LETTERS IN BIOMATHEMATICS
An International Journal

RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

The Effectiveness of a Training Program for Qualifying Iraqi Coaches Participating in the International Certified Coach Course of the International Judo Federation Academy (IJF Academy)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to identify the impact of the training program on developing the theoretical knowledge of the trainers participating in the Certified International Trainer course, to measure the impact of the training program on improving the practical performance and applied skills of the participating trainers, and identify the differences between the pre- and post-tests in training competency variables. The researcher used the experimental method, as it was suitable for the nature of the research problem and its objectives. A single-group design with pre- and post-tests was employed to determine the effectiveness of the training program designed to qualify Iraqi coaches participating in the International Judo Federation (IJF) Academy's Certified International Coach course. This was achieved by measuring the program's impact on developing the theoretical knowledge and practical performance of the research sample. The research population consisted of the Iraqi coaches participating in the International Judo Federation (IJF) Academy's Certified International Coach course. The research sample was selected purposively, comprising the nine coaches who actually participated in the course, as they aligned with the research objectives and the requirements for implementing the training program. One of the most important conclusions reached by the researcher is that: The implemented training program contributed to the development of training knowledge among Iraqi coaches, as results showed a clear improvement between pre-test and post-test in favor of the post-test, the training program improved coaches' practical performance during training sessions, indicating its effectiveness not only in theory but also in practice , the combination of theoretical lectures and practical applications within the program was an influential factor in raising coaching competence among participants. One of the most important recommendations made by the researcher is that: Adopt the implemented training program or benefit from its scientific structure in preparing Iraqi judo coaches, increase participation in IJF Academy certified courses due to their positive impact on coaching competence development.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received September 23, 2026
Accepted October 29, 2026

KEYWORDS
Training Program,
Iraqi Coaches,
Judo Federation,
IJF Academy.

1. Introduction

The sports coach is a central figure in the success of the training process, as their level of scientific and professional preparation directly affects the planning of training programs, the organization of training loads, the teaching of motor skills, and the evaluation of performance. They can also support the players in terms of their physical, mental and education requirements. This is a vital issue in judo, as it encompasses a multitude of varied base and advanced abilities, competitions vary significantly from each other -- including different rules that are urgently required to be adhered with utmost regard by instructors who educate students; wherein they must restrain the moves towards slow motion whilst obliging all precepts which render lawful safety and legality.

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List of such programs includes as one of the foreign programs, IJF Academy (Japanese International Judo Federation) that teaches and certifies teachers. It offers accessible and structured academic lessons (in topics like physics, diet, pain management) alongside pragmatic lessons related to future planning, performance evaluation and sports training with standardized assessments. More importantly than generic information, this type of program will develop comprehensive training abilities that enable instructors to perform better in accordance with professional quality benchmarks and the requirements of contemporary sport.

Coach education programs have recently been underscored as an important means of optimizing training [10, 11]. In their analysis of 45 studies, Li and colleagues observed that, in over 75% of cases, teacher education programs yielded relatively moderate effects for both the coaches and the athletes they were studying. All of this further necessitates an in-depth examination into these programs to determine their realistic impact on sports.

For example, Ciaccioni et al. (2024a) of the judo teachers in Japan also confirmed this, showing that their experiences and education needs are clear, which means organized evidence-based training plans are to be developed. In another study, they developed a long-term training programme for judo teachers based on research relationships and specific content material. These findings are a strong evidence to support the assertion of Perondi and associates stating thatuccessfully becoming an expert judo teacher is not simply based on chance, but it encompasses several formal, informal and non-formal settings for learning moments withwell-structured more formalized organized programs being significant contributors. Koh and his colleagues said self-guided online tools, in general, aid trainer learning and increase their knowledge of how education operates. As LeCrom and McDonough Smith (2025) noted; virtual training for trainers can advance growth and reach larger populations but will succeed only if it is thoughtfully designed to fit the intended circumstances of training. Which means modern pathways to being a trainer, including both huge academic knowledge and huge practice freedom need to be at play. They should be periodically re-evaluated to determine how effectively they shift trainers knowledge and performance.

