Impact of Training on Employee Motivation and Performance in the Sports Industry

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Abstract

This study explores the crucial relationship between employee training and its influence on motivation and performance within the sports industry, focusing on insights from Athletic Directors within the Pace University Athletic Department. Through three comprehensive, in-depth interviews with these key stakeholders, the study aims to discern the effects of targeted, effective training and clear goal setting on employee motivation and performance outcomes. The insights gathered from the Athletics Directors at Pace University reveal a strong correlation between well-designed, efficient training programs and heightened motivation. When training initiatives are aligned with clear objectives and goals, employees exhibit increased levels of enthusiasm, commitment, and job satisfaction. Importantly, these motivated employees consistently achieve performance levels that exceed expectations, showcasing the profound impact of strategic training on work effectiveness within the sports sector.

This study emphasizes the importance of investing in tailored training programs that align with both organizational objectives and individual needs. The findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge on training’s pivotal role in shaping employee motivation and driving exceptional performance in the competitive realm of the sports industry.

Keywords: training, training programs, employee motivation, employee performance, sports industry, commitment, satisfaction, human resource management, sports managers, skills
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Introduction

The sports industry is one of the most well-known industries across the world, which is filled with mainstream professional sports teams that compete in different leagues, tournaments, and competitions all year round. Also, included in the sports industry is Intercollegiate Athletics in the NCAA’s three tiered infrastructure (Division I, II and III) and colleges not in the NCAA; NAIA and Junior College as well as high school athletics where each state governs Interscholastic Athletics (NCSA, 2024). This industry serves as a source of entertainment, passion among sports fanatics, and employment for not just the athletes, but for the personnel involved in every facet that goes into major and minor sporting events.

Specifically, the field of sports management involves the oversight of all aspects of an athletic program or professional sports team (Western Governors University, 2023). Sports managers serve as the glue that ties the athletes to the organization for which they play for. The day-to-day duties of a sports manager could range from the responsibility of setting up and organizing a sporting event, to ticket sales and marketing of that specific event, to providing sufficient security for the entirety of the sporting event. Sports analytics has recently been the driving force that sports managers utilize, not only to choose which players to buy or recruit, but also applied by coaches and managers (Pykes, 2022). Specifically, sports analytics can be used to develop personal training goals and developing metrics for performance benefits, which include informed decision making, resulting in increased revenue and growth within the sports industry.

I have been surrounded by the sports industry my entire life, from playing soccer since I was three to playing collegiate soccer, to attending several different sporting events to now working with Pace Athletics and the Hudson Valley Hammers. Thus, I have established a passion that has been instilled in me since I can remember, and I cannot imagine working in any
other field. It is rare that you are able to find something that you genuinely love and are passionate about; therefore, to have the ability to surround yourself around that environment every single day is truly incredible.

Behind the scenes, however, there are many different problems and issues that arise in the sports management industry, particularly within the realm of human resource management, which plays a pivotal role in shaping the success and sustainability of sports organizations. Human resource management (HRM) involves coordinating, managing, and allocating employees in an organization, in this case the sports industry, in order to carry out the specific organization’s mission, vision, and goals. Within HRM, there is recruiting, hiring, training, compensating, retaining, and motivating employees (Coursera, 2023). Sports managers and HRM go hand-in-hand as sports managers receive their initial position through the HRM department; therefore, they understand the recruiting, hiring, training, and others, as listed before, because they have experienced it themselves. HRM provides this initial training that is linked to sports management. Sports organizations use a strategic approach to HRM as a critical method for managing their HRM for the purpose of effective and efficient operation, specifically throughout gameday sporting events. Yet, there are many instances where organizations do not take the proper time and effort into training and inducting employees, resulting in employee dissatisfaction, lack of motivation, and lack of experiential knowledge needed to quickly deal with any unpredictable problems that may occur during a sports event behind-the-scenes.

