, which results in a more favorable work environment, better performance and well-being among coaches.

To summarise, the participants perceived that the organizational support in terms of work-life balance that they perceived was relevant for pursuing a career as coaches. The different ways in which coaches perceived organizational support in terms of work-life balance ranged from family-friendly environment, board support in personal difficult moments, social support from colleagues, schedule flexibility and open communication, which were important for coaches to continue in the profession.

Concluding comments

The present study provides evidence of the different ways in which the experiences of work-life conflict and perceived organizational support impacted the coaching career and coaches' personal life. As the findings show, from the holistic and multilevel view from Dixon and Bruening's theoretical framework (2005), it is important to highlight that the coaches' experiences are varied, complex and dynamic.

Within this study, the participants spoke about the difficulties they encountered balancing work and life issues, since they felt that coaching invaded their personal time and pushed them to choose between either their personal or their professional life. Personal lives, relationships, social and family commitments were influenced by their role as coaches. The family, and especially the spouse for men coaches, became the coaches' primary support mechanism which, in the long-term, is an unsustainable strategy as evidence shows that this can lead to relationship breakdown and negative impacts on the family structure, or coaching turnover. According to gender, the results also show how men and women coaches differ in their experiences. Furthermore, the perception of coaches' organizational support was also relevant for them to continue in the profession, since the organization may be a key support making adjustments to coaches' personal situations.

The present study provides new evidence that work-life interface remains a crucial area of examination for sport organizations and for the sports system. By understanding the different experiences that surround coaches, sport organizations can better identify strategies to reduce WLC among sport coaches in order to optimise their experience of the profession, enhance outcomes such as their productivity and performance, and retain coaches, especially women.

The diverse sample of the present study, which included men and women with different family structures, is a strength that offers a broader insight to the existing literature mostly focused on mother and father coaches. WLC is not only experienced by fathers or mothers. The study also highlights that WLC is observed in full-time and part-time coaches, and among coaches with and without a job besides coaching. Moreover, by using a qualitative approach, we can privilege the personal stories and account of coaches' experiences to better understand the impact of WLC on their lives.

Despite the strengths and contributions of this research, there are some limitations that could be addressed in future research. Future research should examine the experiences of coaches that decided not to continue in the coaching profession because of the challenge of managing coaching, family and personal life.

In terms of practical implications of the present study, the participants spoke about the actions that organizations were implementing in their workplace to promote their integration of the work and life interface. These actions were perceived as key elements for remaining in the sport organization and in the coaching profession. The most relevant actions suggested by the participants in the present study as ways that sport organizations could sustain their work included: (a) promoting family friendly culture in the sport organization, which means that the family can be integrated in the sport organization in different roles as participants or other roles in the organization, (b) promoting networks between colleagues and superiors that provide a climate of confidence and social support, (c) schedule flexibility and autonomy, in terms of weekly and season schedule that provides balance between the dedication to coaching and personal life, (d) open communication between technical directors and coaches in order to be able to come to an agreement about their personal needs.

The present study showed that there is a need to improve the work-life balance among coaches that enhances their career development from a holistic perspective. Rather than understanding these findings as coaches' personal inability to cope with work-life conflict, sport organizations need to be more proactive and responsible promoting family conciliation policies in the coaching workforce.

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