Matching school sports managers' job demands with resources for optimal performance in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

School sports are beneficial to schools, communities and society as a whole in that they can prevent delinquent behaviours, force commitment to rules, promote social control and teach societal/school values, among others. Deriving these benefits of school sports requires the optimal performance of school sports managers, who teach physical and health education (PHE) as a subject, games masters, house masters, head teachers and seconded school coaches. In this literature review, the JD-R theory was used to explore the literature regarding several potential job demands and job resources within the school sports management environment and how these can be matched for the optimum performance and productivity of school sports managers. It was established that there is a need to identify all possible physical, psychological, social or organizational demands and resources in school sports management to achieve optimal performance in school sports management. The JD-R literature suggests that organizations need to offer employees sufficient job challenges and resources, including feedback, social support, and skill variety, for optimal productivity.

1. INTRODUCTION

The physical, social and mental wellness benefits derivable from school sports are so enormous that much importance is attached to them. According to Nabofa (2017), school sports can prevent delinquent behaviours, force commitment to rules, create role models, promote social control

and teach societal/school values. Nabofa (2017) posited further that school sports could also help stop students from questioning the rules, drain energy, and positively divert youthful energy and attention. In the words of Onifade, Keinde & Kehinde (2009), school sports are acknowledged as the pivot of sports development for any nation. They explained further that school sports are an important phase of the curriculum that fulfils the significant needs of in-school youths. School sports allow students with superior athletic ability to compete at an advanced level within the framework of carefully defined educational goals to reach their maximum potential.

In this paper, school sports managers are identified to include all school teachers who teach physical and health education (PHE) as a subject of instruction, games masters, house masters, head teachers and seconded school coaches. They are responsible for implementing the curricular and extra-curricular sports-related activities plus the sporting programme of their schools in terms of supervision and coordination. In addition, school sports managers strive to ensure that students, in particular, and schools in general, perform well in achieving the objectives of school sports and sporting programmes.

According to Antunes, Soares, Rodrigues & Velosa (2020), the efforts of school sports managers are geared toward the successful performances of school teams and athletes in intra- and inter-school competitions. Onifade, Keinde & Kehinde (2009) have since asserted that a primary objective of school sports programmes is providing pupils with opportunities to excel and bring honours to themselves and their schools in various sports. School sports managers are expected to develop pupils into successful performers because they are the critical performance managers of athletic performance (Becker, 2009; Becker & Wrisberg, 2008; Mitchell, 2009; York, 2015). However, Antunes, Soares, Rodrigues & Velosa (2020) argued that school sports have objectives related to the learning and development of the pupil/student-athletes' social skills and their improvement in successive competitions.

It is necessary to obtain reliable information about the actual performance of the school sports managers and the factors that influences these performance levels. According to Antunes, Soares, Rodrigues & Velosa (2020), it is the only way to find fair and substantiated answers that can lead to the modification and improvement in work processes to achieve optimal performance of school sports managers. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory posits that each job has its unique set of demands and resources, which, in turn, have implications for individuals and the organisation in which they work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Understanding a job's demands and resources can allow for proactive strategies to minimise demands and build up resources needed for optimal

performance (Taylor, Sauder & Rode, 2020). School sports managers' job demands and the required resources for adequately coping with these demands need to be studied, understood and well-matched. It is a sure way to ensure optimal performance by school sports managers.

In this literature review, the JD-R theory was used to explore the literature regarding several potential job demands and job resources within the school sports management environment and how these can be matched for the optimum performance and productivity of school sports managers. Therefore, this study aims to establish the need to match job demands with job resources for optimal performance among secondary school sports managers.

1.1. Conceptual Model

The conceptual model used in this review is based on two theoretical frameworks. The first one is the dimensions of coaching performance framework (MacLean & Chelladurai, 1995), claimed by Antunes, Soares, Rodrigues & Velosa (2020) to be the most suitable criteria for determining school sports managers' performance levels. The other one is the Job Demands and Resources (JD-R) theoretical framework (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer & Schaufeli, 2003; Demerouti et al., 2001).