Regarding this discipline specifically, scholars have said that these issues, which are dissatisfied employees who do not have the proper skills to solve unpredictable problems in sports organizations, result from negligence towards effecting and efficient training and inducting into the sports industry, specifically. Thus, since the sports industry is always changing
due to new teams, athletes, and coaches, as well as the growth and popularity of women in sports, this also brings light to new challenges that employees must be able to appropriately handle successfully. Additionally, I have experienced this significant issue firsthand, and not having the proper knowledge or skills to promptly fix an unintentional problem can be particularly detrimental. I work in the operations department for Pace Athletics, which consists of planning, marketing, executing, and managing all of the Pace sports teams, games, and events. There was one particular instance where an employee had no idea what to do or who to contact when the camera cut out and disconnected during the women’s basketball game. In this instance, not only was the employee not taught how to reconnect the camera to the livestream, but they were also not told who to go to for help with these technological issues, if necessary. Eventually, the employee was able to contact one of the athletic directors who was at the game, and they were able to solve the issue. This technological issue could have been solved in a timely manner, where the audience who was watching the livestream was not missing too much of the game, had the employee received effective and efficient training. It is crucial that all of the employees have the knowledge and capability to solve a problem that arises almost instantaneously. This specific knowledge, skills, and capabilities are rooted in the training and hiring process that occurs before obtaining a position in any department that is involved within the sports industry.

There are numerous questions that I have constructed that will be answered through the research that will be conducted. These questions are as follows: How does inefficient training affect the employee’s application of skills in unpredictable circumstances? Why do sports organizations neglect the amount of time needed for HRM in the hiring and training process? How does proper training increase employee motivation in sports organizations? I hypothesize
that there is an evident connection between the time set aside for sufficient and effective training, and how it affects employee motivation and performance.

Literature Review

Introduction

Human resource practices, like training, are applied in many more industries other than the application in sports management and the sports industry. For instance, in the not for profit space, there is an increasing threat to the industry’s survival based on increased employee turnover. The increased employee turnover results from numerous factors such as poor pay, long hours; however, the largest factor is growth potential. There is not enough time to train employees as they have to be thrown into situations that they most likely are not truly ready for, let alone train them to a career ladder that seems to be out of reach (Redjebov, 2024). Some of the sources described in this section deal with the broad application of training in a business, while others cover the effects of training on performance and motivation, specifically in the sports industry.

The sources are divided into two subsections: the impact of training and HRM practices on employee performance and the impact on employee motivation. The first subsection tackles the transfer of soft skills from training to the job, the importance of clear objectives and goals for effective training programs, and how satisfaction plays a factor in the performance of an employee in sports businesses. The second subsection covers the significance of the relationship between training programs and motivation, training motivation and organizational commitment in an athletic department, and the importance of motivation and satisfaction in relation to undergraduate volunteers in the sports management program. The purpose of this review is to
provide background information that reveals the impacts that proper or improper training programs can have on employee performance and how employees are motivated.

Subsection 1: The Impact of HRM Practices on Employee Performance

The significance of training in enhancing employee performance is a recurring theme in various studies across different sectors. In the sports business industry, the transfer of soft skills from training to the job is critical as well as setting clear objectives and goals for training programs. Employee satisfaction plays a significant role in the performance and effectiveness of an employee in a business. To start, soft skills are defined as intrapersonal skills, such as the ability to manage oneself, and to interpersonal skills, such as managing interactions with others (Laker & Powell, 2011). Botke et al. (2018) address the factors that influence the success of the transfer of soft skills training. The authors start by pointing out that when trainees fail to use their knowledge and skills on the job, training resources are wasted, and business results go unrealized. Training is an investment that organizations should make as it brings a high return on investment, in turn creating a competitive advantage for the organization as a whole (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Investing in training is essential for organizations to optimize employee performance, drive productivity, foster employee engagement and satisfaction, and mitigate risks. Regarding the training itself, Weerakoon (2016) emphasizes the importance of human resource management (HRM), human resource planning, and strategic human resource management, which are important for an organization’s effectiveness. Training can be divided into two specific parts: general and specific training. General training consists of skills that are transferable from one organization to another, and specific training consists of skills and knowledge that are used when working for a single employer (Weerakoon, 2016). By providing a combination of general and specific training, organizations can ensure that employees have well-
rounded soft skills set and the specialized knowledge necessary to perform their job proficiently. In turn, this enhances employee performance and contributes to the overall success of a sports organization. Furthermore, understanding the post training transfer process of skills and the importance of the factors that influence the transfer stage is a necessity for organizations. The transfer of skills from training to post training applications in the workplace is a crucial step that should not be overlooked as those soft skills are key to effective employee performance (Botke et al., 2018). This is decisive for an organization because at its core, the transfer of skills from the training program stems from the employee’s motivation and desire to excel in the workplace.

