

Original Research

Soccer for Peace in Jordan: A qualitative assessment of program impact on coaches

Jacob W. Cooper¹, Lindsey C. Blom², Lawrence H. Gerstein³, Dorice A. Hankemeier⁴, Tacianna P. Indovina³

¹ Ball State University, School of Physical Education, Sport, Exercise Science & Boston University, USA

² Ball State University, School of Physical Education, Sport, Exercise Science, Sport & Exercise Psychology, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, USA

³ Ball State University, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Department of Counseling Psychology, USA

⁴ Ball State University, School of Physical Education, Sport, Exercise Science, Athletic Training, USA

Corresponding author email: lcbloom@bsu.edu

Abstract

The increased use of sport as a vehicle for development and peace has resulted in the creation and implementation of specific sport-for-peace programmes world wide.¹ The purpose of this study was to qualitatively investigate the personal and professional impact of a sport for development programme on six Jordanian soccer coaches. The primary objective of the Soccer for Peace and Understanding in Jordan² programme was to teach coaches how to develop citizenship behaviours and conflict resolutions skills in their athletes through the game of soccer. Specifically, this study aimed to give a voice to the participants in an effort to better understand their experiences and improve future programing. Through the use of one-on-one interviews and the consensual qualitative analysis method, domains, core ideas, and categories were identified from the shared experiences of the participants. The coded domains of *Programme Experience*, *Programme Impact*, *Coaching Philosophy*, *Approach to Diversity*, *Sub-Cultural Norms*, and *Programme Evaluation* were then cross analyzed and subsequently revealed that the participants felt that they learned skills that they have used and will continue to use related to promoting peace within their sport-based responsibilities.

Background

Over the past two decades reports by the United Nations

(UN) inter-agency task force on sport-for-development and peace have led to the remobilization of sport-based strategies and programs aimed at the comprehensive facilitation of sustainable pro-social development.³ Although the style of these programs varies, their primary purpose remains relatively similar: to decrease conflict and increase harmony across the world through the implementation of physical activity.⁴ Some sport-for-development and peace (SDP) programs have achieved this goal by using sport as a way to safely construct and adjust behaviours that take place during athletic competition and every day life.⁵ Other programs have achieved this goal simply by using sport as a form of therapy or taking advantage of the raw convening power athletics to bring awareness to another cause.⁶

Additionally, the growth of the SDP movement has brought with it a number of important theoretical frameworks (e.g., post-colonialism, critical race theory, hegemony theory) that have been widely used as fundamental philosophies within the field. Furthermore, the social and political underpinnings within the SDP movement should be carefully examined before the commencement and evaluation of a specific program.⁷ Therefore, it is important to note that the qualitative analysis of the Soccer for Peace and Understanding in Jordan² (SPUJ) programme put forth in this study was rooted in the framework of hegemonic theory. Hegemonic theory has shown to be a useful infrastructure for the study of sport-for-development as it brings about vital attention to the manor in which the disparity of mobile capital creates impoverished conditions.⁸ This means that the

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well-intentioned and benevolent ‘mission’ of the procedures discussed in this research operated off the idea that in order to better assist the disempowered, an establishment of a dichotomy between those with access to resources (e.g., knowledge, financial capital, proper training) and those without such resources is necessary in order to achieve the greatest outcomes.⁹

Recently, similar frameworks have been utilized to conduct research evaluating SDP programs in South Africa.¹⁰⁻¹¹ These studies have helped shed light on not only methods for evaluating SDP programs but also on the best practices and challenges of current programs. For example, challenges such as insufficient familial support, insufficient infrastructure, and race/class perceptions were discovered and explored as impediments to the obtainment of SDP goals within underserved communities.¹⁰ These conditions were cited by participants as possible reasons that might impede on programme outcomes because the targeted population was often forced into adult responsibilities despite the absence and lack of support from actual adults.¹⁰ Conversely, Gannett et al.’s research has provided a set of suggestions based off of a study conducted at an international soccer tournament in Johannesburg.¹¹ This study successfully investigated the experiences of youth and adults with an SDP model programme. The study concluded the following five recommendations for future programs: a) systematically formulate desired outcomes; b) formalize a curriculum and training plan; c) prioritize social values over match outcomes during implementation; d) conduct pilot projects in a range of settings over an extended period of time; e) emphasize monitoring and evaluation to assess effectiveness and impact. Thus, these suggestions should be considered in the successful implementation of future SDP programs.

In addition to the five aforementioned recommendations, an important component of programme implementation is training the coaches. Over the past four decades, coach education and training programs have been developed to provide practical sport-specific and pedagogical instruction to coaches aspiring to deliver more intentional, holistically positive outcome-based instruction.¹² In a similar light, trainings for youth workers involved in Positive Youth Development (PYD) programs have emerged in several varieties. This is due to the fact that the learning needs of coaches can often be heavily contextualized and thus require a versatile curriculum that can create meaningful learning experiences across several levels of competency. Specifically, training programs have prioritized the integration of the democratic exploratory coaching style as it has shown evidence of providing meaningful learning

experiences for the adolescents they serve.¹³ The democratic style of coaching transfers more choice and empowerment to the entire team as opposed to the traditional authoritarian “top down” approach. This dispersal of power then helps facilitate high levels of personal and social responsibility and therefore higher salience of life skills involving conflict resolution, empathy, and self-awareness.¹³

