

Research Paper

An Assessment of Emotional Intelligence among Multi Level Indian Football Coaches

Aditya Nath^{1*}, Dr. Shailesh Kumar Singh²

ABSTRACT

Background: Emotional intelligence (EI) is increasingly recognized as an important psychological competency in sports coaching, influencing communication, leadership, interpersonal relationships, and responses to emotionally demanding situations. However, evidence concerning EI across different qualification levels of Indian football coaches remains limited. **Purpose:** This study assessed and compared overall emotional intelligence and its components among AFC 'B', AIFF 'C', and AIFF 'D' licensed Indian football coaches. **Methods:** A descriptive-comparative design was adopted with 135 football coaches, comprising 45 coaches from each qualification level. Emotional intelligence was assessed across ten components: Self-Awareness, Empathy, Self-Motivation, Emotional Stability, Managing Relations, Integrity, Self-Development, Value Orientation, Commitment, and Altruistic Behaviour. Descriptive statistics were calculated, normality was examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test, and group differences were tested using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Bonferroni-adjusted post-hoc comparisons were conducted for significant effects, with statistical significance set at $p < .05$. **Results:** AIFF 'C' coaches recorded the highest overall EI mean ($M = 128.24$, $SD = 10.88$), followed by AIFF 'D' ($M = 126.38$, $SD = 9.80$) and AFC 'B' coaches ($M = 126.07$, $SD = 9.48$). However, overall EI did not differ significantly across qualification levels, $F(2, 132) = 0.615$, $p = .542$. Nine of the ten EI components also showed no significant between-group differences. Value Orientation was the only component demonstrating a significant group effect, $F(2, 132) = 7.008$, $p = .001$. Bonferroni comparisons showed that AIFF 'C' coaches scored significantly higher on Value Orientation than AFC 'B' coaches (mean difference = 1.11, $p = .001$), whereas the other pairwise differences were non-significant. **Conclusion:** Emotional intelligence was largely comparable among AFC 'B', AIFF 'C', and AIFF 'D' Indian football coaches, indicating that differences in formal coaching qualification were not accompanied by systematic differences in overall EI. The isolated difference in Value Orientation suggests that specific emotional competencies may vary independently of overall EI. These findings support greater attention to the deliberate development of emotional and interpersonal competencies within football coach-education programmes.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Football Coaching, Coach Education, Coaching Qualification, AFC, AIFF, Value Orientation, India*

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Football coaching extends beyond technical, tactical, and physical preparation and requires coaches to manage interpersonal relationships, motivate athletes, regulate emotions, resolve conflicts, and make decisions under competitive pressure. Consequently, psychological and interpersonal competencies are important components of effective coaching. Among these, **emotional intelligence (EI)**, broadly defined as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and use emotions effectively, has received increasing attention in sport psychology and coaching research (Laborde et al., 2016).

Emotional intelligence is particularly relevant in football because coaches operate in dynamic and emotionally demanding environments. Their ability to regulate personal emotions and respond appropriately to athletes may influence communication, leadership, motivation, decision-making, and coach–athlete relationships. Previous studies have demonstrated associations between coaches' emotional intelligence and coaching efficacy, leadership behaviour, and interpersonal effectiveness (Thelwell et al., 2008; Chan & Mallett, 2011; Hwang et al., 2013). Football-specific research has further highlighted the importance of emotional competence in coaching practice and competitive behaviour (Lee et al., 2018; Teques et al., 2019).

Despite growing international interest in emotional intelligence within sport coaching, research involving Indian football coaches across different levels of professional qualification remains limited. It is therefore important to examine whether emotional intelligence differs according to coaching certification. The present study compares AFC 'B', AIFF 'C', and AIFF 'D' licensed football coaches in terms of overall emotional intelligence and its ten dimensions: Self-Awareness, Empathy, Self-Motivation, Emotional Stability, Managing Relations, Integrity, Self-Development, Value Orientation, Commitment, and Altruistic Behaviour. The findings may contribute to a better understanding of the psychological characteristics of Indian football coaches and provide useful implications for coach education and professional development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess and compare overall emotional intelligence and its individual dimensions among Indian football coaches holding AFC 'B', AIFF 'C', and AIFF 'D' coaching qualifications.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to:

1. Assess emotional intelligence among AFC 'B', AIFF 'C', and AIFF 'D' football coaches.
2. Compare overall emotional intelligence across the three coaching qualification groups.
3. Examine differences in the individual dimensions of emotional intelligence among the three groups.
4. Identify specific between-group differences where statistically significant effects were observed.