While the transfer of soft skills from training is an invaluable step for enhancing overall employee competency and adaptability, it is equally important to establish clear objectives and goals for training programs, as they directly impact employee performance and organizational success in the sports industry. Elnaga and Imran (2013) provide suggestions as to how organizations can improve their employee performance through effective training programs. Training programs provide a foundation for acquiring and honing the skills, knowledge and competencies required to successfully perform within an organization. Organizations must design their training programs with clear goals and objectives while keeping in mind the particular needs of the individual and the organization as a whole. Clear training objectives and goals for the programs are important because they provide alignment with organizational objectives, measurable outcomes, and acts as a source of motivation for employees. Training is an investment that organization need to make as effective training results in enhanced levels of employee and organizational competency and performance (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Additionally, sports businesses must manage their time, energy loss, activities, money, and human resources to reach their goals of their organizations, implying that they need to invest in
their human resources for the effective and efficient organization of operations (Weerakoon, 2016). Training programs not only develop employees but also help an organization to make best use of their human resources in favor of gaining competitive advantage; therefore, it seems mandatory by the organization to plan for such a training program for its employees to enhance their abilities that are required at the workplace (Shen, 2005). By investing in proper training programs with clear identified objectives for employees, organizations can improve productivity, employee performance overall, job satisfaction, ultimately driving the long-term success of the organization. In order for sports organizations and businesses to see an increase in performance of their employees, effective training programs must be implemented, in turn increasing employee motivation simultaneously.

Employee satisfaction is a pivotal factor that significantly influences and complements the effectiveness of training initiatives by an organization, precisely shaping employee performance. Weerakoon (2016) found that training can enhance the self-confidence of employees and their productivity, as self-confidence and productivity are developed through gaining new skills and knowledge. Training experience for an employee in the sports industry must be conducted responsibly because the satisfaction of employees is directly related to their performance, which is influenced by their training. If the employees are dissatisfied, it may lead to a lack of desertion and a decrease in productivity and performance level (Weerakoon, 2016). When employees are satisfied with their work environment, including opportunities for growth and development through training, they are more motivated to actively participate and engage in activities that foster learning and adapting new skills. The impact of training and development programs cannot be realized unless the employee is both willing, which implies motivation, and able to use their new skills on the job (Botke, Jansen, Khapova, & Tims, 2018). Thus, when
employees are motivated and satisfied with the training programs, it results in a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce capable of performing more effectively and efficiently. Additionally, it is important that trainees feel that the training is relevant to their jobs and perceive that they have autonomy to use the new skills, that the workload allows for attempts to use the new skills, and that the supervisors and peers support the transfer of skills (Botke et al., 2018). Evidently, employee training has a significant impact on employee performance because if employees feel as if the training is irrelevant, it will likely result in a decrease in satisfaction and overall performance levels. Thus, sports organizations and businesses that prioritize employee satisfaction alongside effective training programs are better positioned to achieve higher levels of employee performance, resulting in collective organizational success. These studies jointly highlight the critical relationship between training and employee performance, emphasizing the need for organizations to invest in proper and effective training programs to optimize and satisfy employees and achieve successful transfer of skills and competencies.

Subsection 2: The Impact of Training on Employee Motivation in the Sports Industry

Employee training acts as a focal point in enhancing motivation within the workplace, particularly in industries such as sports where employee performance directly impacts the success of the organization. There is a significant relationship between effective training programs and employee motivation, where the level of training has an evident lasting impact on the general workplace. Additionally, the importance of motivation and satisfaction in relation to undergraduate volunteers in the sports management program is crucial as well as research regarding training motivation and organizational commitment in an athletic department. To start, Ozkeser (2019) surveyed 200 employees aiming to measure the relationship between training activities and employee motivation, where each individual surveyed used the 5 point Likert scale
to answer the questionnaire. The findings of this study emphasized the correlation between perceived training opportunities and employee motivation had a substantial 81% impact on motivational levels (Ozkeser, 2019). Thus, this highlights the significance of investing in training activities and programs to foster a motivated workforce as this study revealed a strong, positive relationship between the motivational level of an employee and the training opportunities.