Although the aforementioned studies have provided valuable knowledge along with examples to model, the empirical data on SDP programme effectiveness remains limited, specifically with research gaps in programme evaluation, cross-cultural considerations, and long-term societal impact of interventions. The current researchers set out to augment the discoveries found in studies like Whitely et al. and Gannett et al. via qualitatively investigating coach’s perspectives on their experiences within the SPUJ programme along with the impact upon their professional and personal lives.¹⁰⁻¹¹

Programme Context

Of specific interest to this project was the country of Jordan. Jordan is a kingdom on the East Bank of the River of Jordan in Western Asia bordering Saudi Arabia to the southeast, Iraq to the east, and Syria to the north. Jordan is a critical player in regional peace and stability, especially with regard to the Israel and Palestine crisis.¹⁴ Jordan provides the U.N. critical military intelligence and assistance in the war on terrorism, is at peace with all of its neighbours, is a favored training site for students in Arabic and Middle Eastern studies, and it is an important contributor in the liberalization of Middle Eastern economics.

Although Jordan contains hundreds of tribes and villages, this study included participants from three areas: Amman, Zarqa, and Ajloun. Amman is the country’s political, cultural and commercial focal point while also being one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world.¹⁴ Known as a beacon for growth and understanding in the country of Jordan, Amman has maintained a moderate, non-ideological and revolution-adverse political culture despite the domestic instability that has recently engulfed much of the Middle-East.¹⁴ Located to the northeast of Amman, Zarqa is much smaller than the capital city. Zarqa remains very conservative and traditional in regards to its political, religious and social climate.¹⁴ Although not as conservative as Zarqa, Ajloun is another village deeply rooted in history and tradition and is located even farther north.¹⁴ Well known for its impressive ruins throughout the village, Ajloun holds

one of the highest ratios of Muslim populous of all the villages at nearly 95%.¹⁵

Overall, the country of Jordan is considered one of the Arab world's most cosmopolitan and progressive countries.¹⁴ Jordan's education and foreign policy systems are arguably some of the strongest in the world.¹⁴ Jordanian culture is best exemplified through its spoken language, values, beliefs and reputation for stability and tolerance.

Concurrently, and of specific interest to this study, the culture of Jordan was found to promulgate an authoritative coaching philosophy where outcome-oriented goals were emphasized over holistic process goals. Jordan has a history of authoritarian leaders, thus offering a possible explanation for the prevalence of this "command style" of coaching.¹⁶

Approximately 150 Jordanian coaches and 300 athletes from the aforementioned villages participated in three primary phases of the SPUJ programme during its two-year duration (2012 – 2014). During these three phases, three training workshops took place (two in Jordan and one in the United States) with the implementation of the curricula through clinics, cultural exchanges, practice sessions and mentoring programs. The program was in its second year of existence and final training workshop when the data collection took place for the current study. Utilizing a "train the trainer" approach, the programme relied on the Human Development (HD) curriculum created by the Indiana Soccer Association. The HD curriculum strives to develop good citizens through the game of soccer by teaching coaches how to use common soccer drills to deliberately emphasize responsibility, respect, leadership, wellness, integrity and honour among their athletes. The SPUJ programme drew from the HD curriculum along with technical and tactical soccer information adapted from the U.S. Soccer Federation "E" coaching license material, which includes information on methods of coaching soccer, technical skills, tactical aspects, strength and conditioning, psychology and nutrition.² The programme also emphasizes techniques on developing peaceful living skills such as empathy, personal responsibility, understanding conflict and communicating effectively.² The programme was run by five specialists from a variety of disciplines: a) the project director, a professor whose background was in sport psychology, coaching and soccer; b) a peace and counseling psychologist; c) a soccer coaching educator with over 30 years of coaching experience; d) a strength and conditioning expert and coaching education professor; and e) a religion professor who had extensive experience with the Jordanian culture. Thus, the purpose of this study was to qualitatively investigate the personal and professional impact of the SPUJ

programme on six Jordanian soccer coaches who participated in all three phases of the programme. Specifically, the researchers aimed to give a voice to the participants in an effort to better understand their experiences and improve future programming.

Method

Participants

Ten coaches met the inclusion criteria for this project: a) consider the country of Jordan to be their home, and b) have participated in the majority of all sessions throughout all three phases of the SPUJ programme. The sample included six Jordanian youth soccer coaches: three men and three women, ages 29-44 (see Table 1).

Instruments

In order to answer the research question, Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR)¹⁷ methodology was implemented, which included a research team and interview guide. A myriad of qualitative methodologies were explored (e.g., comprehensive process analysis, discourse analysis, & focus groups); however, the methodology of CQR was decided upon for the following reasons: a) the collaborative team approach to analysis allowed the data to be coded by individuals from multiple ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, which included individuals with specializations in Jordanian culture and the Arabic Language; and b) the use of an external and internal auditor along with the multitude of triangulation techniques implored by the CQR methodology was determined to be the best way to ensure dependability, transferability and trustworthiness in the studies results.

Research Team

When implementing the methodology of CQR, researchers serve as the primary instrument used in data collection.¹⁷ The primary investigator (PI), a 24-year-old male graduate student from the United States of America, traveled to Jordan to conduct all of the interviews. He was trained for this research venture over the course of eight months prior to the trip through both exposure to the second phase of the SPUJ programme and the completion of two graduate research methods courses, one of which specifically focused on the understanding of qualitative research and the implementation of the CQR methodology. The PI also conducted a pilot study with U.S. participants in the programme and constructed training exercises for the research team.

