

Degree of motivation and satisfaction of a Spanish second division soccer team Grado de motivación y satisfacción de una plantilla de fútbol de la segunda división española

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Abstract. Introduction. In this article we present the results of an investigation that analyzes the degree of satisfaction of a professional Spanish soccer club. Professional satisfaction is the positive emotional state and enjoyment of a person with their work experiences. Methodology. The study is quantitative in nature, with data extracted from a questionnaire carried out by the coaching staff ($n=3$) and players from the first squad ($n=16$) of a Spanish second division team. Results. The results show us that, although the general feeling is of satisfaction with the profession, elements and factors appear that negatively affect this perception. Conclusions. Having the felt support of sports management, group cohesion and camaraderie could help improve satisfaction between the coaching staff and the players.

Keywords: Motivation; Professional satisfaction; Professional soccer; Elite soccer.

Resumen. Introducción. En el presente artículo presentamos los resultados de una investigación en la que se analiza el grado de satisfacción de un club profesional del fútbol español. La satisfacción profesional es el estado emocional positivo y de disfrute de una persona con sus experiencias laborales. Metodología. El estudio tiene un carácter cuantitativo, con datos extraídos de un cuestionario realizado por el cuerpo técnico ($n=3$) y jugadores de la primera plantilla ($n=16$) de un equipo de segunda división de España. Resultados. Los resultados nos muestran que, si bien el sentimiento general es de satisfacción con la profesión, aparecen elementos y factores que afectan negativamente a esta percepción. Conclusiones. Contar con el apoyo sentido de la dirección deportiva, la cohesión grupal y el compañerismo podrían ayudar a mejorar la satisfacción entre el cuerpo técnico y los jugadores.

Palabras clave: Motivación; Satisfacción profesional; Fútbol profesional; Fútbol de élite.

Introduction

Satisfaction with the job being done is an important predictor of professional performance. It is known to all that a happy and content worker is more productive, although the work psychology literature is not conclusive when it comes to establishing the relationships between professional performance and job satisfaction (Judge, Thoresen, Bono & Patton, 2001). Professional satisfaction can be defined as the positive and pleasant emotional state that a person experiences, as a result of the subjective perception of their own work experiences. Some authors (Spector, 1996; Weiss, 2002) define professional satisfaction as an attitude based on positive and negative judgments and the degree of enjoyment of a person with their work activity.

Job satisfaction is a widely studied variable in organizational psychology. From the theory of self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2009), intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are studied as a framework to

understand job satisfaction. Relying mainly on questionnaires, they study demographic factors, material conditions of work, and its intrinsic nature as predictors of job satisfaction. Deci and Ryan (1991) defend that there are 3 types of motivation: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and non-motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to the satisfaction inherent in the behaviour itself, that is, it is not carried out for any reason other than enjoyment and fun. These authors (Deci & Ryan, 1991) also propose four types of extrinsic motivation that vary according to the degree of autonomy: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and integrated regulation, while in non-motivation, there is no self-regulation possible. Following these contributions, Cruz and Boixadós (1999) have observed that the perception of the motivational climate of involvement in the task is related to greater satisfaction in training, with a perception of skill that is more self-referenced than normative and with an attitude favourable to fun.

Soccer is a cooperation / opposition sport, where players interact with each other to achieve objectives, both in attack and defense, where cohesion, communication and understanding between players must

be very high (Ródenas, 2015). In motivational climates of task involvement, coaches value and promote effort, progression, and cooperation among team members. Cohesion, understood as «a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency of a group not to separate and remain united in order to achieve its instrumental objectives or to satisfy the affective needs of its members» (Carron, Brawley & Widmeyer, 1998; Ródenas, 2015). For Ródenas (2015), these cooperation climates enhance the psychological well-being of the players, since they have greater confidence, better self-esteem and less anxiety. Competition in soccer involves the athlete facing situations of maximum activation that, repeatedly, can cause changes in their psychological characteristics and, therefore, influence their sports performance (Hevilla-Merino & Castillo-Rodríguez, 2018).