Similarly, Cunningham and Mahoney (2004) focused their research on the lack of attention paid to the training of employees, especially considering the importance of training in gaining an advantage and increasing employee motivation. Their findings demonstrated a positive relationship between training motivation and post-training self-efficacy, emphasizing the necessity of effective training to drive employee motivation and satisfaction. To add, finding the connection between employee motivation and satisfaction with the characteristics of individuals who are interested in the sports industry is a critical part to understanding the significance of this relationship (Johnson et al., 2017). Evidently, the relationship between employee motivation and effective training programs is significant because it impacts performance, retention, and overall organizational effectiveness. Motivated employees are more likely to stay within an organization that supports their continuous development and continuity of educational activities through a properly aligned training program, which leads to higher levels of engagement and satisfaction (Ozkeser, 2019). Thus, by investing in these high-quality training programs, sports organizations can cultivate a motivated and skilled workforce that meets performance levels in an extremely dynamic and demanding industry.

Building upon the foundational understanding of how effective training programs drive employee motivation, there are broader implications of training motivation and its impact on organizational commitment within an athletic department. Organizational commitment and
training motivation on post training self-efficacy play a significant role in the impact it had in a university athletic department. It is crucial for sports organizations to train their employees in order to have desired work outcomes, such as the effective delivery of the sport product, high customer satisfaction, and efficient operations (Cunningham & Mahoney, 2004). The sample used for Cunningham and Mahoney’s (2004) research was from a sample of part-time employees of a major Division I University’s Athletic Department participating in mandatory training session. The purpose of the training session was to increase the perceptions of self-efficacy in satisfying customer’s needs, and the results demonstrate the importance of training motivation in relation to training outcomes. There is a positive correlation between training motivation and post training self-efficacy, as well as organizational commitment and training motivation. This is significant regarding employee motivation and training because when employees are motivated to engage in training programs and learning activities, they are more likely to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy, which refers to their belief in their ability to successfully perform tasks and achieve organizational goals. However, one limitation to make note of is that since the data was collected from part-time employees at a NCAA Division I Athletic Department, it can be hard to make generalizations about larger sports organizations; yet generalizations can be made about similar university programs as the organizational process is similar across all universities. Additionally, to increase motivation through training activities for future improvement, Ozkeser (2019) recommends that managers pay more attention to the training activities, resulting in an increase in employee loyalty and their contribution will increase. Evidently, the positive relationship between training motivation, post training self-efficacy, and organizational commitment is significant as it not only drives individual and collective performance and motivation but also contributed to the overall success and sustainability of the athletic
department. Organizations can develop a motivated and resilient workforce that achieves excellence in their endeavors by promoting these positive correlations.

To dive deeper into the interplay between effective training programs and employee motivation, it becomes evident that there are numerous motivational factors that lay the foundation for understanding motivation and satisfaction within the sports industry. Johnson et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between motivation, satisfaction, and retention of volunteers at undergraduate sports management program and identified six motivational factors that would be examined throughout their research. The motivational factors are Values, Understanding, Social, Career, Protective, Love of Sport, and Enhancement. The participants completed a 46-question survey that required the rating of motivation, satisfaction, and intention to continue to volunteer. One of the research questions was, “What factors motivate sport management students to participate in volunteer activities?” and the authors hypothesized that Love of Sport and Career will rate as the highest motivation factors, and Protective will rate as the lowest. The results regarding this specific research question supported the hypothesis; therefore, there is significant evidence linking motivation, satisfaction, and retention of the sport management volunteers in this study. The significance of this study can be linked to the effectiveness of proper training as training programs can indicate the relationship with employee motivation because it enables employees to feel privileged, while increasing their knowledge and skills in the sports industry (Ozkeser, 2019). Thus, in order for sport organizations to be successful, one of the major factors that is considered is the employees who are working in the organization, and whether or not they are motivated to effectively deliver desired outcomes (Cunningham & Mahoney, 2004). Employee motivation stems from the training employee’s receive, and with effective training, there is an increase in employee motivation. Clearly, the
motivational factors identified as well as other factors, such as increased knowledge
development, significantly influence the motivation levels of the employees positively and
negatively. These studies collectively accentuate the critical role of training in enhancing
employee motivation and satisfaction within the vigorous and ever-evolving sports industry.