According to Antunes, Soares, Rodrigues & Velosa (2020); MacLean &Chelladurai's (1995), dimensions of coaching performance theory provide the most feasible criteria for measuring the performance levels of secondary school sports managers. However, in the words of Taylor, Sauder and Rode (2020), the extent to which job demand and resources are matched in secondary school sports management for secondary school sports managers to stay motivated, obtain personal growth, and perform optimally, are best measured with the JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). It is thus most appropriate to combine dimensions of coaching performance theory (MacLean & Chelladurai, 1995) with the JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) in this review that seeks to establish the need to match existing secondary school sports managers' job demands with adequate job resources for optimal performance.
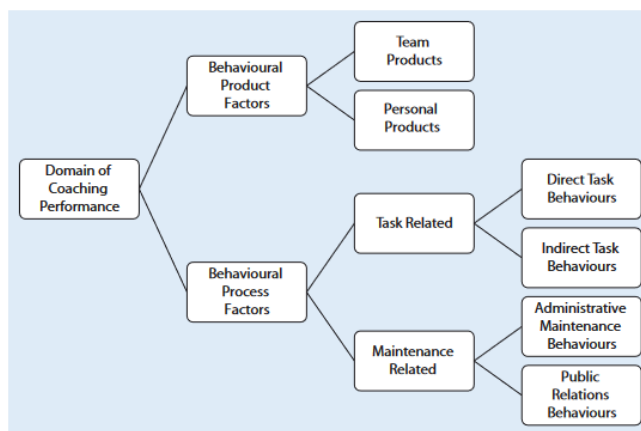
Figure 1. Dimension of Coaching Performance Theory (MacLean & Chelladurai, 1995)

There are two broad categories in the dimensions of coaching performance theory. These categories are the behavioural product factors and behavioural process factors. The behavioural product factors are divided into two subcategories: the teams' product and personal product factors. In this theory, the behavioural process factors are divided into two subcategories: the behavioural process factors related to the task and the behavioural process factors related to the organisation's maintenance. Each of these behavioural process subcategories is further subdivided into two classes of 'Direct Task Behaviours' and 'Indirect Task Behaviours' for the behavioural process factors related to the task subcategory, and 'Administrative Maintenance Behaviours' and 'Public Relations Behaviours' in the behavioural process factors related to maintenance of the organisation subcategory. The two subcategories of the broad Behavioural Product category and the four classes resulting from the two subcategories of broad Behavioural Process Factors are combined to yield a model of six dimensions of coaching performance. These dimensions include (a) team products, (b) personal products, (c) direct task behaviours, (d) indirect task behaviours, (e) administrative maintenance behaviours, and (f) public relations behaviours.

In the view of Antunes, Soares, Rodrigues & Velosa (2020), the team products of school sports managers are indicated by the sports scores obtained by school athletes or teams, while their personal products are reflected in the sports results they achieve personally. Their direct task behaviours are indicated by their skills in planning, guiding and evaluating training and competitions. In contrast, their indirect task behaviours are seen as tasks that are indirectly related to their position, including their skills in the selection of sports talent and recruiting new players. Furthermore, the administrative maintenance behaviours of school sports managers are indicated by the ability to

secure financial stability and understanding of the mission and regulations of the school sports programme. Finally, the public relations behaviours of school sports managers are reflected in their interpersonal skills and good public relations shown in existing cooperation with parents of athletes, partnerships and communication with potential partners, among others.

It was this theory that MacLean & Chelladurai (1995) used to develop a valid and reliable scale for measuring sports managers' performance levels. They administered the scale to 77 sports administrators and 363 coaches from Canadian Intercollegiate Athletic Union institutions. The collected data were analysed, and correlations, confirmatory factor analysis, and internal consistency estimates were computed. The results of their analysis yielded a psychometrically sound Scale of Coaching Performance (SCP). According to König (2013), the psychometric soundness of this theory is demonstrated in that the SCP provides a job task analysis of sports management. He stated further that the SCP could differentiate between products and processes, making it possible to analyse coaches' work in terms of their actual behaviour. In this manner, the evaluation of sports managers' performance based on a team's win or loss record, which has been criticised in the science of training literature, can be avoided (Lames, 1998).

