Organisational and occupational commitment as predictors of volunteer coaches’ burnout

TERRY ENGELBERG-MOSTON, CATHERINE STIPIS, BRYDIE KIPPIN, SARA SPILLMAN, AND KATE BURBIDGE

ABSTRACT

Volunteer coaches play a significant role in the provision of sport and have a great impact on those they coach. Issues such as increasing numbers of athletes, coupled with more stringent legislation affecting safety and child protection, are putting added pressure on coaches. Some of the consequences are burnout and high drop out rates. The purpose of this research is to examine the organisational and the occupational commitment of volunteer coaches in community-based sporting organisations and the implications of such commitment for coaches’ experience of burnout. This research is a work in progress conducted in Townsville, northern Queensland. Volunteer coaches in various sports including hockey, rugby league, basketball, soccer, and surf lifesaving completed a survey instrument which assessed their demographic and background characteristics (including experience, qualifications, and hours dedicated to coaching) organisational and occupational commitment, and burnout. The findings of the analyses conducted to date indicate that affective occupational commitment is a predictor of two aspects of burnout: reduced professional efficacy and exhaustion and cynicism; normative organisational commitment was a moderate predictor of reduced professional efficacy only. These findings suggest that commitment to the coaching role may be an important aspect of volunteer coaches’ sense of self. Future research should focus on further exploring the impact of commitment components on coaches’ burnout to better understand their interrelationships and their implications for coaches’ wellbeing.

INTRODUCTION

Volunteers are essential for the delivery of community-based sport and recreation services in Australia. The survey Giving Australia: Research on Philanthropy in Australia (Lyons & Passey 2005) indicates that 17% of the adult population volunteer for sport and recreation clubs. The significance of volunteering in the sport sector is noteworthy not only because of the number of people involved, but because of the time they invest: sport attracts one in five of all volunteer hours, the highest proportion of volunteer hours given according to Lyons and Passey. Further, of all ‘highly committed volunteers’ (a term given by Lyons & Hocking, 2000, to those who contribute more than 300 hours per year or an average of 6 hours per week), nearly 53% volunteer for sport organisations.

Many sport volunteers take on the role of coach or instructor. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2005) more than 452,000 people over the age of 15 were engaged as unpaid coaches, instructors, or teachers in the year 2004. Coaches are thus a significant human resource in the sport and recreation sector. As Cuskelly, Hoye and Auld (2006) note, 'Coaches are the
most tangible manifestation of organisational quality and effectiveness in the sport context and are a crucial component of the sport experience for most participants’ (p. 123).

Despite these seemingly impressive figures there are some emerging issues of concern for sport volunteers in general and volunteer coaches in particular. Amongst these, increasing numbers of participants in organised sport are overreaching the capacity of many sport organisations (Cuskelly 2004). The outcome of this situation, as Doherty (2005) stresses, is that ‘there are fewer volunteers doing more work’ (p. 10). Further pressures stem from the ever-changing nature of the sports sector (Nichols et al. 2005). For example, there is an increasing trend towards professionalisation in the provision and delivery of sport services coupled with stringent legal requirements. These pressures are leading to a demand for volunteers with specialist skills and knowledge. Coaches are highly likely to feel many of these strains, as concerns over participant safety, training delivery, and child protection are directly under coaches’ purview (Cuskelly, Hoye & Auld 2006). Some of these strains can lead to coaching burnout (Vealey et al. 1992), which can result not only from the situation that coaches face, but from the perception of the situation. Among the psychological variables that have been found to affect burnout, commitment has emerged as a key issue (Raedeke, Granzyk & Warren 2000). Committed individuals are believed to be more likely to remain in their respective organisations, to participate wholeheartedly in organisational activities, and to enjoy an enhanced sense of wellbeing (Chelladurai 1999). Given the concerns outlined above, the study of commitment is a worthwhile endeavour in order to further understand what sport organisations can do to make enjoyable the work of the volunteer coach and to retain coaches. Theories and research on commitment have typically focused on commitment to the organisation as a whole, however, individuals can become committed to their occupations as well as their organisations. The following sections review research on both organisational and occupational commitment and the implications of these commitments for volunteers.