**Conclusion**

My review of the literature assisted in constructing questions that would reveal
information in my interviews that I have not discovered already. As a whole, these journal
articles and research studies elaborate on the impact of training on both employee performance
and motivation conjointly.

First, Botke et al. (2018) introduce the idea that you must understand the post-training
transfer process initially, and that the trainees need to feel as if training is relevant to their job in
order to grasp the concepts of soft skills training. Similarly, Elnaga and Imran (2013) make an
applicable point that implementing training programs with clear and concise goals and objectives
will enhance the performance levels of the employees significantly because they will feel as if
the training is specific and relates to the job at hand. Weerakoon (2016) emphasizes the
importance of self-confidence and productivity, which stems from the training employees
endure. Second, Ozkeser (2019) mentions how significant training activities are when addressing
the relationship between individuals who are motivated and the success of an organization. This
same point can also be seen where Cunningham and Mahoney (2004) talk about training
motivation within an athletic department. They also harp on how there is a lack of attention
dedicated to proper training programs for individuals within the athletic department, which
tampers on the desired work outcomes of the organization and decreases the individual’s
motivation to continue to perform to expectations. Johnson et al. (2017) also bring light to the
same relationship Ozkeser (2019) addressed, which is the relationship between motivation and how successful an organization dependent on the training implementation.

Evidently, there is a positive relationship on proper, devoted time to training, which results in an increase in employee motivation, and in turn, increasing their performance in the sports management industry. Due to this secondary research, I am able to draw similarities from others’ research to the research I had done during my primary research. This literature review strengthened the impacts that both improper and proper training can have on the motivation and performance of employees.

**Methodology**

Throughout this study on the effects of ineffective training resulting in a decrease in employee motivation and performance in sports organizations, I conducted semi-structured interviews with three athletic directors who work in the athletic department at Pace University, which is a private institution. Athletics directors are administrators who supervise and oversee athletic programs at a college, high school, or private institution (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). There are many different areas of which athletic directors can be in charge, such as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Compliance, or Student Success and Services, or Communications, etc.

I chose to interview these three individuals in an attempt to gather information regarding the hiring and training process of employees who work directly in sports in the athletic department. My first interviewee was Kristin Quinn, who was the Associate Athletics Director for External Operations. Soon after our initial interview, Kristin Quinn received a new position at St. John’s University, where she is currently the Senior Associate Athletics Director and Senior
Woman Administrator. Prior to her position in the St. John’s Athletic Department, she was responsible for overseeing the day-to-day management of the Athletic Communications department, digital product of the Pace Sports Network operated under NE10Now and sponsorship, and marketing and branding efforts for the Pace University Setters (St. John's University Athletics, 2024). The second person I interviewed was Mike Winn, who is the Associate Athletics Director for Operations. He is in control of the day-to-day internal operations of the athletic department including overseeing aquatics, equipment, facilities, game operations, and the sports medicine department, and he is also the Head Coach of the Women’s Soccer Team (Pace University Athletics, 2024). The final person I interviewed was Jeremy Pouncey, who is the Assistant Athletics Director for Facilities and Campus Recreation. He is responsible for directing the Intramural and Recreation Department for the Pleasantville campus, while coordinating annual gym membership for the eight-year-old Goldstein Health, Fitness and Recreation Center (Pace University Athletics, 2024).

Two other potential interviewees are Matt Anthony, the Associate Athletic Director for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Compliance, or Alexa Fuentes, who is the Senior Vice President for Ticket Sales and Service for NY/NJ Gotham F.C. Alexa Fuentes is a reach for an interviewee but could potentially give crucial responses from a professional sports team standpoint. I asked all three interviewees the same five central questions in an in-person interview that lasted approximately 15 minutes. The questions were as follows:

1. Can you describe the process when you are hiring an employee into the athletic department, both students and other applicants?
2. How long does the process typically take when hiring and training new employees? Can you elaborate on what you think the connection is between the length of training on an employee’s effectiveness in the workplace?