Job demands and resources are derived from the Job Demands and Resources theory (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer & Schaufeli, 2003; Demerouti et al., 2001). This theory is based on two premises. The first premise is the assertion that although different occupations have peculiar characteristics, it is nevertheless possible to group all these characteristics into two primary groups, namely Job demands and Job resources. These groups are depicted in Figure 2.
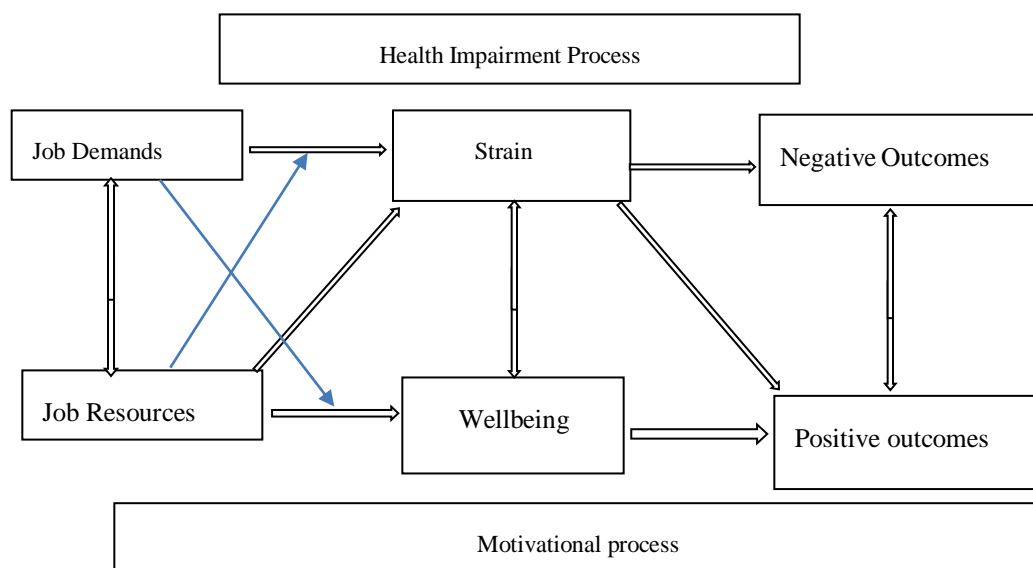
Figure 2. Theoretical Framework of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory. Source: www.toolshero.com

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Job Demands

Job demands refer to the physical, psychological, social and organisational aspects of a job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive or emotional) effort and that therefore make specific physiological and/or psychological demands on those who work in them. While job demands may not necessarily be objectively arduous, they can become problematic when the effort required by a particular employee to meet the demands of the job requires a degree of effort from the employee that induces emotional problems (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Examples of job demands that result in emotional problems are an increased or unmanageable workload, role conflict and ambiguity, and the pressure of unreasonable deadlines (time pressure). These can be expressed as long hours of coaching, preparation of viable and acceptable training schedules and programmes, conducting trials and selection of team members, interpersonal relationships at work, inadequate salaries, delayed payment of salaries, work-home interface and irregular promotion.

2.2. Job Resources

Job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social and organisational resources that reduce the severity of specific job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs associated with them, assist a worker in achieving his or her work goals, stimulate personal growth, learning and development. Resources might be organisational in nature (salary, career opportunities, and job security)

and interpersonal and social (supervisor and co-worker support, team atmosphere). They may also be identified as features of how the work is organised (role clarity, participation in decision-making) or may be found at the level of individual tasks (performance feedback, skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy (Bakker et al., 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Adequate and functional coaching equipment/facility, library, and a conducive workplace and living quarters equipped with adequate and functional water supply, sanitary system, fans and air conditioners could be the physical, psychological, social and organisational resources described by the JD-R as job resources.