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Meyer and Allen (1991) conceptualise organisational commitment as having three dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative. Affective commitment represents an individual’s emotional attachment to and, an identification with, his or her organisation. This individual wants to remain in the organisation.

Continuance or calculative commitment reflects an individual’s decision to remain with his or her organisation because of the costs associated with leaving (e.g. loss of salary, prestige, or contacts). This individual needs to remain in the organisation. Overall, continuance commitment has been found to be more relevant to paid staff in sporting organisations where paid staff worked alongside volunteers (Cuskelly, Boag & McIntyre 1999). It appears that volunteers seem less concerned about making sacrifices in leaving an organisation as they are not dependent on financial or other tangible rewards.

Finally, normative commitment reflects an individual’s feeling that he or she should or ought to remain with the organisation because of a sense of duty or obligation. This commitment may derive from normative pressures that promote volunteering as a leisure choice, or influenced by a process known as the psychological contract (Rousseau 1989). Although this is not a binding contract, the individual’s interpretation of agreements that have been made with the organisation may affect perceptions of obligation and loyalty (Liao-Troth 2001). For example, a volunteer coach may feel indebted to his or her club (the organisation) because the club has paid for their coaching qualification. Studies have shown that the three component model is applicable to volunteer workers (Dawley, Stephens & Stephens 2005; Engelberg, Skinner & Zakus 2007; Preston & Brown 2004) and that organisational commitment is a predictor of outcomes such as intention to leave and performance (Hoye 2007; Preston & Brown 2004).

OCCUPATIONAL COMMITMENT

According to Cohen (2003) occupational commitment is characterised by its focus on the individual’s profession, occupation, or career. Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) extended Meyer and Allen’s (1991) model and found that the three-component conceptualisation could be applied to an occupation as well as an organisation. In sport specifically, Turner and Chelladurai (2005) examined the occupational commitment and the organisational commitment of intercollegiate coaches and found that both predicted important outcomes such as job performance and intention to leave the organisation. The occupational commitment focus can be extended to a volunteer context by examining the attachments that volunteers develop to their roles. For example, Wilson (2000) suggests that commitment can be construed as an attachment to a volunteering role over time. The concept of commitment to a role may share similarities with Grube and Piliavin’s (2000) role identity. Role identity is conceptualised as a state in which a particular role becomes so important that the role comes to dominate the sense of self. In a study of retention and performance
of American Cancer Society (ACS) volunteers, Grube and Piliavin found that role identity was the most important factor in the prediction of amount of time given to and intent to leave the organisation. Furthermore, role identity was a better predictor of outcomes including intention to leave the organisation. In a volunteer sport context, Engelberg (2007) found that volunteers in athletics clubs had distinctive affective and normative commitments to their volunteer role (e.g. committee member, coach, and official). In sum, there are some preliminary indications that the concept of commitment to a role, such as coaching, may be an important focus of study in a volunteer setting.

BURNOUT

Coaches are likely to experience burnout, which is defined as a state of emotional exhaustion caused by excessive psychological and emotional demands made on an individual who is working with other people (Jackson, Schwab & Schuler 1986). According to Maslach and Jackson (1981) burnout is a multidimensional concept consisting of three aspects; emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion refers to the overwhelming response to emotional commitments and demand. This is the first aspect of burnout, where the individual often feels ‘drained’ (Maslach 1982, p. 3). Depersonalisation, the second aspect, refers to a detached, callous or dehumanising representation of others. Reduced personal accomplishment is the third aspect; it occurs when a negative evaluation of the individual’s self is present. Of the three components, emotional exhaustion is at the heart of burnout, although others. Reduced personal accomplishment is the third aspect; it occurs when a negative evaluation of the individual’s self is present. Of the three components, emotional exhaustion is at the heart of burnout, although emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and personal accomplishment respectively. Emotional exhaustion refers to the overwhelming response to emotional commitments and demand. This is the first aspect of burnout, where the individual often feels ‘drained’ (Maslach 1982, p. 3). Depersonalisation, the second aspect, refers to a detached, callous or dehumanising representation of others. Reduced personal accomplishment is the third aspect; it occurs when a negative evaluation of the individual’s self is present. Of the three components, emotional exhaustion is at the heart of burnout, although emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and personal accomplishment respectively.