3. How often do the employees receive training after being hired? Is it a one-time session, or do employees receive regular scheduled training?

4. What does the training process entail for the employees? Can you describe the impact you see of the training process on employee performance or motivation in the workplace?

5. What are the indicators that you have noticed when an employee seemed unmotivated or was not performing to expectations, if any?

These questions served as a basis for the interview, which allowed the Athletic Directors to add any additional information they thought was crucial during our conversation. The research protocol was approved by the IRB of Pace University. Each individual was sent a Research Participation Information Sheet prior to the scheduled interview and provided informed consent to participate and be recorded as part of this research study.

**Results**

The interviews I conducted led to a myriad of themes; however, there are three apparent and evident themes that overlap and connect to each other. The three major areas in which the prominent themes were found were in the hiring process, the training process, and the different indicators that can be identified when an employee was not performing. The most prominent theme in the hiring process was the significance of the duration of the process and how it is dependent on the eagerness of the individual. When addressing the training process, the major theme was the different types of training employees receive and how that impacts their
effectiveness. With each different type of training, there is a different amount of time each takes, which will reveal how determined the individual is if they take the time to do each different type of training. The last main theme stemmed from the input from all of the interviewees, where they shared what they believed to be the most evident indicators when an employee seemed unmotivated, thus not performing to expectations.

All three of my interviewees work or have worked in the Athletic Department at Pace University. As Athletic Directors, part of their specific job descriptions in hiring new employees, whether they be students or other professionals. Kristin Quinn elaborated on the hiring process from her perspective, and she said, “Well, this is for regular employees. We collect the resumes, and then we sort through them looking for the criteria for what meets the role we are filling.” Quinn discussed how long the process actually takes since she has to narrow down the candidates, and then have them come on campus to make them feel a part of the process. She emphasized how important it was to “match up their experience and their interests with what could benefit, and best be suited for the Athletic Department.” Thus, if the employee’s interests are aligned with the role, they are more eager and motivated to start. Similarly, Jeremy Pouncey is in charge of hiring students to work in Goldstein Fitness Center at the front desk and in the gym, as well as hiring event staff to work the numerous different sporting events on campus. Pouncey describes the process a little different than Quinn, as it has to do with students, but at its core, the hiring process is the same. Pouncey starts by expressing how “it really comes down to how determined the individual is. Sometimes the applicant is very eager to start, and they get everything done as soon as possible, within days.” From two different employer perspectives, it can be seen that there is a shift in responsibility from Quinn’s response to the response from Pouncey. Quinn makes it clear that it is strictly up to the employer whether or not the employee
is hired; however, Pouncey explained how it is on the employee and how eager they are for the position for the hiring process. Mike Winn also talks about how onboarding takes a long time but is “one of those things that you have to do because you want to make sure that new employees are equipped with all the tools they need to be successful.” The tone in Winn’s voice when he explained onboarding clearly emphasizes the importance of taking the time needed for the process. Evidently, it can be seen how the hiring process can take an extended period of time based on the eagerness and drive of the individual to start but is necessary in order to properly set the individual up for success. However, Winn mentioned how the Athletic Department “work[s] in collaboration with HR” to send out the job posting, and in addition, to bring the individual on once they are hired. Thus, HR and the Athletic Department work together through the hiring process.