Research Hypotheses

- **H₀₁**: There is no statistically significant difference in overall emotional intelligence among AFC 'B', AIFF 'C', and AIFF 'D' football coaches.
- **H₀₂**: There are no statistically significant differences among AFC 'B', AIFF 'C', and AIFF 'D' football coaches across the measured dimensions of emotional intelligence.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-comparative research design to assess emotional intelligence and examine differences across coaching qualification levels. Coaching qualification—AFC ‘B’, AIFF ‘C’, and AIFF ‘D’—served as the grouping variable, while overall emotional intelligence and its dimensions constituted the outcome variables.

Participants

The sample comprised 135 Indian football coaches, equally distributed across three qualification groups: AFC ‘B’ ($n = 45$), AIFF ‘C’ ($n = 45$), and AIFF ‘D’ ($n = 45$).

Research Instrument

Emotional intelligence was assessed using the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) developed by Hyde, Pethe, and Dhar (2002). The instrument consists of 34 items measuring 10 dimensions of emotional intelligence: Self-Awareness, Empathy, Self-Motivation, Emotional Stability, Managing Relations, Integrity, Self-Development, Value Orientation, Commitment, and Altruistic Behaviour. Responses are recorded on a five-point Likert-type scale. The instrument provides an overall emotional intelligence score together with scores for the individual dimensions, enabling both overall and component-level assessment of emotional intelligence.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum scores, were calculated to summarise the data. The Shapiro–Wilk test was used to examine the normality of emotional intelligence scores. Differences among AFC ‘B’, AIFF ‘C’, and AIFF ‘D’ coaches were analysed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for overall emotional intelligence and its individual dimensions. Where a statistically significant omnibus effect was identified, Bonferroni-adjusted post-hoc comparisons were performed to determine the specific groups responsible for the difference. The level of statistical significance was set at $\alpha = .05$.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

This section presents the statistical findings concerning emotional intelligence among AFC ‘B’, AIFF ‘C’, and AIFF ‘D’ football coaches. A total of 135 coaches participated in the study, with 45 coaches representing each qualification level. The analysis was undertaken in stages.

Normality of Emotional Intelligence Scores

Table 1 Shapiro–Wilk Test for Emotional Intelligence Scores

Coaching Level	Shapiro–Wilk Statistic	df	p-value
AFC ‘B’	.960	45	.126
AIFF ‘C’	.974	45	.410
AIFF ‘D’	.967	45	.233

As presented in Table 1, the Shapiro–Wilk statistic was .960 for AFC ‘B’ coaches, .974 for AIFF ‘C’ coaches, and .967 for AIFF ‘D’ coaches. The associated probability values were .126, .410, and .233, respectively.

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All three probability values were above the .05 criterion. Therefore, there was no statistical evidence of a substantial departure from normality in any of the three groups. The normality assumption was consequently regarded as adequately satisfied, supporting the subsequent use of parametric analysis for comparing emotional intelligence scores.

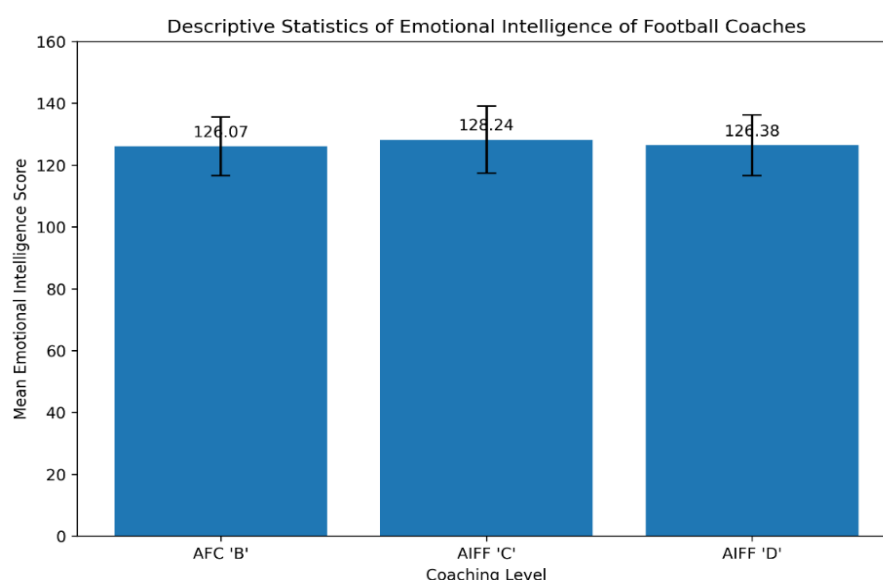
Descriptive Analysis of Overall Emotional Intelligence