Table One: Participant Information

	Age	Gender	Background	Coaching Level	Future Goals
Participant One	44	Male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ From a rural village ▪ Coaches male athletes ages 14-17 ▪ Coached for six years 	Coached mid-level club based teams	Plans to coach for at least two more years
Participant Two	29	Male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Currently a student at a well-known Jordanian University ▪ Coaches male athletes between the ages of 12 and 14 in Amman ▪ Coached for four years 	Coached lower level school-based club teams	Plans to coach as long as possible
Participant Three	33	Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ From a large city ▪ Coaches Jordanian female youth at the national level ▪ Coached for nine years 	Coached national level youth teams	Plans to continue coaching for as long as possible
Participant Four	29	Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ From a rural village ▪ Teaches and coaches at a small school for male and female athletes ages 12-16 ▪ Coached for two years 	Coached lower level school-based club teams	Plans to continue coaching and teaching for as long as possible
Participant Five	52	Male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ From a large city ▪ Coached at the national level 	Coached national level youth teams	Plans to continue coaching for the remainder of his professional career
Participant Six	32	Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ From a moderate-size village ▪ Teaches and coaches at a large university with both male and female athletes between the ages of 8 and 12 	Coached mid-level university based club teams	Plans to continue coaching for at least the next two years

Upon return from fieldwork, the PI was joined by a team of selected individuals who aided in the analysis of the data. The team consisted of the PI, two graduate students with no involvement with the SPUJ programme and two doctoral students with extensive involvement with the SPUJ programme. One of the research team members was also a native Jordanian who was fluent in both English and Arabic.

External and internal auditors were also used during the process of data analysis to ensure objectivity and development that maintained the initial purposes and objectives of the study. The external auditor for this project was the director and founder of the SPUJ programme. The auditor's experience implementing sport as a tool for peace and development along with her comprehensive understanding of the programme made her an ideal candidate, although with an obvious bias. The strengths of her knowledge of the field and programme offered a perspective that could not have been obtained otherwise. These strengths and biases were considered heavily prior to the implementation of any of the auditor's suggestions. The internal auditor for this project was a research team member who was a native Jordanian, spoke both English and Arabic and had worked as an interpreter for the SPUJ programme.

Interview Guide. The interview guide consisted of a total of ten primary questions plus probes. The first three questions focused on participants' personal experiences within the programme and personal and professional impact, while the next five questions were more specific about the details of the potential programme impact. The last two questions were evaluative in nature, focusing on coaches' challenges and recommended changes to the programme.

Procedure

Data were collected in March of 2013 based on a CQR procedure adapted from Hill et al.¹⁷ All participants signed an informed consent form in their native language the first day of data collection. The interviews, which included an interpreter, lasted between 28 - 42 minutes and were audio and video recorded. Although translation is clearly vital for the process, it provides opportunities for mistranslation and misunderstanding. To protect the study's level of trustworthiness, the PI met with the interpreter the day before the interviews to go over the script and discuss the importance of translating the questions and responses verbatim and not changing or adding any of their own insights or opinions. Member checking was also instituted throughout the interview as the PI often summarized the participants' responses and asked if he was accurately

depicting the participants' experiences.

Research Design and Analyses

CQR involves four steps in data analysis: 1) transcribing and coding of interviews; 2) developing domains constructed using the responses provided in the interviews; 3) constructing core ideas (abstracts or brief summaries) for all the material within each domain for each case; and 4) conducting a cross analysis which involves developing categories to describe consistencies in the core ideas within domains across cases is conducted.¹⁷ Figure 1 illustrates how this process was applied in this study.

Transcribing and coding of interviews. After the PI returned from collecting data in Jordan, all interviews were transcribed in English by a hired transcriptionist. Each transcript was then emailed to the corresponding participant as a way to member check for accuracy. Five of the six participants responded by agreeing that the transcript reflected their true words, and that they felt comfortable with its accuracy. One coach was non-responsive after four attempts of contact through electronic mail.

Developing domains. During the research teams' initial meetings, the team established the primary domains or different topic areas observed in the data. Eight domains were identified after the team members rigorously explored several different ways of initially segmenting and organizing the data. The evolution of the domains is documented throughout the following sections, beginning with the independent coding of Interview 1.

During step one of the domain development process (see Figure 2), each research team member took the first interview and independently assigned each piece of data (i.e., everything ranging from a phrase to several sentences all related to the same topic) from the first selected transcript to an independently entitled domain. The research team then met and found that their independently titled domains were quite similar in meaning but often different in verbiage. The team then constructed a master list of domains that combined the essence and meaning of all the independently coded domains into six agreed upon titles. The titles of each domain were debated until a consensus of at least three out of five members was reached.

Once each team member had independently coded the first transcript for a second time, the team met and discussed the codes. At the conclusion of this meeting, the team had a

Figure One: *Consensual Qualitative Research Data Analysis Progression (*RTM- Research Team Member)*

Step 1: Each RTM independently coded first transcript for domains.

Step 2: Research team met to discuss their independently identified domains and then constructed a consensually excepted master list. Transcript was then recoded by all RTM's using only the master list.

Step 3: Master list of domains and consensually coded first transcript were brought to the auditor for review and confirmation.

Step 4: Research team made necessary adjustments and changes to the domains.

Step 5: Each RTM independently coded the second transcript, using the now audited master list.
Step 4 was repeated for all remaining transcripts.

Step 6: Research team discussed the formation of core ideas and began the implementation of consensus on data.

Step 7: Core ideas formed for each domain in every transcript and were separated into formerly identified categories. Categories audited by external auditor.

Step 8: Research team discussed participant cases and changes made in audit. Agreed on the quotes that embody the essence of each category.