The predominant role that the coach has regarding the quality of the sporting experience is known. Maestre, Garcés, Ortín and Hidalgo (2018) indicate that the profile of the excellent coach could be defined by three dimensions: disciplinary, methodological and personal, including among their competences emotional balance, values, leadership capacity and efficient motivation; in addition to continuous training on soccer and proper organization and planning of training. Likewise, according to Falcon, Ortega and Moreno (2020), the training of coaches is very important in sports teaching by directly influencing the personal and sports development of athletes. The verbal behaviour of the coach is very important when presenting relationship with the perception of competence, motivation and performance of her players (Falcon et al., 2020). On the other hand, the fact that coaches punish mistakes, favor interpersonal competition, enhance rivalry between teammates and highlight only those with high ability, is related to lower psychological well-being, higher performance-related anxiety and lower satisfaction with sports performance environment (Duda & Balaguer, 2007; Ródenas, 2015).

López (2016) and López, Sánchez, Pulido and Amado (2016) indicated that the transition to professional sports is often seen by athletes as the most difficult transition and many of them confess that they failed in it. Footballers who, in addition to wanting to become professionals, consider achieving other achievements, both academic and in their private lives, have a healthier profile regarding the motivational processes of passion and satisfaction of basic psychological needs. Expectations have a positive influence on intrinsic motivation and

integrated regulation and negatively with no-motivation (López et al., 2016). For Olmedilla, Ortega, Boladeras, Ortín and Bazaco (2013), learning in psychological techniques such as activation control, relaxation and visualization is highly valued by athletes; even suggesting increasing the number of psychological training sessions. The study of emotional management and its relationship with the type of motivation in sport is a topic of great importance due to the repercussions it has on the athlete's health and on their sporting performance. The study of the psychological characteristics involved in the sporting experience and their influence on performance, as well as the involvement of emotions and emotional management in the sporting field are shown as a key research aspect (León, Quiles, Manchón, Marco & Cantón, 2018). There are few studies that have tried to integrate motivational and emotional aspects into the same explanatory model (Núñez, León & Martín-Albo, 2011). Thus, therefore, the study of psychological variables in the sports context is essential for the identification of the factors involved in the well-being and performance of athletes and teams (Vieira, Pizzo, Contreira, Lazier-Leão, Moreira, Rigoni & Nascimento, 2018).

For all this, the objectives of this research have been to know what is the level of motivation and professional satisfaction of a team of the SmartBank League (second division) with respect to their work and what are the elements and factors of their work that condition their professional satisfaction.

Methodology

Participants

For this research on the satisfaction of a soccer squad and its coaching staff, we included quantitative data extracted from a questionnaire. In the descriptive study, a total of 19 members participated, from the coaching staff ($n=3$) and players ($n=16$) from the first team of Real Racing Club de Santander of the SmartBank League (second division of Spain). The ages of these members of the professional soccer club ranged from 22 to 51 years, with a mean close to 32 years (31.58) and a standard deviation of 6.82. The average age of the technical staff is 40.7 years and that of the players 29.9 years. Years of experience ranged from 2 years (for a footballer) to 20 years (in the case of the coaching staff), with a mean of 12.11 years and a standard deviation of 5.45 (the difference between the coaching staff and the footballers is very scarce: 13.0 and 11.9, respectively). 100% of the participants in this survey were men.

Instrument and materials

To obtain information, they completed a questionnaire of 40 questions divided into 3 sections. The sections of the questionnaire were divided as follows (Table 1).