In sport specifically, research has shown that coaches do suffer from burnout (Kelley 1994; Raedeke et al. 2000; Vealey et al. 1992). Kelley contended that burnout is a consequence of ‘ongoing and prolonged stress’ (1994, p. 48), which is in turn a result of interpersonal and situational variables. Vealey et al.’s study found that it was the perception of the situation, rather than the actual demands, that predicted the stress that results in burnout.

Indicators of stress and strain, such as burnout, have been examined as consequences of commitment in a few studies of paid workers (Bagley & Czajka 1993; Schmidt 2007). These studies have shown that organisational commitment has the potential to reduce strain, thus acting as a ‘protective resource’ (Schmidt 2007). Given this finding, Schmidt recommends that organisations create working environments that foster affective organisational commitment of their workers. This appears to be a promising applied avenue for researchers and practitioners alike. There is, however, a lack of research into the influence of commitment on stress and burnout with volunteer populations.

THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study is a work in progress that examines the commitment of volunteer coaches to their respective organisations (their clubs) and their occupations (the coaching occupation) and the relationships between commitment and burnout. To date, studies that have examined the relationship between organisational commitment and burnout have focused on organisational commitment exclusively, and have been undertaken with paid workers as participants (Bagley & Czajka 1993; Schmidt 2007). Given the centrality of the occupation to coaches’ identity and to their attitudes and behaviour (Chelladurai & Ogasawara 2003; Turner & Chelladurai 2005), the study of the impact of occupational commitment, as well as organisational commitment, to volunteer coaches’ levels of burnout is warranted.

METHOD

SAMPLE AND PROCEDURE

We enlisted the cooperation of Sport and Recreation QLD, Northern Region (SRQ) (the regional government body that oversees community-based sport in northern Queensland) to recruit volunteer coaches. Following a suggestion from a senior officer of SRQ, we attended six coaching workshops which took place in Townsville between May and July 2008 in order to recruit participants for this study. These workshops attract a substantial number of volunteer coaches from a variety of sports. At the beginning of each workshop, we introduced the research and requested cooperation with the study. Coaches were then asked to complete a written questionnaire and to return it to us upon completion. To ensure confidentiality, coaches were
given a blank envelope to put their completed questionnaires in, and these were then placed in a box. All participants in each workshop agreed to participate for a total (to date) of 177 volunteer coaches who returned completed questionnaires.

The sample consisted of 110 men and 67 women. Respondents’ ages ranged from 18 to 62 years (M = 37.7, SD = 10.4). Over a quarter of respondents (27%) were hockey coaches, 19% were rugby league coaches, 16% were basketball coaches, 9% football (soccer) coaches, 9% surf lifesaving coaches, 5% athletics coaches, 5% netball coaches, 4% cricket coaches, 3% touch football coaches, and the remaining 3% were coaches in various other sports including baseball, swimming, taekwondo, and water polo. The majority of coaches had recognised coaching qualifications (81%); and amongst these, 22% had advanced qualifications (defined here as Level 2 or above). Nineteen per cent had no qualifications or had informal or non-recognised qualifications and training. Coaching experience ranged from 1 to 30 years (M = 9.2 years, SD = 8.4). Time devoted to coaching or coaching-related activities ranged from two to 60 hours per week (M = 10, SD = 9.3). Length of club membership ranged from one to 45 years (M = 8.4, SD = 9.6).

MEASURES

Organisational Commitment: Meyer and Allen’s (1991) three-component 18-item organisational commitment scales were used to assess coaches affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the sport club. In order to keep the questionnaire brief and to maintain respondents’ rating time to a minimum, we selected the three highest loading items for each commitment dimension from Meyer et al’s (1993) study: three affective, three continuance, and three normative (cf. Goffin & Gellatly 2001; Ivenson & Buttigieg 1999; Turner & Chelladurai 2005). To make the items relevant to coaching we replaced the word ‘organisation’ for ‘club’ and the wording of other items was also adapted (e.g. ‘coaching’ for ‘working’). The new items retained the main terminology used by Meyer et al. (e.g. ‘This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning to me’ became ‘This club has a great deal of personal meaning for me’).