Step 9: Final themes and "essence quotes" identified and emailed to participants to see if they felt they accurately represent their views/experiences.

Figure Two: Final Categories: General

Theme	Quote
Theme 1: Program impacted participants' professional and personal development. Frequency: General 6/6	"The program provided me with a self-development opportunity and an eye-opening experience regarding conflict resolution among players as well as people in real life. Furthermore, I believe it [the program] added something new...the way I'm being more patient...the way I analyze the information...the way I accept others."-P5
Theme 2: Participants experienced an increase in empathy and a deeper understanding of diversity as a result of the program. Frequency: General 6/6	"Thanks to the program I learned to pay more attention to anyone who was being ignored or left out, I would encourage him to become the captain...I support them so that they won't feel inferior and isolate themselves."- P4
Theme 3: Application of conflict resolution skills were a result of participation in the program. Frequency: General 6/6	"The same way, each student should listen to his colleague, with less talking...and when the student, who started the problem, finishes talking, I'll then talk...when they listen to each other, they can figure out what is the main reason for the problem...they may resolve the conflict between them...in case they couldn't resolve the problem...if they were willing to resolve the conflict on their own and interfered, they might get upset. So, I give them a chance to solve the problem, if they were successful, this would be good. If not, I'll help them solve it."-P6
Theme 4: The participants were comfortable and enjoyed all phases of the program, especially the exchange trip to the U.S. during phase two of the program. Frequency: General 6/6	"The first phase was about understanding and peace among countries and people...and religions...and accepting each other more...the third phase was all about training,, which was very useful...and even the scientific information...we had some information, but the one we gained was up-to-date...we had an old way of approaching the players; now we have an updated one...even me, I felt much more comfortable. Overall I'm very, very happy from the experience I gained because I learned a lot...for my children."- P6
Theme 5: Participants experienced challenges in the application of program curriculum due to national and international differences in cultural norms. Frequency: Typical 4/6	"Our culture reinforces that we should win every time...So we need to admit, we Arab, or Oriental coaches, that we still use "orders" in our coaching styles...we don't try to learn or teach the kids the "exploring style". The challenges were related to politics around the world...to be honest with you, being on good terms with the West is not always well received throughout Jordan and that created a challenge for us"- P5
Theme 6: Cooperation and player enjoyment are strong components of the participants' coaching philosophy. Frequency: Typical 5/6	"Winning is the basis...we always look for winning.... however, in a legitimate way...everyone who is involved in soccer loves to win...but for me, winning is not just scoring more goals than the other team...winning is to see my players have acquired new skills...and at the same time, to feel that I have accomplished something as a coach. We are reinforcing among players that soccer is not only about winning or losing...sometimes you win...and other times, you lose...however, each time you are learning...and we are trying to teach the players that we are not training you for just one year; we are training you for the future -P5
Theme 7: Future programming can be improved Frequency: General 6/6	Refer to 7A, 7B, 7C
Theme 7A: The participants generally suggested that the program could be improved by extending the time of the exchange trip in the United States United States. Frequency: 6/6	"The phase in the USA was better than the first phase. The first phase gave me the training; but the most benefit was in the USA. And now, we have learnt how to control big group of players"-P2
Theme 7B: The participants variantly suggested that the program could be improved by specifying the curriculum to the different districts of Jordan. Frequency: Variant 3/6	"I recommend each district be given specific attention for their needs and resources available...because each district is very different and some of things we learned would only work in certain places... and there would be more exchange visits, since such visits are eye-opening"-P1
Theme 7C: The participants rarely suggested that the program could be improved through increased communication between the participants and the directors of the program. Frequency: Rare 2/6	"To have better communication among us participants and the captains would have been ideal, there were times when it felt like only the captains knew what was going on. This made it so people trailed off or lost out on teachings."- P4

final coded version of the first transcript that was then reviewed by the external auditor. The suggestions made by the external auditor were then discussed and voted upon by the research team. A three out of five majority was needed for any changes to be implemented to the coding. Upon finalization of the first transcript, the team members independently coded the additional five transcripts and met once a week to discuss, debate and come to a consensus on the coding.

Core ideas constructed. After all six transcripts were coded with each piece of data categorized, the research team summarized the content of each domain for a given participant. This process was conducted for each domain in every transcription with the aim to capture the essence of the coaches' statements in a few concise sentences. Once the team members formed these core ideas independently, they came together as a group to discuss their ideas until consensus for each core idea was reached.

Cross analysis. Finally, the team examined all of the formed core ideas within each domain to determine how the core ideas clustered into categories. This was a rigorous process in which the team worked to establish all of the possible categories and also to identify the quotes that best represented each category. The determination of these final categories was discovery-oriented.¹⁸ Once the categories were established, the research team sent them to the participants in an effort to triangulate the data. Five of the six participants responded by agreeing that the discovered categories accurately summarized and reflected their experience. One coach was non-responsive after four attempts of contact through electronic mail.

External Audits. Throughout the data analysis process, the external auditor completed systematic audits of the research team's work. As previously mentioned, the first audit took place after the domains were identified and the second audit took place after the core ideas were assigned to each domain. The separate domain documents were presented to the auditor to again ensure the work of the research team was remaining close to the project's original purpose. The third and final audit took place after the final categories were identified and organized. The auditor carefully examined the cross analysis and thought carefully about whether the categories created were adequate in capturing the essence of the core ideas listed.