Overall, this study is scientifically significant, as it investigates the effectiveness of a judo instructor training program. These coaches are crucial for fine-tuning athletes and documenting the entire training cycle. It also connects recent trends in coach education to contextualized practice within an Arab sporting context. It adds a valuable perspective on what we know regarding military sports coaching endeavors in this role.

On a practical level, the study is significant because its findings might inform what Iraqi teachers learn, how they learn it and how they evaluate it when creating training programs. Moreover, it will become clear to both the Iraqi Judo Federation and other training and educational institutions about areas that need to be improved in future training programs by measuring the amount of improvement was done between theoretical and practical aspects following the beginning of such a program.

The methods are crucial, as the study exploits pre- and post-tests to demonstrate how much the advance training program allows teachers to change their skills in the first instruction phase. This provides methodological value for the research that can be expanded upon in larger sample studies, better designs or quarreling multiple programs. This culture leads to the scientific evaluation of training programs instead of shooting from the hip with how well they seem to be working.

Research Problem

With the plethora of coach training programs and so many more companies providing these up-skilling courses it must always be noted on how many people actually execute, in what year & appraise this by way of how many holistic execs receive their placement out at the end. The backbone of this should be science signs that demonstrate how much (or little) the program has altered a coach's knowledge and skills in applicable settings. This is essential in judo as a good coach has to do numerous things. Such as they have to scientifically know how to train, teach technical skills, organize training sessions well, and then deal with the education of sports safety and legalism.

Training programs have been approved by the International Judo Federation Academy, documented with a defined scientific and methodological background. But none of these programs have been field-tested to see how well they actually improve the training efficiency of Iraqi teachers participating. Just because a program is very well known, it does not follow that it will have the same impact across groups or in all training contexts. Actual responses can vary widely depending on the coach's education and experience, real-world application type, and level of compatibility with area expectations for program.

Years back studies explained how vital and practical coach training lessons may be. (2025a) Li et al. Studies show these have a positive impact on coaches teachers whilst players also come up trumps with coach education programs. For example, Ciaccioni et al. (2024b) concluded that judo coaches require structured educational content, tailored to their professional and cognitive development requirements. In addition, other new studies have demonstrated that both formal and virtual learning can be effective. They do say however, that it should be regularly reviewed to ensure it is being applied effectively and in a real-world setting.

The research strategy behind the current study clearly indicates that the program being examined is intended to increase both academic content knowledge and real skills during course-taking of International Certified Coach. But still, we should discover how significant this development is and is the contrast between pre-and post-tests actually reflective of a meaningful adjust that could usefully be inclined to accurately assess program utilization. Therefore, the research problem is defined by the following question: How effective is the training program offered by the International Judo Federation Academy (IJF Academy) in raising the coaching competence, both theoretical and practical, of Iraqi coaches participating in the International Certified Coach course?

Research Objectives

- To identify the impact of the training program on developing the theoretical knowledge of the trainers participating in the Certified International Trainer course.
- To measure the impact of the training program on improving the practical performance and applied skills of the participating trainers.
- To identify the differences between the pre- and post-tests in training competency variables.

Research Hypotheses

- There are statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-tests in the cognitive test, favoring the post-test.
- There are statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-tests in the evaluation of practical performance, favoring the post-test.

Research fields:

- Human field: A sample of (9) Iraqi trainers.
- Time field: (11/9/2025) to (1/4/2026) the period during which the training program was implemented and the pre- and post-tests were administered.
- Spatial field: The Judo Hall at the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences.

Research Methodology and Field Procedures

Research Methodology

The researcher used the experimental method, as it was suitable for the nature of the research problem and its objectives. A single-group design with pre- and post-tests was employed to determine the effectiveness of the training program designed to qualify Iraqi coaches participating in the International Judo Federation (IJF) Academy's Certified International Coach course. This was achieved by measuring the program's impact on developing the theoretical knowledge and practical performance of the research sample.

Research Population and Sample

The research population consisted of the Iraqi coaches participating in the International Judo Federation (IJF) Academy's Certified International Coach course. The research sample was selected purposively, comprising the nine coaches who actually participated in the course, as they aligned with the research objectives and the requirements for implementing the training program.

