

Transforming NCAA Coaching Strategies: The Role of Sociological and Communicative Theories in Encouraging Evidence-Based Practices Adoption

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Abstract

Reimagining the role of sociological constructs and communicative paradigms in facilitating the uptake of evidence-based practices (EBPs) among NCAA coaches forms the cornerstone of the present discourse. The objective is to investigate how two theoretical perspectives can uncover the resistances to, and opportunities for, the enhanced integration of EBPs. Coaches' decisions are crucial in influencing student-athlete success, development, and team's overall performance. Thus, it is essential to understand coaches' reluctance towards embracing progressive approaches such as EBPs. We cast light on this query through the sociological theory of structuration and the theory of communicative action. Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration provides a unique lens to understand the space of EBPs within the NCAA community. This theory illuminates the shaping and reshaping of social practices, focusing on the interplay between human agency and social structure (Rose & Pennings, 2022). By applying this to NCAA coaching, the dynamics of EBPs' acceptance and hesitation can be better comprehended. Simultaneously, Habermas's (1981) theory of communicative action underscores the role of successful communication in altering behavior. In the context of EBPs uptake for NCAA coaches, primary focus is upon coaches' dialogue about their experiences, successful examples, and their apprehensions about implementing new practices (Monti et al., 2022). Despite its relevance, the adoption of EBPs among the NCAA coaching fraternity faces multiple challenges such as resource limitations, time constraints, and inconsistent stakeholder support. Therefore, it is imperative for sport administrators to play proactive roles in advancing the culture of evidence-oriented coaching. This could be accomplished through widening access to relevant sources of knowledge, investing in coaches' continued education, and implementing structures that support such a paradigm shift. The effective adoption of EBPs mandates a thorough understanding of social principles and the nuances of communication, which form the basis for a supportive, open, and adaptive environment. This discourse provides applicable examples of challenges associated with EBPs adoption and proposes strategies to overcome them. Keeping in view the long-term sustainability of NCAA sports and the importance of athlete development, promoters of collegiate sports must proactively commit to this transformative shift towards an evidence-based culture with their coaches.

References:

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