Results and Discussion

Through the CQR emergent design, the research team

identified seven categories relating to the impact of the SPUJ programme. The frequency of a category was identified as one of the following: (a) General: category pertained to all participant interviews; (b) Typical: category was relevant to at least four but no more than five participant interviews; (c) Variant: category was found in precisely three interviews; or (d) Rare: category applied to only two participant interviews.

While this study provides evidence for the effectiveness of a SDP programme, it is important to consider the methodological limitations. In this study, the PI was only able to spend one week during the third phase of the programme to collect data. Ideally, qualitative researchers would spend extensive time in the field, conducting several hours of interviews per participant to ensure data saturation and transferability.¹⁹ However, since this was not possible in this study, measures were taken to ensure credibility and transferability as mentioned earlier. A second limitation involves the selection bias present as four of the potential participants did not volunteer to be interviewed; thus, all perceptions and experiences were not represented. The experiences of these individuals may or may not have affected the themes and conclusions that were discovered in this study, but the six individuals who participated may have been more inclined to share the positive impact of the programme than the four who did not.

Category 1: The programme impacted participants' professional and personal development (General)

Throughout the shared experiences of all participants, examples were given of how the programme impacted their professional and personal development. Personal development is instrumental for all parties involved with the implementation of sport-based development programmes.²⁰ Coalter²⁰ also provided reassurance that personal development is one of the most valuable results of participation in an SDP program. However, while discussing this result it is important to provide a specific definition of personal development, as the term can sometimes be rather vague and broad, ranging from outcomes like peace achievement at the local or national level or changed individual approach to diversity via community-level social cohesion.²⁰ For the purposes of this study, personal development was defined as the facilitation or growth in skills that are linked to positive character traits. This type of development, when transferred to youth, can eventually assist in learning the necessary lessons to becoming a good citizen and responsible adult.²¹

Through the results, it was evident that participation in the SPUJ programme impacted both the professional and personal development of the coaches. The core ideas in this category specifically reflected skill acquisition and increased knowledge of drills and lessons that taught perspective-taking, empathy and conflict resolution. The strongest example of this category could be seen in the shared experience of Participant Four when he described his experience.

The programme provided me with a self-development opportunity and an eye-opening experience regarding conflict resolution among players as well as people in real life. Furthermore, I believe [the programme] helped me to view conflict differently . . . although I never want to start conflict . . . now, when it happen . . . I view conflict as an opportunity to teach . . . to understand . . . and to help others handle it.

This experience also was bolstered by the shared experiences of Participants Five and Three. Both coaches shared stories of how their teams and schools had benefited from the implementation of the learned drills. Participant Five indicated a dramatic quantifiable impact upon his team along with an example of how his personal development was impacted as a result of participation in the SPUJ programme.

After we came back from the U.S., we had a festival and tried to apply the concepts that we learnt . . . we faced many problems with players regarding winning and losing . . . we used to have meetings with them...and we started asking them: you lost the game, but can you play again in the future? . . . they replied: yes, we can . . . and we tell them: just like the other team won, you should try to win next time . . . and it is your natural right . . . so he used to accept the situation, and continue the practice to achieve good results . . . and throughout last year, conflict percentage, in the team that I train, has been reduced 50%. It has even impacted me while dealing with my family . . . I previously had a very passive and rigid personality . . . but now I smile with all my heart . . . I used to be shy to dance, but now, if the situation requires, I dance . . . I didn't feel that it's normal to dance!

This category was additionally supported as participants reflected how their experience in their roles as coaches, teachers, family members and citizens were impacted as a result of participation in the programme. Participant Three reflected on how her participation in the programme changed the way she approached problems and conflict throughout her everyday life.

I believe [the programme] added something new . . . the way I'm being more patient . . . the way I analyze the information . . . the way I accept others . . . And an important point is that regardless of linguistic, religious, or racial differences with others, there is definitely something common, and you can exchange points of view with them.

Category 2: Participants experienced an increase in empathy and a deeper understanding of diversity as a result of the programme (General)

Sport has the ability to work as a universal language capable of breaking down divides and cross-cultural boundaries, while also encouraging peaceful interactions when it is deliberately developed and implemented.⁴ This category showed how this universal language aspect of athletics was utilized through the SPUJ programme to foster deeper empathy and an understanding of diversity among its participants. Similar evaluations of sport for development programmes also have noted increases in empathy among their participants; furthermore, these increases were sometimes noted as unintentional yet overwhelmingly positive effects within the population.²²

Specifically, this category revealed that participation resulted in an increased value in empowering marginalized populations. Coaches mentioned being empowered to help Syrians, Iraqis and those living in areas where fewer resources were available, like Al-Risayfeh (near Zarqah). The essence of this category is best exhibited through the words of Participant Two:

Thanks to the programme I learned to pay more attention to anyone who was being ignored or left out, I would encourage him or her to become the captain . . . I support them so that they won't feel inferior and isolate themselves.

Additionally, this category was supported by more specific examples of actions taken by the coaches to advocate for marginalized individuals. Participants Two and Six shared individual stories that demonstrated increased consideration of others. In the story shared by Participant Two, a student was being belittled in front of his peers by another coach on account of his skin color. He responded to this situation:

Once a teacher called an African American student "a black slave" . . . so I scolded the teacher . . . the teacher got upset . . . and I told him this is a human being regardless of his skin colour . . . although the teacher got upset, I feel I have won the student and prevented a future problem.