Questionnaire sections	Questions
Demographic aspects (7 items)	Age, gender, responsibility / role in the club, hours of weekly dedication and years of experience
General satisfaction (29 items)	Satisfaction with the current job, autonomy to develop the job, relationships with the club's management and colleagues, work environment, organization of training sessions, cooperation with the different agents that make up the club, the media and fans / followers
Aspects that improve and worsen job satisfaction (4 items)	Two items were established to name all those aspects that improve and worsen job satisfaction (free and open response)

All study factors were treated as continuous variables, and the response format used in all instruments was a Likert-type scale in which each item had a response range from 1 to 5. 1 corresponded to very little satisfied and 5 with very satisfied according to the formulation of the question. For some questions, the range of responses was from 1 to 3, with 1 being little satisfied / not adequate and 3 being satisfied / adequate. Likewise, in some items, given the formulation of the question, it was left as an open answer.

Procedure

In the first place, a letter was sent explaining the reasons for the survey to the coaching staff of the first team, and it provided the link with the survey that was intended to be carried out. This survey was uploaded to Google Drive and was active from March 15, 2020 to April 15, 2020, coinciding with the confinement decreed by the Government of Spain Royal Decree 463/2020, of March 14th (Government of Spain, 2020) due to the health crisis caused by COVID-19. Thus, the first phase consisted of a quantitative cross-sectional study based on the administration of a questionnaire to the staff of a professional second-division soccer team in Spain. Subsequently, the data was analyzed, a search was made for articles related to this topic in the Scopus, Dialnet and Google Academic databases, and the article was written.

The participants of this questionnaire were informed of the final objective of the study, and agreed to participate in it.

Analysis of data

For data analysis, the statistical program SPSS has been used, which allows work with a large amount of information, but also allows the analysis of smaller databases, as is the case. For the treatment of the information, a database was created with the results

obtained, made up of 45 variables, both numerical and literal. Once this base was obtained, a descriptive analysis of the data was carried out, based mainly on the study of frequencies and percentages, as well as the main descriptive statistics: mean, standard deviation, mode and other variables. There is, in general terms, a significant concentration of responses. In other words, the agreement between the opinions of the people surveyed is quite high. However, in some of the questions raised, a certain variability of responses has also been found, expressed in a greater standard deviation (for example, in the case of satisfaction with salary or with cooperation with the club's management).

Results

Regarding the question about the degree of satisfaction with their current job, the staff and the coaching staff indicated with 57.9% that they are very satisfied, 31.6% feel satisfied and 10.5% remain neutral. 94.7% are very satisfied or satisfied with their work in general. In a neutral position with the degree of satisfaction were a member of the coaching staff and a soccer player who plays defense in the team (Figure 1 and Table 2).

	Frequency	Percentage
1	0	0.0
2	0	0.0
3	2	10.5
4	6	31.6
5	11	57.9
Total	19	100.0

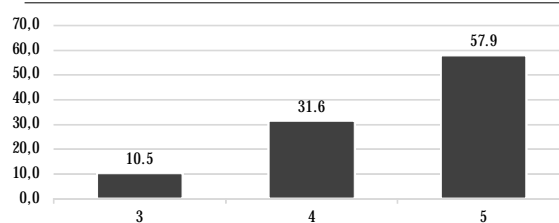


Figure 1. Degree of satisfaction with their job in general (%)

The hours of weekly dedication ranged from 10 to 70 hours, depending on whether they are players or coaching staff and the responsibility they have when making decisions. In the same way, some members of the staff indicated that these hours of dedication have been conditioned by the confinement situation due to COVID-19. All the participants in the survey were satisfied with their current situation regardless of the hours of weekly dedication, except for two respondents, one from the coaching staff and one player, who respectively dedicated more than 35 hours and 24 hours per week to their work. Likewise, 79% feel very satisfied or satisfied with the decision-making capacity

in their work. Likewise, 79% feel very satisfied or satisfied with the knowledge they have about soccer, being 21.1% those who remain in a neutral position. Regarding the coaching staff, 33.3% feel satisfied with the number of players in the squad and 66.7% remain in a neutral position.