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory is an offshoot of integrating theories of stress and motivation within management literature. This integration within the JD-R theory makes it a more encompassing theory that considers the "unique and multiplicative" effects that job demands and resources have on stress and motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, p. 38). In the words of Taylor, Sauder & Rode (2020), the JD-R conceptualises Job Demands as elements of the given job that require an individual to engage in substantial effort and therefore have concomitant physical and psychological costs. They stated that physical workload, time pressure, features of the physical environment, and contact with clients or customers are examples of job demands. They explained further that, on the other hand, Job Resources are the elements of a job that reduce the costs associated with job demands, aid in achieving work goals, and encourage personal growth. They went on identify feedback, rewards, control, job security, and supervisor support as examples of Job resources. Both job demands and job resources stem from multiple sources in the "physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of work" (Van den Broeck et al., 2017, p. 370) and have a significant impact on both employee well-being and organisational outcomes via employee behaviour (Taylor, Sauder & Rode, 2020).

Two independent processes are traceable to Job Demands and Resources. These processes are a health impairment process and a motivational process. According to Bakker & Demerouti (2014), Job Demands have been shown to be more responsible for initiating the health impairment process, while Job Resources more heavily influence the motivational process. However, Job Demands and Resources can also interact, especially when a job offers several resources that buffer demands. Therefore, there are several sources of Job Demands and Resources. For this reason, every occupation has its own unique set of Job Demands and Resources (Van den Broeck et al., 2017). It is also why so many studies have used the JD-R theory to understand employee performances in several industries (Mudrak et al., 2018).
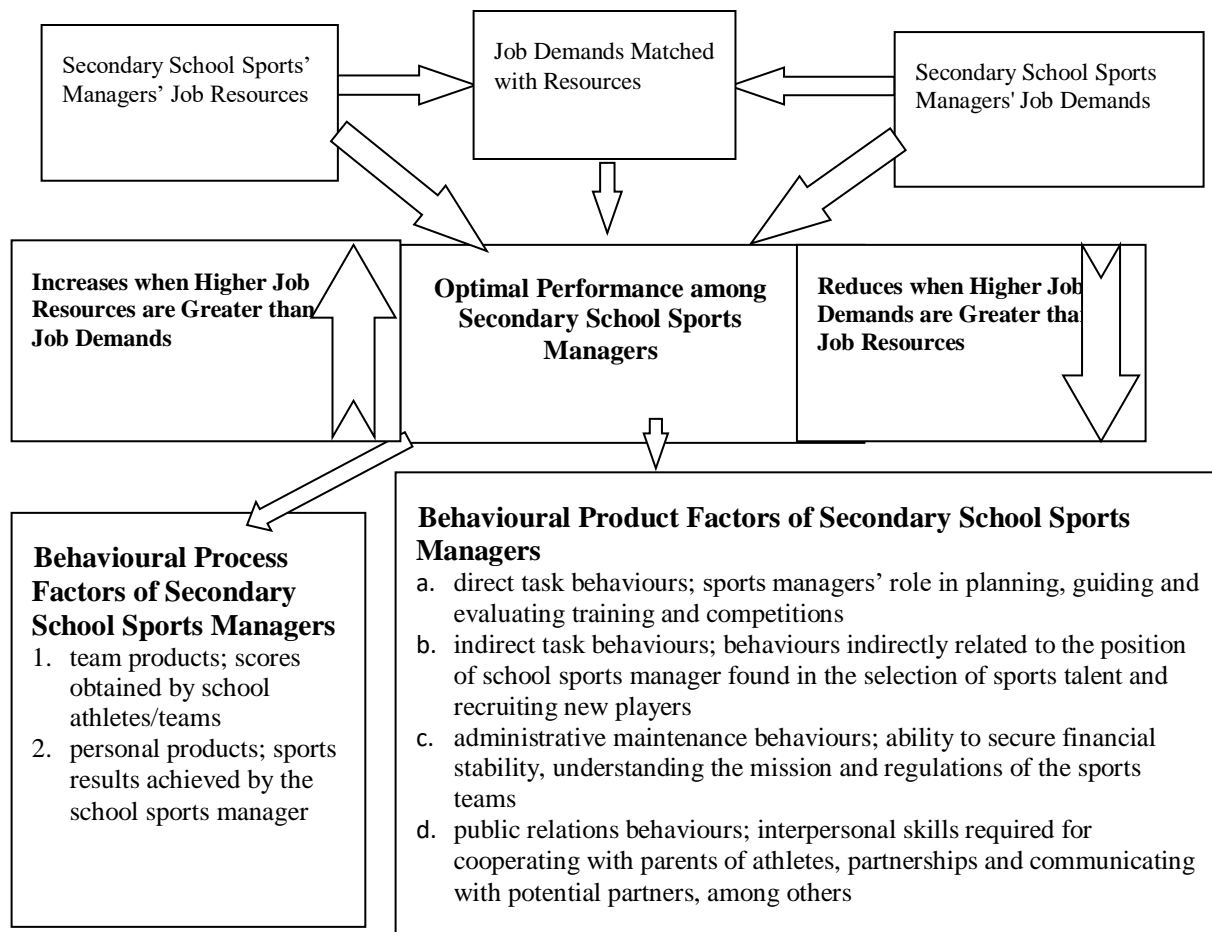
Figure 3. Conceptual Model of Job Demands and resource for optimal performance among secondary school sports managers.