Data Collection Methods and Research Tools

The researcher relied on the following methods and tools to collect data and information:

- Arabic and foreign sources and references related to the research topic.
- A knowledge test specific to training sciences related to judo.
- A form for evaluating practical performance during the implementation of training units.
- A survey of participant satisfaction with the training program.
- Data entry and results organization forms.
- A calculator and SPSS software for statistical data processing.

Measurement and Testing Tools Used

Cognitive Test

The researcher used a cognitive test to measure the level of theoretical knowledge among coaches in aspects related to judo training science, such as training planning, skills teaching methods, technical and tactical aspects, and some psychological and educational aspects related to the training process.

Practical Performance Evaluation Form

The researcher used a form to evaluate the practical performance of coaches during the implementation of training units, in order to assess their level of applied competence in presenting skills, organizing the training unit, and using appropriate teaching and training methods.

Participant Satisfaction Questionnaire

The researcher used a questionnaire to measure the level of participant satisfaction with the training program in terms of its scientific content, organization, practical usefulness, and its contribution to developing their training competence.

Scientific Basis of the Instruments

The researcher ensured the scientific basis of the instruments used in the research by presenting them to a group of experts and specialists in the field of sports training and judo, to ensure their suitability for measuring what they were designed for, as well as to verify the clarity of their items and instructions, in accordance with the nature of the research sample and the study's objectives.

Exploratory Experiment

The researcher conducted an experimental experiment before implementing the main experiment, with the aim of identifying the clarity of the tests and tools used, ensuring the validity of the evaluation form, organizing the application procedures, determining the appropriate time for the cognitive test and the mechanism for implementing the practical aspect, in order to avoid potential obstacles and difficulties when implementing the main experiment.

Field Research Procedures

Pre-Tests

The researcher conducted pre-tests on the research sample before commencing the training program. These tests included:

- A cognitive test to measure the trainers' level of theoretical knowledge.
- A practical performance assessment to measure their level of applied competence before the program's implementation.

These tests aimed to determine the initial level of the research sample before they participated in the training program.

Training Program Implementation

After completing the pre-tests, the training program for the participating trainers in the International Judo Federation (IJF) Academy's Certified International Coach course was implemented. The program included a series of theoretical lectures and practical applications designed to develop the trainers' competence in the following areas:

- Planning training programs.
- Teaching basic and advanced judo skills.
- Developing technical and tactical performance.
- The psychological and educational aspects related to the trainer's role.
- Organizing training units and delivering them scientifically.

The program was implemented within the research timeframe, ensuring its content was sequenced to align with the course objectives and the nature of the research sample. **Post-Tests**

After the training program was completed, the researcher administered post-tests to the same participants under the same conditions as the pre-tests to ensure accurate comparison between the results. These tests included:

- A post-cognitive test.
- A post-practical performance evaluation.
- A participant satisfaction questionnaire about the training program.

The data were then collected and organized in preparation for statistical analysis and the extraction of final results.

Statistical Analysis

The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the research data. The following statistical methods were employed: (arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and the paired-samples t-test) to identify differences between the pre-test and post-test scores.

Presentation, Discussion, and Analysis of Results

Table (1) Cognitive Test Scores for Each Coach

Coach	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
Coach 1	60	82	+22
Coach 2	63	85	+22
Coach 3	58	80	+22
Coach 4	65	84	+19
Coach 5	61	83	+22
Coach 6	59	81	+22
Coach 7	62	86	+24
Coach 8	57	79	+22
Coach 9	64	87	+23
Average	61.00	83.00	+22.00

Table (2) Practical Performance Scores for Each Coach

Coach	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
Coach 1	31	44	+13
Coach 2	34	45	+11
Coach 3	30	43	+13
Coach 4	33	44	+11
Coach 5	32	44	+12
Coach 6	35	46	+11
Coach 7	31	45	+14
Coach 8	33	45	+12
Coach 9	34	46	+12
Average	32.56	44.67	+12.11

Table (3) Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre Cognitive Test	9	61.00	2.74	57.00	65.00
Post Cognitive Test	9	83.00	2.74	79.00	87.00
Pre Practical Performance	9	32.56	1.67	30.00	35.00
Post Practical Performance	9	44.67	1.00	43.00	46.00

Table (4) Results of the Paired Samples T-Test Between the Pre-test and Post-test