Since each Athletic Director deals with different personnel during the hiring and training process, there are some differences in the training that they receive for their specific role; however, there is one common training program that employees must complete. This program is called SettersEd. Quinn explains this training process and emphasizes the importance of employees “always being updated processes, whether that be sexual harassment, diversity training, mental health, sleep training, etc.” She also mentions that this is a training process that all of the student-athletes complete as well; therefore, the employees are in tune with the students at the University. Winn also comments on SettersEd and describes it as “different types of training the University does to kind of keep us current on what’s going on like the industry, effective way to manage, how to deal with issues as they come up such as active shooting, diversity, harassment, etc.” SettersEd is a crucial training program that both the student-athletes and employees and staff, even the interviewees, must do in order to learn and keep themselves
educated on the current world which increase the employee’s effectiveness if they are properly 
educated, and this program is completed every month digitally. However, there is a different type 
of training that the student event staff, that Pouncey oversees, must endure in order to run a 
sporting event on campus effectively. Pouncey states that the “training is just on site. They are 
just told what to do, and what we expect out of them during their time there, and the more events 
they work, the more comfortable they are, the more of understanding of the expectation are in 
terms of us running a successful event.” Thus, as the event staff covers more sporting events, 
they will become more effective as it comes down to repetition, doing the right thing over and 
over again for a successful event. Both Pouncey and Winn are in similar agreement about finding 
a balance between the length of training and how effective the employee with be. Pouncey thinks 
that “any kind of training is huge in terms of how effective someone can be within their role. The 
more they know the more effective they are,” and he also comment, “knowledge is power.” 
Winn emphasizes how “each individual learns differently, and you have to spread it out a little 
bit because you don’t want to overwhelm somebody and just give them too much information at 
onece.” Evidently, taking the time to properly train an employee will allow them to obtain more 
knowledge and information because they are not overwhelmed, resulting in a more effective 
employee in the athletic department.

The third theme that emerged from these interviews is the indicators that were noticed 
when an employee seemed unmotivated, and there were three indictors that were common across 
all of the interviews, which are lack of interest, training, and communication. Quinn started by 
saying how “it is usually quite easy from a sports perspective. If you are losing interest in how 
teams are doing, if you are losing interest in the day to day, …, it become a little of a disconnect 
with your work, and your motivation at work.” Pouncey also saw the same indicator as he
described it as “not really involved in the role, lack of effort, not showing up on time, missing shifts,” and he stated that “there is a lack of interest of what they’re doing.” Both Quinn and Pouncey reveal how they have noticed that an employee was not motivated, which was indicated by their decreased interest in what they were doing in their role. One of the specific indicators noticed by Winn was the lack of training. Winn emphasized how “people being untrained and not having the tools or resources to help them to do their job” results in the effectiveness and motivation of an employee decreasing. The last indicator that was observed was the lack of communication. Quinn noticed how an employee, who was “very communicative, all of a sudden, they are not really communicating as well.” She identified this as an indicator of an employee being unmotivated because it is something that should not change, especially suddenly. Winn also noticed that an employee might become unmotivated if there is lack of communication and miscommunication in the job description. He said that “we have had mistakes where we have hired someone, and they thought the job was different.” Thus, they were not motivated to fill a role that they were not expecting to fill. Evidently, there are three indictors that were identified which are apparent when an employee seemed unmotivated or was not performing to expectations.

The results of these interviews align with my hypothesis as the time dedicated to proper HRM practices, which are hiring and training, directly impact the employee’s effectiveness and motivation in the sports industry. Introducing the identification of signs or indicators that professionals in the sports industry, specifically a University Athletic Department, expands on the research question as it reveals the underlying reasons why an employee is motivated or unmotivated. This data collected from the interview acts as confirmation of the idea posed in the research question regarding the application of skills from the training process.
Conclusion

The primary research conducted through semi-structured interviews reinforced the conclusions made in the literature review. Although all of the interviewees are Athletic Directors from one University Athletic Department, the information they shared can be used to draw conclusions about all other Athletic Departments across the country, as each one works similarly to another. This same idea can be seen in Cunningham and Mahoney’s (2004) journal article, where they conduct research regarding the importance of training within a Division I Athletic Department. Cunningham and Mahoney (2004) draw the same conclusion as the interviewees in that the information about the training programs and how it impacts the employee’s motivation and effectiveness is crucial and can be compared across other Athletic Departments.

Additionally, the primary research provided an avenue to ask new questions regarding the training and hiring of employees and how that impacts their motivation and performance in sports organizations. Specifically, the data from the primary research confirms that when employees are given the right tools and resources to succeed in training, they are able to apply them properly in action. However, the application of skills in unpredictable circumstances was not directly stated by the athletic directors during the collection of the data; therefore, it is unclear whether or not the lack of training affects the application of skills during these specific circumstances.