This conceptual model points out that optimal sports performance can be achieved when secondary school sports managers' job demands are appropriately matched with their resources. It has been recognised that the extent to which job demand and resources are matched for secondary school sports managers reflects the extent to which they will stay motivated, obtain personal growth, and perform optimally (Taylor, Sauder & Rode, 2020). It has also been established that the optimal performance of school sports managers is indicated by their achievements in (a) team products, (b) personal products, (c) direct task behaviours, (d) indirect task behaviours, (e) administrative maintenance behaviours, and (f) public relations behaviours (Antunes, Soares, Rodrigues & Velosa, 2020). Therefore, it is conceptualised that the extent to which the physical, social, psychological and organisational job demands and resources are matched among school sports managers should be reflected in how well they score in these dimensions of sports coaching performance.

It is postulated that when secondary school sports managers' job demands are adequately matched with their resources, then they will perform optimally in their jobs. When secondary school sports managers perform optimally, there will be improvements in their team products, personal products, direct task behaviours, indirect task behaviours, administrative maintenance behaviours, and public relations behaviours. In other words, schools would post better individual and team sports results just as the school sports managers would obtain improved personal achievements in sports. There would be an improvement in their direct task behaviours in planning, guiding and evaluating training and competitions. Their indirect task behaviours in selecting sports talent and recruiting new players would become top-notch. There will also be improved administrative maintenance behaviours of the school sports managers that would be readily observable in their improved ability to secure financial stability and understanding of the mission and regulations of the school sports programme. The public relations behaviours of school sports managers would become very visible in existing cooperation with parents of athletes, partnerships and communicating with potential partners, among others.

2.3. Job Demands and Resources in School Sports Management

It has been demonstrated that Job Demands and Job Resources can be traced to the "physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of work" (Van den Broeck et al., 2017, p. 370). School sports managers need substantial physical effort, social interaction and organisational manoeuvres while performing their jobs of school sports management. It is, therefore, necessary to identify all possible physical, psychological, social or organisational Demands and Resources in school sports management.

2.4. Physical Demands and Resources in School Sports Management

School sports managers perform fundamental management functions, which include planning, Organizing, Leading and Evaluating. According to Thanuraj & Jeganenthiran (2018), planning is a process where an organisation sets up short-term and long-term goals and sports action courses to achieve these. They explained further that organising is all about the implementation of plans and how the goals set during the planning process will be achieved, as it is the function of the sports manager to create schedules of how sporting events will be done. Furthermore, the sports manager needs to recruit and direct the correct people (staff) for the sporting jobs, like referees, recorders and

linesmen. Finally, leading is when the sports manager directs the sporting activities through the employees (Thibault & Pedersen, 2014).