Responses to all items were measured with a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Like organisational commitment, some items were negatively worded and alternated with positive items to avoid response bias.

Occupational Commitment: The items for occupational commitment were taken from Meyer et al’s (1993) occupational commitment scales. Following Turner and Chelladurai (2005) we took the three highest loading items (three affective, three continuance, and three normative) from the original 18-item questionnaire. To make the items relevant to the coaching occupation we replaced the word ‘nursing’ (the occupation under study in Meyer et al’s study) for ‘coaching’ or ‘coach’, so that items read, for example, ‘I like being a coach’ or ‘I feel a responsibility to coaching’. Once again, level of agreement was measured with a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Like organisational commitment, some items were negatively worded and alternated with positive items to avoid response bias.

Burnout: The items measuring burnout were adapted from Maslach and Jackson’s (1981) 16-item MBI-GS. Two of the original items were left out of this study as they did not apply to the volunteer coaches (for example, ‘I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job’). The remaining 14 items used in this study required some further adjustments to make them relevant to coaching. For example, the terms ‘my work’, ‘job’, ‘work day’, and ‘organisation’ were replaced with ‘coaching’, ‘current position’, ‘coaching session’, and ‘club’, respectively. Examples of these reworded items include ‘I feel used up at the end of a coaching session’ and ‘In my opinion, I am good at coaching’. The scoring scale used in the original MBI-GS was also adjusted to make it more appropriate to the volunteer coach situation taking into consideration, for example, that coaches normally only work during the sports season (depending on the sport, seasons may last only 6 or 7 months in a calendar year). Thus, the original 7-point scale was modified into a 5-point scale in which respondents had to indicate how often they felt about their coaching as described in each statement. Responses were scored as 0 = ‘Never’, 1 = ‘A few times a season’, 2 = ‘Once a month or less’, 3 = ‘Every fortnight’, and 4 = ‘After every session’. Of the 14 items included in the modified scale, three measured exhaustion, six measured professional efficacy, and five measured cynicism.

Demographic data gathered included gender, age, sport coached, coaching qualifications, coaching experience (number of years coaching), extent of involvement with coaching (number of hours per week spent coaching or on coaching-related activities), and length of membership in current club.

Data treatment and analyses: The data were checked for errors and omissions and entered into an SPSS Version 16 file for Windows. Commitment items that had been reversed were recoded so that a higher score denoted higher commitment level. We carried out factor analyses to examine the structure of the burnout scales and then
carried out reliability analyses on the respective subscales of organisational commitment, occupational commitment, and burnout. Finally, we conducted stepwise multiple regression analyses to assess the effect of the components of organisational and occupational commitment on burnout.

RESULTS

NATURE OF COACHES’ BURNOUT

The items of the burnout scale were analysed by means of a principal component analysis with varimax rotation. Two components with eigenvalues higher than 1 were found. Both components accounted for 54% of the variance. The first component comprised the exhaustion and the cynicism items; the second comprised the professional efficacy items. Therefore we aggregated the exhaustion items and the cynicism items to form one measure of burnout (exhaustion and cynicism). The scores for the professional efficacy items were reversed to indicate reduced professional efficacy and then aggregated to represent the second measure of burnout (reduced professional efficacy).

OCCUPATIONAL COMMITMENT, ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND BURNOUT SCORES

The continuance commitment subscales were discarded due to their poor reliabilities (alphas) which were below .67 for organisational commitment and below .65 for occupational commitment. All other alphas were good (above .70 as recommended by Tabachnick & Fidell 2001), and retained for further analyses.