Other variables that can influence professional satisfaction have been studied. Regarding holidays, 26.3% feel very satisfied, 21.1% satisfied, 42.1% remain neutral and 10.5% feel not very satisfied. Regarding the salary they receive, 10.5% feel very satisfied, 42.1% satisfied, 31.6% remain in a neutral position while 15.8% feel little or not at all satisfied with the remuneration they have in the club (Figure 2 and Table 3).

Table 3

Satisfaction with their salary

	Frequency	Percentage
1	2	10.5
2	1	5.3
3	6	31.6
4	8	42.1
5	2	10.5
Total	19	100.0

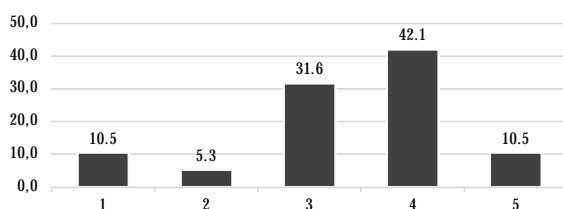


Figure 2. Degree of satisfaction with their salary (%).

On the other hand, 52.7% feel very satisfied or satisfied with the consideration and behaviour of the public, fans or followers, while 42.1% remain neutral and 5.3% feel not at all satisfied. 31.6% feel very satisfied or satisfied with the media's regard for their profession, 57.9% remain neutral and 10.6% feel little or not at all satisfied (Figure 3 and Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4

Satisfaction with the media's regard for their profession

	Frequency	Percentage
1	1	5.3
2	1	5.3
3	11	57.9
4	5	26.3
5	1	5.3
Total	19	100.0

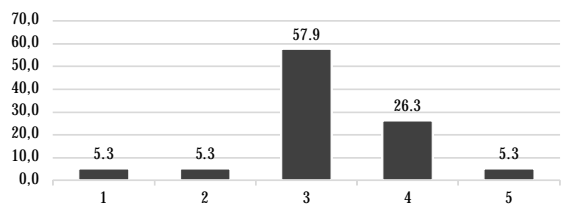


Figure 3. Degree of satisfaction with the consideration of the media towards their profession (%).

Discussion

The questions we intend to answer in this article have to do with the degree of satisfaction with their

work of a squad and coaching staff of a soccer club of the Spanish second division SmartBank League. In view of the data, we can indicate that the players and the coaching staff of this sports club are satisfied with the profession they exercise. The aspects that favor satisfaction have been the environment in training, that there is camaraderie and cooperation between both parties and at the same time it is demanding. The support of fans and the media, the good condition of the playing fields, the classification and results also influence in increasing the degree of satisfaction and personal well-being.

Following these contributions, Pulido, Sánchez, Sánchez, Amado and García (2018) indicated that the training environment created by the coach can be crucial for the satisfaction or frustration of basic psychological needs and, as a consequence, could play an important role in the sports commitment of young soccer players. Ureña, Chinchilla and Castillo-Rodríguez (2020) showed that young soccer players have fluctuations in motivation depending on the context that surrounds them, so that the coach must design tasks for training, using an appropriate and active methodology, very similar to the experiences soccer players encounter in competition, with problem solving and global tactical approaches, since intrinsic motivation greatly increases. Following these contributions, Pérez, Castaño, Sánchez, Rodríguez, Mena, Fuentes and Castaño Sáez (2018) pointed out that to increase motivation, the coaching staff should carry out workouts that have a high content of fun, teamwork and for the older players that pose a challenge. In the same way, Pérez, Sánchez and Urchaga (2015) indicated that when planning and carrying out a motivating intervention in training, playful, fun and competitive tasks must be carried out, in which it is necessary to