There are several parallels between the literature review and the responses from the interviewees. First, Elnaga and Imran (2013) focus their research study on setting clear goals and objectives for the employees during the training process as well as meeting the needs of the individual in order to have a positive outcome of training. Pouncey and Winn both emphasized
how important it was to set a clear job description and expectations in both the hiring and training process because the employee would be less overwhelmed with the training process and the training itself since the expectations were already given from the start.

Another significant connection can be found where Botke et al. (2018) discuss how training resources are wasted if the employee fails to use the knowledge from the training. After the interview with Quinn and Pouncey, it is clear that the failure to use knowledge from training is an indicator of an unmotivated employee, resulting in ineffective performance. Since the employee is failing to apply the knowledge from training in situations where it is necessary, the employee has lost the willingness and determination to do so that once was apparent, suggesting that the employee is not motivated.

The last parallel can be seen when Winn identified the indicator of lack of training or improper training in the interview conducted, and similarly, Ozkeser (2019) mentioned in his journal article how employees who are untrained are unmotivated because they feel as if they were not privileged or wanted throughout the initial training program. Thus, it is evident that there is a parallel between the indicator Winn discussed in the interview and the idea regarding untrained employees being unmotivated in Ozkeser’s (2019) research study from the literature review.

Throughout both the literature review and the primary research, a developed understanding of the impact of HRM practices, like the hiring and training process, on employee motivation and effectiveness in sports organizations can be obtained. While the training process might seem like the bigger issue when addressing employee motivation and effectiveness, there are underlying problems within both the hiring and training process that must be addressed in order to increase motivation, which in turn increases effectiveness and performance. Further
research into these underlying problems will help to prevent indicators, such as lack of interest or decreased communication, from occurring in the first place. Thus, it can be concluded that these indicators provide a warning that employee performance and motivation has decreased and will continue to do so in the future. In addition, it can be concluded that time dedicated to a proper training program reduces the risk of mistakes occurring during a sporting event, since the employee absorbed the information at a pace where they were not overwhelmed; therefore, the employee is motivated to perform beyond expectations.
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Appendix

Pace University, New York
RESEARCH PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET

Impact of Training on Employee Motivation and Performance in the Sports Industry

You are invited to participate in a research study. Participation is completely voluntary.

My name is Alyssa Macur. I am an undergraduate student in the School/Department of Lubin School of Business at Pace University working with my faculty advisor, Professor Katherine Richardson.

I would like to invite you to take part in my research study, which concerns the different problems and issues that may arise while working in the Sports Management Industry that stem from HRM. Specifically, there are many instances where organizations do not take the proper time and effort into training and orienting employees, resulting in employee dissatisfaction and lack of employee motivation.

If you agree to participate in my research, I will ask you 5 central questions in person that are as follows:

- Can you describe the process of when you are hiring an employee into the athletic department, both students and other applicants?
- How long does the process typically take when hiring and training new employees? Can you elaborate on what you think the connection is between the length of training on an employee’s effectiveness in the workplace?
- How often do the employees receive training after being hired? Is it a one-time session, or do employees receive regular scheduled training?
- What does the training process entail for the employees? Can you describe the impact you see of the training process on employee performance or motivation in the workplace?
- What are the indicators you have noticed when an employee seemed unmotivated or was not performing to expectations if any?

It should take about 15 minutes to complete and will be recorded.

_____ Yes, I agree to allow the research team to audio record my interview.
_____ No, I do not agree to allow the research team to audio record my interview.
______ Yes, I agree to allow the research team to video record (the study procedures/my interview/etc.)
______ No, I do not agree to allow the research team to video record (the study procedures/my interview, etc.).

Only members of my study team will know your identity. We will store your records in ways we think are secure. Paper files will be kept in locked filing cabinets. Electronic files will be stored in computer systems with password protection and encryption. However, we cannot guarantee complete confidentiality.

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me at 845-532-9145 or am57374p@pace.edu.

If you agree to take part in the research, please email me at am57374p@pace.edu to schedule the interview with a statement that you agree to have the interview recorded.