Table 1 presents the correlations amongst affective organisational commitment, normative organisational commitment, affective occupational commitment, normative occupational commitment, reduced professional efficacy and exhaustion and cynicism. Subscale reliabilities (alphas) are also reported. There were significant negative correlations between the four measures of commitment and reduced professional efficacy, with affective occupational commitment the most strongly correlated (r = -.37). Affective occupational commitment and normative occupational commitment were significantly negatively correlated with exhaustion and cynicism, with affective occupational commitment the most strongly correlated (r = -.36). As expected, the two burnout measures were significantly and positively correlated (r = .35).

Table 2 shows the results of a stepwise regression analysis with the four commitment subscales as predictors and exhaustion and cynicism as criterion. With this method a significant model emerged: F (1, 175) = 30.27, p < .0005. The model explained 19% of the variance (Adjusted R² = .19). Only affective occupational commitment contributed significantly to the variance in exhaustion and cynicism (β = .38, p < .0001). All other variables were excluded from this model.

Table 2 also shows the results of a stepwise regression analysis with the four commitment subscales as predictors and reduced professional efficacy as criterion. A significant model also emerged: F (2, 174) = 20.41, p < .0005. The model explained 19% of the variance (Adjusted R² = .19). Two of the predictor variables, affective occupational commitment (β = .32, p < .0001) and normative organisational commitment (β = .24, p < .001), contributed significantly to the variance in reduced professional efficacy. All other variables were excluded from this model.

In brief, affective occupational commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Affective</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>–</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Normative</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.45**</td>
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<td>Occupational commitment</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Affective</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Normative</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Burnout (reduced professional efficacy)</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td>-.37**</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Burnout (exhaustion and cynicism)</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.36**</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>–</td>
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</table>

*p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01 (2-tailed).
Table 2: Regression of coaches' burnout (exhaustion and cynicism and reduced professional efficacy) on commitment subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R^2</th>
<th>R^2 change</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Exhustion and cynicism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affective occupational commitment</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.38***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced professional efficacy</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Affective occupational commitment</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.32***</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Normative organisational commitment</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.24**</td>
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</table>

**p < .001, *** p < .0001 (2-tailed)

contributed to the prediction of exhaustion and cynicism and affective occupational commitment together with normative organisational commitment contributed to the prediction of reduced professional efficacy. Neither affective organisational commitment nor normative occupational commitment, were significant predictors of burnout.

DISCUSSION

The present study explored the commitment and burnout of volunteer coaches in community-based sporting clubs in northern Queensland. Specifically, the study explored the relationships between two components of organisational commitment (affective and normative), two components of occupational commitment (affective and normative), and two aspects of burnout (reduced professional efficacy and exhaustion and cynicism).

This study represents work in progress and hitherto the analyses have focused solely on the relationships between the affective and the normative components of organisational and occupational commitment with burnout. As expected, commitment and burnout were negatively related; however the contribution of each component of commitment was quite different. The findings indicate that of all the components of commitment examined only affective occupational commitment was a predictor of both aspects of burnout. Normative organisational commitment was a significant predictor of reduced professional efficacy (but not of exhaustion and cynicism). These findings suggest that occupational commitment, specifically its affective component (that is, an emotional attachment to the occupation or role) is an important aspect of volunteer coaches' attitudes and may have an influence on coaches' experience of burnout. In this respect, the centrality of the role or occupation may be similar to that of paid coaches (Turner & Chelladurai 2005).

Although this study's findings have some important implications for volunteer coaches in community-based sporting organisations, there are some limitations that must be addressed. The mean burnout scores, for both exhaustion and cynicism and reduced professional efficacy, were low (1.03 for exhaustion and cynicism, 1.01 for reduced professional efficacy on a 5-point scale where 0 = 'Never' and 4 = 'After every session', with a standard deviation of .78 and .82 for each type of burnout respectively). This suggests that this sample of coaches experienced little actual burnout: the distribution of burnout scores in this sample was positively skewed. The commitment predictors, though significant, are predicting very low degrees of burnout. Although we are not suggesting that low degrees of burnout represent an undesirable situation, caution must be used when interpreting the relationships between commitment and burnout. There are a variety of reasons why burnout scores may have been skewed towards the lower end of the continuum: first, the shortening of the scale response range from seven to five points may have restricted respondents' choices. In this respect, further adaptations of the MBI (or new measures of coaches' burnout) must take response scale formats into account to avoid truncation of scores.