Table 5

Elements and factors related to staff satisfaction

Elements and factors	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Regular	Not satisfied	Not satisfied at all
Sports facilities	42.1%	57.9%	-	-	-
Facilities maintenance	31.6%	42.1%	21.1%	-	5.3%
Quality of the facilities	42.1%	42.1%	15.8%	-	-
Material equipment	26.3%	31.6%	36.8%	5.3%	-
Distance to facilities	57.9%	26.3%	15.8%	-	-
Schedule organization	47.4%	42.1%	10.5%	-	-
Number of training hours	47.4%	52.6%	-	-	-
Relations with the club's management	15.8%	31.6%	36.8%	5.3%	10.5%
Relations with the coaching staff (for players)	47.1%	41.2%	11.8%	-	-
Relations with the players (for the coaching staff)	41.7%	33.3%	25%	-	-
Work environment in the team	36.8%	57.9%	5.3%	-	-
Work climate in the club	21.1%	36.8%	31.6%	10.5%	-
Relationships with their teammates (players)	68.8%	25%	-	6.3%	-
Relations with their fellow staff (only for the coaching staff)	55.6%	33.3%	11.1%	-	-
Group collaboration / cooperation	47.4%	42.1%	10.5%	-	-
Collaboration / cooperation with the club's management	15.8%	31.6%	26.3%	21.1%	5.3%
Possibilities to influence their work	15.8%	52.6%	31.6%	-	-
Degree of control in their work	31.6%	42.1%	26.3%	-	-
Autonomy to develop their work	42.1%	42.1%	15.8%	-	-
Possibilities for professional development	31.6%	63.2%	5.3%	-	-

win and compete against other players. Boixadós and Cruz (2000) did not observe differences in satisfaction and motivation in the coaches depending on the category in which they train. According to Iglesias (2017) the coach can in this sense generate a climate that favours and optimizes the performance of athletes. Sánchez, Marcos, Sánchez, Alonso and García (2010) highlighted the importance of the coach when it comes to promoting, in the sports context, a climate that involves and is demanding with the tasks to be performed, with the aim of promoting practice reasons intrinsic to the activity itself, which will cause a more appropriate involvement by athletes. On the other hand, according to Falcon et al. (2020), the trained coach emits a greater number of messages than the untrained coach. The most used feedback by both coaches is descriptive. It is important to have effective guidelines for the transmission of information by coaches to improve the teaching-learning process in sports initiation. Vieira et al. (2018) concluded that the coach's relationship with his players is decisive so that the behaviour regulated by external factors does not negatively influence the perception of group cohesion in the context of soccer.

On the other hand, Kolayi^o and Çelik (2017) compared the levels of motivation and anxiety of 129 professional soccer players from the Turkish Super League. The data obtained in this research (Kolayi^o & Çelik, 2017) showed significant differences in somatic anxiety, intrinsic motivation to experience sub-dimensions of stimulation, identification and introjection. The levels of anxiety and motivation differ in terms of the league level of professional soccer players. Castro, Zurita, Chacón-Cuberos and Lózano (2019) state that motivation and anxiety represent fundamental psychological factors in the sports context, due to their close relationship with performance. It is important to pay attention to the existing associations between the perceived motivational climate and the anxiety levels of the athletes in the psychological training of the coaches of lower categories of soccer, promoting task-oriented motivational climates and intervening through the use of relaxation techniques in order to reduce anxiety levels (Castro et al., 2019). The results obtained in another study (Hevilla-Merino & Castillo-Rodríguez, 2018) indicated differences in motivation between categories and an inverse relationship between motivation and cognitive anxiety, which may be a determining factor of attention in soccer. For Olmedilla, García-Mas and Ortega (2017) athletes show a good ability to control stress, to properly manage the evaluation made of their

sports performance and a good motivation towards their sports practice, although with a margin of improvement that suggests implementing adequate training programs.