Descriptive statistics were calculated to examine the overall emotional intelligence scores of coaches at the three qualification levels.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Overall Emotional Intelligence

Coaching Level	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
AFC 'B'	45	126.07	9.48	105	143
AIFF 'C'	45	128.24	10.88	107	157
AIFF 'D'	45	126.38	9.80	99	144

Table 2 indicates that AIFF 'C' coaches obtained the highest average emotional intelligence score ($M = 128.24$, $SD = 10.88$). This was followed by AIFF 'D' coaches ($M = 126.38$, $SD = 9.80$), while AFC 'B' coaches recorded a mean of 126.07 ($SD = 9.48$).



Although the AIFF 'C' group displayed the highest numerical mean, the difference between the groups was relatively small. The mean difference between the highest-scoring group (AIFF 'C') and the lowest-scoring group (AFC 'B') was only 2.17 points. Thus, the descriptive results indicate considerable similarity in overall emotional intelligence across the three coaching qualifications.

The scores also showed variability within each group. AFC 'B' coaches recorded scores between 105 and 143, AIFF 'C' coaches between 107 and 157, and AIFF 'D' coaches between 99 and 144. Across the complete sample, emotional intelligence scores therefore extended from 99 to 157.

It is important, however, not to interpret the slightly higher mean of AIFF 'C' coaches as evidence of a genuine group difference on the basis of descriptive statistics alone. Inferential analysis was required to determine whether the observed differences were statistically meaningful.

Comparison of Overall Emotional Intelligence Across Coaching Levels

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether overall emotional intelligence differed significantly among AFC 'B', AIFF 'C', and AIFF 'D' football coaches.

Table 3 One-Way ANOVA for Overall Emotional Intelligence

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	124.859	2	62.430	.615	.542
Within Groups	13393.689	132	101.467		
Total	13518.548	134			

The analysis yielded an F-value of .615 with 2 and 132 degrees of freedom, while the associated probability value was .542. Since the probability value was considerably greater than the .05 significance criterion, the observed differences among the three group means were not statistically significant, $F(2, 132) = 0.615, p = .542$.

Accordingly, the null hypothesis concerning overall emotional intelligence was retained. Within the present sample, there was insufficient evidence to conclude that emotional intelligence varied according to whether a coach possessed an AFC 'B', AIFF 'C', or AIFF 'D' qualification.

This result is particularly important when considered alongside the descriptive statistics. Although AIFF 'C' coaches recorded a somewhat higher mean score, the ANOVA demonstrates that this numerical advantage should not be interpreted as a statistically reliable difference. Overall emotional intelligence was therefore broadly comparable across the three coaching levels.