In a similar fashion, Participant Six offered a personal example of increased empathy when she told the story involving the inclusion of one of her disabled students:

The programme had a great impact. . . even that I transferred my thoughts and ideas, not only to my school . . . but to other schools . . . for example, I left the school I was working at . . . I went to another school . . . I faced many challenges . . . there was a disabled girl, with special needs . . . she didn't play . . . if I didn't go through this training, I wouldn't have given her the appropriate attention, I would tell her that "it's very risky for you to play; you would easily fall. You should sit down" . . . and this will certainly hurt her feeling . . . so I tried to include her, and not make her feel that she is sick . . . she really liked to play with the other girls . . . and she told me: "teacher, this is the first time I play!"

Finally, this category was further exemplified in the way the participants expressed viewing soccer as an international game and as a vehicle for promoting peace regardless of belief and religion.²¹ This aspect of athletics has been labeled as convening power, and Green²¹ also identified the international reach of sports as one of the most untapped resources in promoting peace in the world today. Participant Five and Six both expressed this potential during their explanation of what they experienced during their time in the programme:

During the programme I witnessed how we must love each other . . . whether we are Muslims or Christian. We should love each other because we all at the end belong to one creator. - Participant Five

I saw the harmony there (in the U.S.) among different religions. There is Christianity, and Islam. They are living together and respecting each other in an impressive way. From human development, yes, we understand, love and respect each other. I ask each member of the team not to intrude in the others' privacy. - Participant Six

Category 3: The application of conflict resolution skills were a result of participation in the programme (General)

Successful sport for development programmes suggest that direct participation in a SDP programme can increase conflict resolution skills like developing empathy, listening actively, valuing diversity and considering common ground.²³⁻²⁵ However, assessing the actual application and result of conflict resolution skills learned can be quite difficult.²² This study provided qualitative evidence that

suggested that programme participants were successfully applying conflict resolution skills taught in the programme. Coalter²⁰ suggests that conflict resolution and inter-cultural understanding are strong components of peace, and that successful sport for development programmes place importance on developing conflict resolution skills. Specific to this programme, peace is fundamentally described as a positive social condition where destruction is minimized and human well-being is promoted.²⁶ Furthermore, peace was viewed as a multifaceted phenomenon that can be found in an individual's state of mind, physical being and societal structure.²⁶

While searching for patterns within the core ideas of all participants, it became apparent that each coach had adopted a new perspective when dealing with conflict. Several participants specifically mentioned a newfound emphasis on perspective taking as the primary factor for this association. Participant Six best exemplified this new perspective by sharing about how she went about resolving conflicts with her team based on what was learned in the programme,

The same way, each student should listen to his colleague, with less talking and when the student, who started the problem, finishes talking, I'll then talk . . . when they listen to each other, they can figure out what is the main reason for the problem. They may resolve the conflict between them. In case they couldn't resolve the problem. If they were willing to resolve the conflict on their own and interfered, they might get upset. So, I give them a chance to solve the problem, if they were successful, this would be good. If not, I'll help them solve it.

Not only did coaches note how their approach to conflict resolution changed, they also remarked on the changes they witnessed within their students after the implementation of the conflict resolution techniques they learned in the programme. For example, many participants witnessed a decrease in the amount of conflict among their students. Participant Two shared very specific examples of students committing less destructive acts to public property and being more obedient to teachers as a result of their application of conflict resolution skills:

[The students] are having now fewer problems...especially during P.E. class . . . and even with other teachers . . . they seem more committed . . . they are causing less damage (to any property) . . . they now tend to listen to teachers and coaches much better and consider their commitments as friendly ones.

Category 4: The participants were comfortable and enjoyed all phases of the programme, especially the exchange trip to the U.S. (General)

All six coaches generally shared that they loved being a part of the SPUJ programme and that it was an honor to participate. Thus, the interviews exemplified that coaches had an overwhelmingly comfortable and positive experience throughout all phases of the programme. Participant Six arguably provided the best summary of her experience through all three phases of the programme:

The first phase was about understanding and peace among countries and people . . . and religions . . . and accepting each other more . . . the third phase was all about training, which was very useful . . . and even the scientific information . . . we had some information, but the one we gained was up-to-date . . . we had an old way of approaching the players; now we have an updated one . . . even me, I felt much more comfortable. Overall I'm very, very happy from the experience I gained because I learned a lot . . . for my children. This expressed experience was similar to that of all of the other participants.

Additionally, enjoyment was generally shared about the visit to the U.S. due to the fact that participants felt they were able to best apply the skills learned from the programme in a cross-cultural environment. Participant One and Three spoke in detail about the excitement and privilege they felt in their experience visiting the United States:

Thanks God, they picked me, and I traveled to the U.S. and I was impressed by the country as well as the people's capabilities. I was even happier when they informed me that if I stand out in the programme, and I have made progress, I was very comfortable and happy with myself throughout this programme. - Participant One

First, they welcomed us very much . . . we were introduced there to different cultures . . . I liked when we went to a mosque and we were engaged there in a discussion with other people from different religions . . . and we liked it also when we went to Ball State University and saw the soccer fields . . . we felt right at home . . . the most wonderful experience in my life was to travel to the States and deal with its people, because they are wonderful. - Participant Three

Overall, the participants expressed experiencing a high level of comfort throughout the programme workshops and events. They also expressed a high level of perceived

honour and privilege to be selected for the trip to the United States. Studies comparing physical effort between individuals of moderate and high levels of perceived privilege found support that high levels of perceived privilege positively correlate with individual effort.²⁷ It could be possible that the coaches who were apart of all three phases of the programme were inclined to put forth more effort into the application of the learned skills due to a higher level of perceived privilege than those who participated in only one phase.