The final function of a sports manager is to evaluate results. Evaluation is the review of the progress against the goals set during the planning stage. Since the goals set earlier need to be SMART (simple, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound), it is necessary to evaluate the extent to which set goals are being implemented and achieved over time. Therefore, there is a demand for sports managers to set performance standards and have ways of reporting progress. Moreover, through evaluation, it is possible to set up reward schemes such as promotions and salary raises or to give recognition for work well done (Horton, 2014; Thibault & Pedersen, 2014; Eksteen, Willemse, Malan & Ellis, 2015).

A school sports manager performs many physically demanding jobs in training, planning, managing and coordinating training and competition. Horton (2014) summarised the physically demanding jobs of sports managers to include being:

i.   Leaders who create teams' visions, set goals and objectives and make plans to achieve these;

ii. Teachers who provide knowledge, demonstrations and instruct players as well as teach the necessary sports skills using the proper sequence and progression with understandable language, and help athletes realise learned skills at different rates;

iii. Planners who prepare both long and short-term aspects of games, goals, and games and competitions' plans;

iv. Mentors who provide continual support, look out for players and watch their growth and development;

v.   Motivators who maintain the motivation of players;

vi. Assessors who assess players' performances during training and competition;

vii. Psychologists who deal with players' personalities and mindsets and provide counselling for emotional problems;

viii. Friends whom players can come to regarding problems and success in and out of the sport;

ix. Managers who deal with players, officials, supporters, and sponsors; and

x.   Instructors who instruct athletes in the skills of their sport.

Indeed, school sports management is a stressful occupation with physically demanding expectations (Seo, Kim, Sim, Ha, Kim & Kim, 2022). Therefore, high physical demands are frequently an innate aspect of engaging in school sports management.

According to Balk, De-Jonge, Oerlemans, Geurts, Fletcher & Dormann (2018), the first physical resources in school sports are primarily focused on the opportunity to regulate physical exertion in the form of being able to take a physical break or to divide one's training load according to one's current physical capacity. Wuest & Bucher (2003) see physical fitness as the ability of the body's systems to function efficiently and effectively. It makes physical fitness a dynamic entity defined by observable physiological factors that describe a person's capacity to function optimally.

School sports management demands high-intensity intermittent actions, in which optimal physical fitness attributes are necessary to achieve success (Bohannon, 2012). In addition, the high workloads of sports management require successful and coordinated actions with high motor performance abilities. Nabofa (2016) surmised that optimum amounts of that aspect of physical fitness, known as motor performance abilities, are fundamental to and necessary for all the physical demands placed on school sports managers.

2.5. Social Demands and Resources in School Sports Management

It has since been established that job demands flourish in stressful school environments (Clark, Olender, Cardoni, & Kenski, 2011). Also, continuous changes in the culture and evolution of school sports may contribute to shifting job demands within the school environment (Bentley et al., 2012). Social interactions in the discipline of sport management, such as workplace aggression, has been conceptualised as a job demand in the literature (Law, Dollard, Tuckey & Dormann, 2011). Initial research on workplace aggression within the context of the male-dominated nature of school sport management as a discipline suggests that female school sports managers experience a great deal of harassment from their students, colleagues, and superiors (Taylor et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2018). Although only the experiences of female school sports managers have been documented, male school sports managers may be experiencing a form of workplace aggression that is yet to be documented.

It is crucial that school sports managers feel supported by their immediate supervisors, such as their teachers, chief inspectors of education, directors of schools, and the ministries of education and youth and sports development. Several studies in the school environment show social support's influence on work-related outcomes. For example, Onifade, Keinde & Kehinde (2009) demonstrated

that school sports managers' performance mainly depends on job satisfaction and psychological and social conditions apart from salary. Mudrak et al. (2018) also found supervisor support among the most critical factors impacting school sports managers' engagement and job satisfaction. Similarly, a study on accounting and finance faculty found that the quality of faculty members' relationships with their department heads significantly affected job satisfaction (Byrne, Chughtai, Flood & Willis, 2012). In a thorough review of multiple academic studies (Sabagh, Hall & Saroyan, 2018) found that, in general, higher levels of social support from various sources at an institution were related to lower levels of burnout.