Matus, Molino and García (2020) showed that a soccer team during the regular season became more motivated as they won each game, but at the same time, their expectations of being victorious increased. Prieto and Valdivia (2019) pointed out that in teams that present a low score in motivation towards success and competitiveness, a decrease in the sports commitment variable is observed and, on the other hand, teams in promotion to another category have improved both their sporting commitment and their competitiveness throughout the season. For other authors (Martínez, Guillén & Feltz, 2016), the need for autonomy is the variable that best predicts the symptoms of exhaustion and commitment in soccer players. However, Usán, Salavera, Murillo and Megías (2016) analysed the relationships between motivation, sports commitment and physical self-concept and the results showed significant differences between the different levels of competitiveness and two behaviour profiles: the first characterized by a more self-determined behaviour (intrinsic motivation, sports commitment, sports enjoyment, opportunities for participation, competition, self-confidence) and the second is distinguished by a less adaptive behaviour (extrinsic motivation, motivation, social restrictions or attractive body, among others). Other researchers (Pérez & Guzmán, 2019), on the other hand, support the use of intervention strategies to improve intelligence in the game and develop self-determined motivation given their ability to predict the intention to practice and the relationships of athletes. In another study (de Oliveira, Nascimento, Vissoci, Ferreira, da Silva & Vieira, 2016) they pointed out that players with a professional profile present a higher degree of autonomous motivation, while players with a non-professional profile tend to be demotivated. Sánchez, Leo, Amado, Sánchez and García (2011) highlighted that the sport modality can be a determining factor of the type of motivation, commitment and sports behaviours shown by young athletes.

The study of psychological variables allows us to understand, together with the analysis of other variables, the relationship between sports performance and the athlete (González, Valdivia-Moral, Cachón & Romero, 2016). As conclusions, it is highlighted that psychological abilities influence sports performance; and that forwards and midfielders have higher motivation than other players (González et al., 2016). Psychological

training is one more form of sports training that, little by little, has been inserted into the work method of many athletes and sports teams. The results of other authors (Olmedilla, Ortega, Ortín & Andreu, 2008) indicate that both the satisfaction indices and the perception of applicability show a good assessment of the work done, as reflected by the opinions of the players. The psychologist's work must be adapted to the context in which it occurs; perhaps, in the absence of a more specific individualized work, the combination of both modalities may have served to improve, at least the perception of satisfaction and applicability of the work. On the other hand, Henriques (2013) revealed that burnout syndrome is negative and significantly correlated with quality of life and satisfaction with social support, competitive ranking, injuries, time spent getting to training, number of weekly workouts, the training period and their position in the game. The results of this thesis (Henriques, 2013) showed that third division forwards feel the burnout syndrome more, have less satisfaction with social support and have a lower perception of quality of life. Soccer players in the second division feel the impact of burnout syndrome less and have a better perception of quality of life. Players in the first league feel greater satisfaction with social support. Finally, in another investigation (Diez & Burillo, 2012) it is shown that players prefer, in all aspects, the practice of soccer on the natural grass surface, which also provides them with better performance in physical actions specific to soccer.

Conclusions

From the review of previous studies and research, some conclusions can be drawn that we synthesize as follows:

1. The results of the survey show that footballers and coaching staff are, in general, satisfied with their profession.
2. They value as positive aspects of their professional satisfaction their autonomy, self-efficacy, good conditions in the facilities and varied and adequate materials to carry out their work.
3. They value aspects such as companionship and that the training sessions are varied and demanding. They feel, in general terms, satisfied by the vacations and salary they have. They also value that the state of the pitch is in good condition.
4. Although, as a general rule, they feel satisfied, the survey indicated that relations, cooperation and

collaboration with the club's management, sports management and some media could be better.

5. Although the club is going through a difficult situation in the SmartBank League classification (relegation positions to second division B), the survey data indicated that sports results, classification and personal achievements can greatly influence their degree of satisfaction in the profession.

6. There are numerous studies on soccer that analyse sports performance variables, but fewer deal with aspects of the satisfaction of professionals in this field.

Study limitations

One of the main limitations of this study has been the dates on which the survey was passed. This survey was active during the period of confinement decreed by the Government of Spain due to the health crisis of COVID-19. In this way, the hours of training indicated by some footballers were conditioned by such effects. The survey did not study other circumstances of playing minutes and other statistics. The degree of satisfaction with this variable or other personal or family variables that were not studied could be conditioning

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