Category 5: Participants experienced challenges in applying the curriculum due to discrepancies in resources, community support, and religious variations (Typical)

As found in other international sport for development programmes, cultural differences are sometimes a point of difficulty when transferring the skills taught.^{10, 22} For example, leaders of The Rugby for Peace programme in South Africa suggested that the different cultures within various tribes in South Africa caused a great number of difficulties when implementing the lessons taught.²⁵ Furthermore, other evaluations of similar programmes have revealed that the non-sport components like educating the community facilitators about personal and social responsibility were sometimes lost in cultural misinterpretations.¹⁵ The aforementioned challenges can be exhibited at the macro and micro levels of a given context¹⁰ provided evidence of this by exposing program challenges regarding insufficient familial support for each participant (micro level), along with insufficient infrastructure of the given participants community (macro level).

The core ideas of the interviews helped establish that a main philosophy of sport in Jordan involves placing a high emphasis on winning as opposed to holistic player development. Some participants expressed difficulty transferring and applying the programme curriculum due to the challenge of incorporating the mastery of focus and holistic player development in comparison with their cultural norm of winning. More specifically, the participants were challenged in applying the democratic style of coaching. This challenge can best be seen in the words of Participant Five when he discussed the differences between the command and democratic coaching styles:

Our culture reinforces that we should win every time. . . So we need to admit, we Arab, or Oriental coaches, that we still use "orders" in our coaching styles. . . we don't try to learn or teach the kids the "exploring style" . . . usually. . .

the challenges were related to politics around the world . . . to be honest with you, being on good terms with the West is not always well received throughout Jordan and that created a challenge for us.

Four coaches also expressed challenges when applying the concepts taught in the programme due to the different cultures within Jordan. These challenges were attributed to discrepancies in the extent of resources, communication and the diversity of the population and religious beliefs in different Jordanian villages. Participant Two spoke about a specific example involving the difficulties of coaching in an area with a higher refugee population:

There are some refugee students, like Syrians and Iraqis, whom the Students don't welcome . . . so it is hard for the students to accept him. While coaching in Jordan, I deal with players of different places and environments . . . most of them tried to separate themselves.

In regards to the discrepancy in the extent of resources, Participant One spoke specifically about the disadvantages of his home district:

I believe after I applied what I learnt in the programme . . . although we have limited resources . . . especially that we are in [my] district...sports is not that advanced . . . we have few facilities . . . as well as few equipment. I believe coaches in a district like [mine] don't have the same privileges as coaches in [other districts].

Finally, while some coaches talked about the cultural differences of monetary resources between the villages, one mentioned conflicts off the field, rooted in long-standing family tension and religious discrepancies. Participant Four gave a very memorable and detailed example of this kind of cultural difference within the community she worked:

I trained some girls in Al-Risayfeh area, near Zarqah, and the environment there is so much different from here...their parents are kind of closed-minded . . . so the girls themselves, have the same mentality, they are very aggressive . . . so it was a big challenge to bring change. I even talked to their parents . . . Both of the players came from the team I coach at AL-Risayefeh . . . both of them play really well, but they didn't like each other at all . . . so they had problems outside of the team, and they brought these problems along, which had a negative impact on the team . . . so I approached both of them with techniques learned in the programme with the idea to stop the conflict. Hanan accepted that, but Mariana didn't . . . Mariana became very

aggressive . . . me and the other coach had many conversations with her and her parents...we asked her to be friends with Hanan to reduce this conflict . . . I started to give both of them a ride to and from practice so that they would like each other . . . Mariana didn't react at all . . . after this did not work I talked to her parents . . . I concluded that her parents are the reason behind her behaviour . . . It turned out that Marianas parents don't like Hanans parents due to their heritage . . . so they conveyed that feeling to Mariana.

Category 6: Cooperation and player enjoyment are strong components of the participants' coaching philosophies (Typical)

According to Martens,²⁹ the command style of coaching is characterized by the head coach giving instructions to the athletes who in response, listen and carry out the instructions. This style of coaching is often likened to 'a dictator' and is a style that is being used less and less.³⁰ The command style is useful, however, when establishing rules and safety parameters. On the other hand, the cooperative style of coaching is characterized by giving athletes freedom to share decision-making responsibilities with the coach.³⁰ The cooperative style resembles a teacher-pupil relationship where feedback given from the athlete can steer the direction of the lesson. One of the underlying assumptions with a command style is that the coach is the only one who knows the correct answers and it is his/her role to tell the athletes what to do.³⁰ Martens²⁹ contended that the command style of coaching is often used because it is either the one that coaches have seen modeled by their former coaches or because this authoritarian style helped them conceal self-doubt about their coaching abilities. Jordan has a history of authoritarian leaders, thus offering another possible explanation for the prevalence of a command style of coaching.³¹ On the other hand, the assumption underlying the cooperative style is that the coach shares the decision-making with the athletes. Research indicates that athletes flourish best with a cooperative style of coaching and an "athletes first, winning second" objective.³¹

Along with the ability to foster enjoyment among their players, five of the six coaches indicated teaching cooperation as their primary motivation or goal in their coaching philosophy. Coaches typically expressed that through the programme, they learned that winning did not necessarily mean success and that goals, such as citizenship development and love of the game were also very important. For example, Participant Five stated,

Winning is the basis . . . we always look for winning . . . however, in a legitimate way . . . everyone who is involved in soccer loves to win . . . but for me, winning is not just scoring more goals than the other team . . . winning is to see my players have acquired new skills . . . and at the same time, to feel that I have accomplished something as a coach. We are reinforcing among players that soccer is not only about winning or losing . . . sometimes you win . . . and other times, you lose . . . however, each time you are learning . . . and we are trying to teach the players that we are not training you for just one year; we are training you for the future.