Descriptive Analysis of the Components of Emotional Intelligence

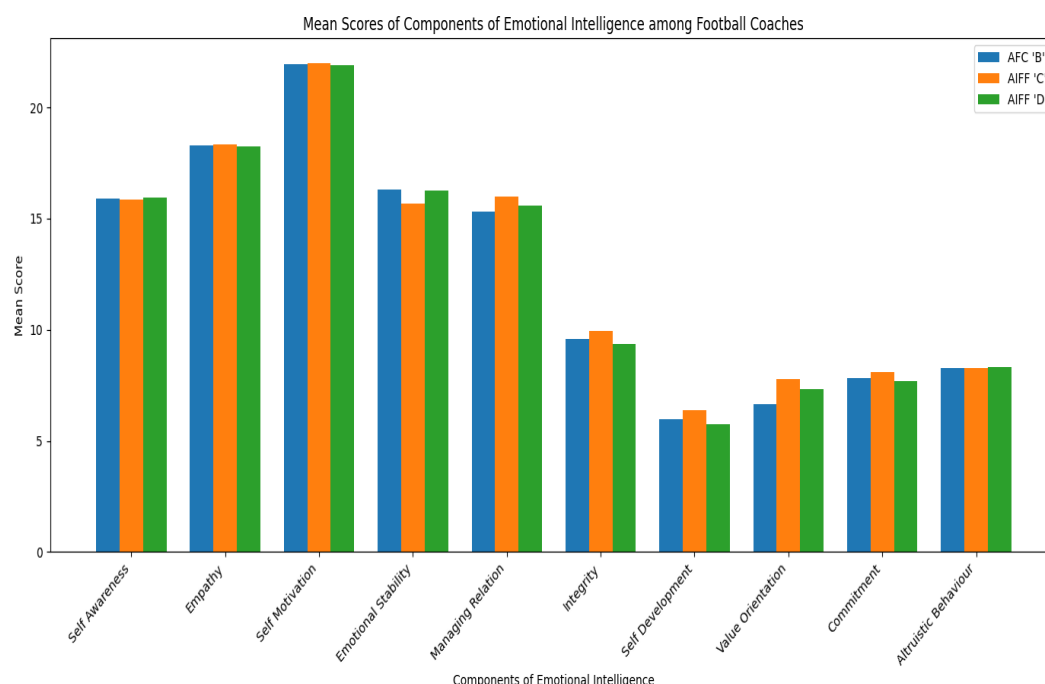
Overall emotional intelligence represents a combination of several psychological and interpersonal characteristics. Therefore, an additional analysis was undertaken to examine whether particular components displayed different patterns across the three coaching groups. Ten components were considered: Self-Awareness, Empathy, Self-Motivation, Emotional Stability, Managing Relations, Integrity, Self-Development, Value Orientation, Commitment, and Altruistic Behaviour.

Table 4 Mean and Standard Deviation of Emotional Intelligence Components

Component	AFC 'B' M (SD)	AIFF 'C' M (SD)	AIFF 'D' M (SD)
Self-Awareness	15.91 (1.79)	15.84 (2.16)	15.96 (2.00)
Empathy	18.29 (2.23)	18.33 (2.11)	18.22 (1.70)
Self-Motivation	21.93 (2.18)	22.00 (2.04)	21.91 (2.14)
Emotional Stability	16.31 (1.59)	15.67 (2.20)	16.27 (1.64)
Managing Relations	15.29 (2.03)	15.98 (1.78)	15.58 (1.80)
Integrity	9.60 (1.76)	9.93 (1.71)	9.38 (2.05)
Self-Development	5.96 (1.36)	6.38 (1.39)	5.73 (1.45)
Value Orientation	6.64 (1.40)	7.76 (1.28)	7.33 (1.57)
Commitment	7.84 (1.02)	8.09 (1.02)	7.67 (1.37)
Altruistic Behaviour	8.29 (0.79)	8.27 (1.14)	8.33 (0.88)

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The component-level descriptive results show that no single coaching group obtained the highest mean across every dimension. Instead, the relative pattern varied according to the component being examined.



AIFF 'C' coaches recorded the highest averages for Empathy ($M = 18.33$), Self-Motivation ($M = 22.00$), Managing Relations ($M = 15.98$), Integrity ($M = 9.93$), Self-Development ($M = 6.38$), Value Orientation ($M = 7.76$), and Commitment ($M = 8.09$). Thus, this group showed the highest descriptive mean in seven of the ten components.

AFC 'B' coaches achieved the highest average for Emotional Stability ($M = 16.31$). AIFF 'D' coaches, meanwhile, obtained the highest averages for Self-Awareness ($M = 15.96$) and Altruistic Behaviour ($M = 8.33$).

Most differences between the group means were small. A more visible descriptive separation appeared for Value Orientation, where AIFF 'C' coaches recorded a mean of 7.76 compared with 7.33 for AIFF 'D' and 6.64 for AFC 'B' coaches. Inferential analysis was therefore necessary to determine whether this and the other observed differences were statistically significant.

Comparison of Emotional Intelligence Components

Separate one-way ANOVAs were performed for the ten components to determine whether the mean scores differed significantly according to coaching qualification.