Second, the data were collected early in the training season. This means that coaches were possibly less likely to have experienced burnout at that stage of their coaching duties. It is not uncommon for the demands and pressures on community-based coaches to increase as the season progresses (Wilson L, personal communication, 20 April 2008). Further research which incorporates measurement of burnout at different stages during the coaching season may shed some useful light into the experience of coaching. For the moment, however, we contend that the relationship between commitment and burnout is, conceptually, an important one that cannot be overlooked.

Another concern refers to the adaptation of the organisational and occupational commitment scales. In adapting such scales to make them applicable to a volunteer context, specifically to volunteer coaches, the psychometric properties of the original scales are lost. Particularly, with the shortening of subscale items to reduce demands on participants' time, we are imposing psychometric constraints even though due care was taken with the selection of items. In this particular study, continuance commitment could not be assessed due to poor scale reliabilities for both organisational and occupational commitment. Future research should continue to adapt and validate organisational and occupational commitment scales suitable for this type of...
population. Raedeke et al. (2000) had noted that continuance commitment may lead to a sense of entrapment (where the individual feels he or she has to remain in the organisation or the occupation) and this may create strain that ultimately may lead to burnout. However, previous research with volunteers in other contexts (Liao-Troth 2001; Preston & Brown 2004) suggests that continuance commitment is not as central to volunteers as it may be to paid workers, due to the fact that volunteers’ do not usually perceive that they ‘have to’ remain with an organisation.

As argued earlier, affective occupational commitment appears to be an important variable that may have an impact on coaches’ perceptions of burnout. Given this, the nature of occupational commitment of volunteers in roles such as coaching, merits further exploration. Is the coaching role central to coaches’ sense of self? Do coaches internalise the role of coach in the same way as paid workers internalise their job or profession (cf. Meyer et al. 1993)? If so, what are the implications for coaches’ behaviour?

Unlike previous studies with paid workers (Schmidt 2007), affective organisational commitment was not a predictor of burnout. Normative organisational commitment was a modest predictor of reduced professional efficacy only. Previous studies with volunteers in a variety of roles have shown that organisational commitment is related to outcomes such as turnover (Cuskelley & Boag 2001), and performance (Hoye 2007; Preston & Brown 2004). It is possible that occupational commitment is more central to volunteers’ perceptions of stress and strain (including burnout) than organisational commitment, but this remains a matter of speculation at this stage.

The contribution of other variables (demographic and situational) to the prediction of burnout must also be established. Previous research has shown that gender is related to burnout (Caccese & Mayerberg 1984), however experience and extent of involvement appear to be un-related to burnout (Vealey et al. 1992). Further research with volunteer coaches will enhance our understanding of how personal situational variables may affect burnout.

Finally, future research needs to examine the differences between volunteers and paid workers in comparable roles or occupations. The data from this study suggests that the nature of the organisational commitment and the occupational commitment of volunteer coaches seems to be similar to that of their paid counterparts. In brief, volunteer coaches had distinctive affective and normative commitments to their organisations (their clubs) and their occupation (coaching). A worthwhile avenue for investigation would be the comparison between paid coaches and volunteer coaches with respect to their organisational and occupational commitment and the relationships of such commitments to variables such as intention to quit, performance, and burnout. In particular, issues such as feelings of entrapment in an occupation or organisation may differ between paid and non-paid workers.

CONCLUSION

Community-based sporting organisations rely on volunteer coaches for the effective delivery of training services to athletes. However, coaches are under increasing pressures and strains that may lead to stress and ultimately burnout. It was argued that an examination of the organisational and the occupational commitment of coaches may be a useful strategy for understanding the nature and extent of coaching burnout. Continuing research in this area will serve to shed more light into the interplay of these variables, and thus serve to provide suggestions that can enhance the enjoyment and the wellbeing of volunteer coaches in community-based sport.

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