This category was further bolstered through examples of how participants developed cooperation and enjoyment on their teams. Participant One provided rich examples of how he emphasized player enjoyment and cooperation in his particular style of coaching,

They line up in two rows before the game . . . I make sure they shake hands with the coaches, referees, other team's players and the subs . . . and then I remind them that both teams are playing for fun and it is just a game. And I want to convey to them that success is not winning the game, but it is to get the utmost potential out of you. . . And I always tell them [my players] that soccer is based on a team effort; a team that includes 11 players.

This finding suggests further exploration regarding the impact of the cooperative coaching style within traditionally authoritarian cultures, which could prove advantageous on a more macro level.

Category 7: Future programming can be improved

Coalter's manual²⁰ noted that one of the most important outcomes of any sport for peace programme evaluation was the identification of best practices and shortcomings. Furthermore, the manual mentioned that changes suggested by evaluations should be seriously considered, but not always automatically implemented.²⁰ It is important to note, however, that continuous evaluation of sport for peace programmes is vitally important to their overall success in the future.²² Although rigorous and time-consuming, continuous evaluations are possible by tracking participants both through their participation and post-programme, which would allow researchers to better document the impact and discover how salient some of the concepts remain with participants.

In the current study examining all six participants' core ideas, it was discovered that every coach felt the programme

could be improved in some way. Due to the vast differences in their suggestions, this category was separated into three sub-categories: a) Extended duration of clinics (General), b) Better specificity of curriculum (Variant), and c) Increased communication (Rare).

The participants, in general, suggested that the programme could be improved by extending the time of the exchange trip in the United States. They also suggested making the workshops in Jordan more similar to the workshops in the United States. Participant Two exemplified this proposed improvement best in the following response:

The phase in the USA was better than the first phase. The first phase gave me the training; but the most benefit was in the USA. And now, we have learnt how to control big group of players.

Three of the participants mentioned that the programme could be improved by tailoring the curriculum to the different districts in Jordan. This suggestion is congruent with the aforementioned Category Five in that all six participants experienced challenges when implementing what was learned in the programme due to international and national differences in culture. Participant One made a very clear suggestion for future programmes when he spoke of the positive outcomes that could result from addressing the cultural differences within Jordan,

I recommend each district be given specific attention for their needs and resources available . . . because each district is very different and some of things we learned would only work in certain places . . . and there would be more exchange visits, since such visits are eye-opening and help participants reflect on what they learn.

The participants rarely suggested that the programme could be improved through increased communication between the coaches and the directors of the programme, not just the Jordan coordinators. While reflecting on her experience within the programme, Participant Four felt that confusion could have been decreased and the salience of concepts could have been increased with more effort from both parties:

To have better communication among us participants and the captains (i.e., coaches) would have been ideal, there were times when it felt like only the captains knew what was going on. This made it so people trailed off or lost out on teachings.

In summary, this category revealed that although the participants felt the program had a highly positive impact upon them, they still offered constructive feedback for how it could be improved. Specifically participants recommended the following steps to improve the programme: a) increase the duration of cross-cultural exchanges and programme clinics to be longer than 2 weeks; b) prioritize the tailoring of the curriculum to the specific communities within the targeted population; and c) increase communication between the programme directors and participants. Based on this feedback, the researchers suggest that future programmes consider longer cross-cultural exchanges. Furthermore, weeklong coaching clinics tailored to the individual communities of the targeted population should be conducted followed by weeklong youth-based camps. This extended schedule could allow for the coaches who participate to better learn the concepts, practice them and then implement them with the youth while the programme directors are still present to answer questions and help when necessary.

Conclusions

The researchers in this study aimed to give a voice to the coaches in the Sport for Understanding and Peace in Jordan programme in an effort to better understand their experiences and improve future SDP programing. Several strengths and areas of improvement were shared during participants' interviews. One of the most impactful findings was the self-report change by the coaches that they began implementing the cooperative style of coaching as opposed to the command style after the programme. Specifically, the implementation of the cooperative style to emphasize player empowerment as opposed to competition was reported as an effective way to teach conflict resolution to youth through the vehicle of sport. Additionally, participants indicated that they felt more accepting of other cultures, willing to collaborate with those who differed from them, better at considering others' perspectives, wanting to promote acceptance and inter-culture understanding, able and enthusiastically willing to apply their knowledge outside of the programme, and able to negotiate conflicts within themselves and with others as a result of their participation in the program. These personal and professional changes were reported from a successful integration of the non-sport components of life skills with the game of soccer.

This qualitative evaluation revealed evidence that the SPUJ programme resisted the dominant hegemonic relations between multiple cultures by creating a pro-social and reflective dichotomy between two different nations along

with hundreds of coaches from different regions throughout the country of Jordan. A newly found awareness of resource disparity among the villages, along with success stories regarding the implementation of program-taught concepts despite these disparities were shared throughout the participant interviews. The apparent awareness, discussion and sharing of resources, according to the hegemonic theory, is imperative in order to achieve the greatest outcomes.⁸ Thus, by distinguishing and documenting the successes and shortcomings of the SPUJ programme, the authors hope that future programmes will be better equipped to adapt, grow and succeed in fostering and facilitating conflict resolution around the world.

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