Table 5 One-Way ANOVA Results for Components of Emotional Intelligence

Component	F	p-value
Self-Awareness	.035	.965
Empathy	.034	.966
Self-Motivation	.021	.979
Emotional Stability	1.739	.180
Managing Relations	1.535	.219
Integrity	1.032	.359

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Component	F	p-value
Self-Development	2.455	.090
Value Orientation	7.008	.001
Commitment	1.538	.219
Altruistic Behaviour	.058	.944

The results reveal a highly consistent pattern for most dimensions. Self-Awareness ($p = .965$), Empathy ($p = .966$), Self-Motivation ($p = .979$), Emotional Stability ($p = .180$), Managing Relations ($p = .219$), Integrity ($p = .359$), Self-Development ($p = .090$), Commitment ($p = .219$), and Altruistic Behaviour ($p = .944$) did not differ significantly across the three coaching qualifications.

Value Orientation was the only component for which a statistically significant group effect emerged, $F(2, 132) = 7.008$, $p = .001$. The null hypothesis was therefore retained for nine components but rejected with respect to Value Orientation.

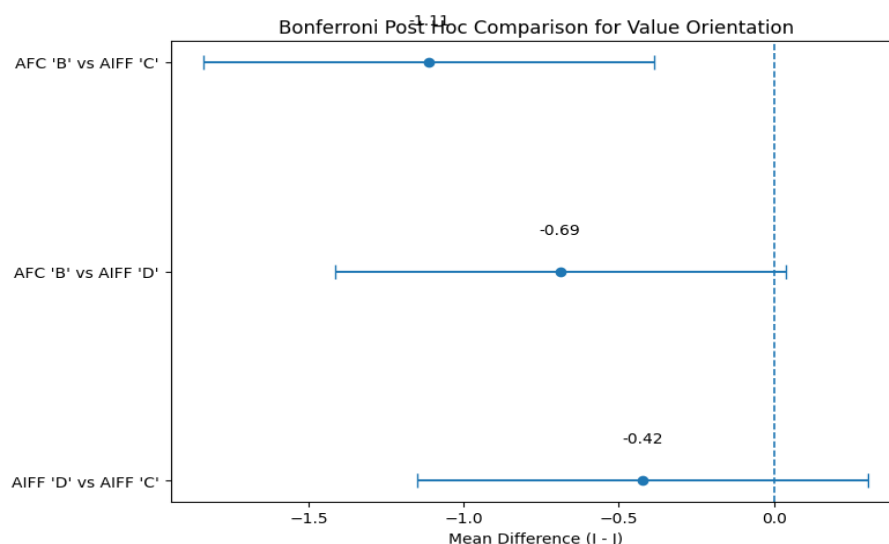
This finding provides a more differentiated understanding than the overall emotional intelligence score alone. While coaches at the three qualification levels appeared similar in their general emotional intelligence and most individual dimensions, their Value Orientation scores were not equivalent. A post-hoc analysis was consequently required to identify which groups accounted for this significant result.

Bonferroni Post-Hoc Analysis for Value Orientation

Bonferroni-adjusted pairwise comparisons were conducted because the omnibus ANOVA established a significant difference in Value Orientation.

Table 6 Bonferroni Pairwise Comparisons for Value Orientation

Comparison	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	p-value
AFC 'B' – AIFF 'C'	-1.111	.300	.001
AFC 'B' – AIFF 'D'	-.689	.300	.069
AIFF 'D' – AIFF 'C'	-.422	.300	.483



The Bonferroni analysis demonstrates that the significant overall effect was primarily attributable to the difference between AFC 'B' and AIFF 'C' coaches. The mean difference