These reviewed studies have shown that social support from superiors and colleagues in any school can be a job resource for school sports managers. However, although the reviewed literature shows that social support can be viewed as a job resource in school sports management, it has yet to be established that all school sports managers have access to social support. In addition, workplace aggression has been documented as occurring in the school environment and may be conceptualised as job demand. However, it has yet to be empirically established that all school sports managers are being hindered in the performance of their jobs by workplace aggression. Therefore, more robust research is needed to establish whether available social support is serving as a resource that enhances performance or whether existing workplace aggression is perceived as a job demand that hinders the efforts of school sports managers.

2.6. Organisational and Psychological Demands and Resources

Research has shown that numerous factors in the school environment may impact school sports managers' job performance. Organisational features include school type (boarding/day school, single-sex/mixed school, private/public school, rural/urban school). A lack of sufficient time for sports activities within the school can be linked with the reduced performance of school sports managers (Bentley et al., 2012). Furthermore, Stokowski et al. (2018) found that sports managers could have been more satisfied with features of the organisation, such as rewards, pay, and school/organisational operating procedures. The importance of operating procedures was highlighted in a study by Bentley et al. (2012) study, as sports managers' perceptions of administrative processes and departmental influence were generally related to job satisfaction. Mudrak et al. (2018) reported that work-family conflict, job insecurity, and a large workload might also be conceptualised as job demands, as they were all substantial predictors of stress.

According to Anthun & Innstrand (2016), the importance of autonomy, particularly for middle-aged and older sports managers, has been highlighted as a job resource in sports management. However, Stokowski et al. (2018) also found that sports managers were highly satisfied with the work, suggesting that this factor could be perceived as a psychological job resource.

This review suggests that several factors in school sports management could serve as either job demands or resources. For instance, the administrative processes of a school could either be considered a resource if they are transparent and fair or a demand if they are not. It is, therefore, essential to study how sports managers perceive these sorts of features of their jobs. Furthermore, establishing these features of their jobs as a job demand or a job resource can have important implications for decision-makers in school sports management. Finally, a motivated school sports management workforce, satisfied with their jobs, will most likely produce the most significant benefit to the school (Bentley et al., 2012).

3. CONCLUSIONS

Engaging in school sports management with the intention to perform optimally is a highly demanding endeavour. Furthermore, demands placed on school sports managers to perform optimally are rising due to the fast-developing and increasingly competitive nature of the school sports environment. Matching these high demands with sufficient resources is essential for staying motivated, obtaining personal growth, and performing optimally. The JD-R literature suggests that organisations need to offer employees sufficient job challenges and resources, including feedback, social support, and skill variety, for optimal productivity. Although employees play a role in mobilising job resources for themselves, managers and overall organisational initiatives are vital in creating opportunities for employees to thrive.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Matching the high job demands in sports management with sufficient resources is vital for performing optimally. The following recommendations are therefore made towards the supply of sufficient job resources in school sports management:

- Resources can be organisational, and so need to be provided to school sports managers. For example, regular payment of an enhanced salary, career development opportunities, and job security are needed for the optimal performance of school sports managers.

- An adequate amount of social resources need to be made available. For example, supervisor and co-worker support, plus a cordial team atmosphere, are required resources for performance.

- It is possible to make the features of how the work is organised a job resource rather than a job demand. It is done by ensuring role clarity and participation in decision-making.

- It is necessary to provide adequate and functional coaching equipment/facility, a library, and a conducive workplace and living quarters equipped with adequate and functional water supply and sanitary system. Also, fans and air conditioners should be sufficient for the use of all staff and students, especially the school sports managers.

- There is a need to supply well-equipped fitness and recreation centres to build the high levels of physical and emotional fitness required to cope with the high demand for school sports management.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

FUNDING

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