between these two groups was -1.111 points ($p = .001$). Since AIFF 'C' coaches obtained the higher Value Orientation mean ($M = 7.76$) compared with AFC 'B' coaches ($M = 6.64$), the significant difference favoured the AIFF 'C' group. In contrast, AFC 'B' and AIFF 'D' coaches did not differ significantly ($p = .069$). Likewise, the comparison between AIFF 'D' and AIFF 'C' coaches was not significant ($p = .483$). Consequently, the significant ANOVA result for Value Orientation should not be interpreted as indicating that all three coaching groups differed from one another. Rather, the statistical evidence identifies one specific pairwise difference: AIFF 'C' coaches recorded significantly higher Value Orientation scores than AFC 'B' coaches.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The present study found that overall emotional intelligence did not differ significantly among AFC 'B', AIFF 'C', and AIFF 'D' football coaches, $F(2, 132) = 0.615$, $p = .542$, although AIFF 'C' coaches recorded a slightly higher mean score ($M = 128.24$) than AIFF 'D' ($M = 126.38$) and AFC 'B' coaches ($M = 126.07$). This indicates that higher coaching certification may not necessarily be associated with higher emotional intelligence. Instead, emotional competencies may develop through coaching experience, interpersonal interactions, exposure to competitive situations, and reflective learning. This interpretation is consistent with Chan and Mallett (2011), who highlighted emotional intelligence as an important psychological resource for effective coaching, and with Thelwell et al. (2008) and Hwang et al. (2013), who reported associations between emotional intelligence, coaching efficacy, and leadership behaviour. In football specifically, coaches are regularly required to manage pressure, communicate with players, regulate emotional reactions, and maintain effective relationships, which may promote the development of emotional competencies regardless of formal qualification level. Lee et al. (2018) similarly identified emotional competence as an important aspect of football coaching, while Teques et al. (2019) demonstrated that coaches' emotional intelligence is associated with their behavioural responses during football matches. At the component level, no significant differences were observed for Self-Awareness, Empathy, Self-Motivation, Emotional Stability, Managing Relations, Integrity, Self-Development, Commitment, or Altruistic Behaviour, suggesting that the three groups possessed generally similar emotional profiles. These findings also support previous research emphasizing the relevance of emotional intelligence to interpersonal functioning and coach–athlete relationships (Watson & Kleinert, 2019; Jowett et al., 2024). The only significant difference was found for Value Orientation, $F(2, 132) = 7.008$, $p = .001$. AIFF 'C' coaches obtained the highest mean ($M = 7.76$), followed by AIFF 'D' ($M = 7.33$) and AFC 'B' coaches ($M = 6.64$). Bonferroni analysis showed that AIFF 'C' coaches scored significantly higher than AFC 'B' coaches ($p = .001$), whereas the remaining comparisons were non-significant. This finding should be interpreted cautiously because it does not indicate a consistent increase in Value Orientation with higher coaching qualifications. Differences in professional experience, educational background, coaching environment, or individual values may have contributed to this result. Overall, the findings suggest that emotional intelligence among Indian football coaches is relatively consistent across qualification levels and may be influenced by factors beyond formal certification. Given the established importance of emotional intelligence for coaching efficacy, leadership, communication, and coach–athlete relationships (Thelwell et al., 2008; Hwang et al., 2013; Teques et al., 2019), football coach-education programmes may benefit from deliberately incorporating emotional awareness, communication, relationship management, and professional values into coach development.

CONCLUSION

The present study assessed emotional intelligence among Indian football coaches holding AFC 'B', AIFF 'C', and AIFF 'D' coaching qualifications. A total of 135 coaches participated, with 45 coaches included at each qualification level. Emotional intelligence was examined both as an overall construct and through ten individual components: Self-Awareness, Empathy, Self-Motivation, Emotional Stability, Managing Relations, Integrity, Self-Development, Value Orientation, Commitment, and Altruistic Behaviour. The findings demonstrated that overall emotional intelligence was broadly comparable across the three coaching groups. Although AIFF 'C' coaches recorded the highest mean score ($M = 128.24$), followed by AIFF 'D' ($M = 126.38$) and AFC 'B' coaches ($M = 126.07$), the differences were not statistically significant, $F(2, 132) = 0.615, p = .542$. Thus, the study did not provide evidence that overall emotional intelligence differed according to coaching qualification level. A similar pattern emerged when the individual components of emotional intelligence were examined. No statistically significant differences were identified for Self-Awareness, Empathy, Self-Motivation, Emotional Stability, Managing Relations, Integrity, Self-Development, Commitment, or Altruistic Behaviour. Value Orientation was the only component that significantly differed among the coaching groups, $F(2, 132) = 7.008, p = .001$. Bonferroni pairwise comparisons further demonstrated that AIFF 'C' coaches obtained significantly higher Value Orientation scores than AFC 'B' coaches (mean difference = 1.11, $p = .001$). The differences between AFC 'B' and AIFF 'D' coaches and between AIFF 'C' and AIFF 'D' coaches were not statistically significant. Overall, the results indicate that coaching qualification level was not associated with broad differences in emotional intelligence within the sample studied. The coaches demonstrated relatively similar emotional profiles despite representing different levels of certification. The isolated difference in Value Orientation suggests, however, that particular emotional or value-related characteristics may vary between specific coaching groups even when overall emotional intelligence remains comparable.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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