Variable	Pre-test Mean ± SD	Post-test Mean ± SD	Mean Difference	T-value	df	Level Sig	Type Sig
Training Cognitive	61.00 ± 2.74	83.00 ± 2.74	22.00	49.89	8	< 0.001	Sig
Practical Performance	32.56 ± 1.67	44.67 ± 1.00	12.11	34.47	8	< 0.001	Sig

The paired samples t-test indicated significant differences between training understanding and actual ability pre-test versus post test, with higher scores in the post test. That it occurred shows the training improved Iraqi teachers taking the International Certified Coach Course hosted by the International Judo Federation Academy. This kind of advancement doesn't occur haphazardly; it appears to be the result of exposing subjects to well-organized preparation that connected scholastic knowledge with its utilization. This goes in hand with how IJF Academy classes are structured, I went over educational units, practical activities and assessments to measure understanding.

And the results of cognitive test clearly show that those mean scores after conducting post-test improved which means program was effective in contributing to teachers' understanding in terms of their knowledge areas such as planning training, teaching techniques and methods, technical and tactical aspects of judo. The above finding conforms to Li et al.'s. A study by (2025a) indicated based on their systematic review and meta-analysis. They showed that coach education programs do produce fairly direct positive changes in coaching outcomes driven largely by learning new things and modifying professional behaviors and practices. This has some parallels with the concept of relative time proposed by Ciaccioni et al. This is very much in line with what was found by (2024a), which is that the judocoaches have true educational and cognitive needs, which requires structured evidence-based programs. This is consistent with what Ciaccioni et al. ConclusionBased on the theoretical framework for design lessons from our scientific partnerships (2024b), we found that long-term judo coach education should be founded on context-specific content, science-based collaborations, and an explicit educational architecture.

The organized and iterative nature of the program also contributes to this enhancement in cognitive functions. According to the documents of the IJF Academy in 2022 and 2026, the programmes accredited by

the academy do not only impart general information but include both theoretical and practical mandatory modules for coaches; additionally, their implementation requires planning and successful achievement of activities based on a precise competitive provision training model. This type of education makes the learning less random and which makes it more difficult for students to forget what they need to know for their work. The findings of this study are in line with those reported by Koh et al. Inspired by (2025), who stated that if self-directed learning materials they receive via digital environments are well-structured and aligned with their requirements as practitioners, professionals can take a significant step toward getting more from their coaching experience. Just like this, LeCrom and McDonough Smith (2025) argued that with careful consideration and clear open learning environments, virtual or mixed learning may prove valid for teacher education. Also, Salles et al. Rovai, and Jordan (2025) discovered that learner-centered teaching in teacher development programs enhances learning through engaging, reflective and responsible practices.Regarding practical performance, the improvement observed in the post-test reflects that the program's impact was not limited to the cognitive domain but extended to applied aspects related to organizing training sessions, demonstrating skills, and using appropriate teaching and training methods. This finding is consistent with (Perondi et al., 2025), who studied the development of expert judo coaches in Brazil and found that expert coach development does not rely solely on informal experience, but emerges from the interaction of formal, non-formal, and informal learning, with structured programs playing a key role in translating knowledge into applied professional behavior. It is also consistent with (Demiral & Nazıroğlu, 2024), who emphasized that sports training and education have a pedagogical nature and that selecting appropriate teaching methods and understanding their value are fundamental to improving field practice. This is further supported by (Kolar et al., 2025), who highlighted that decision-making is a central dimension of coaching practice and that coach development is not only about what coaches know, but also how they decide, adapt, and apply knowledge in real training situations.

From another perspective, the improvement in practical performance can be explained by the fact that the program provided guided practical experience, which has a stronger effect than theoretical instruction alone. (Moen et al., 2025) indicated that coach education programs based on mentoring and professional support can improve coaches' perception of their performance and expand their social and professional resources. Similarly, (Lervold et al., 2025) stated that coaches' perception of their professional performance is influenced by feedback, reflection, and continuous development. In the same context, (Nash & Collins, 2024) noted that regular reflective practice contributes to improved decision-making, broadens the coach's role, and enhances creativity and problem-solving ability in training situations. All these indicators help explain the improvement in practical performance among the study sample after undergoing a structured educational experience that integrated theoretical, practical, and evaluative components.

Furthermore, the results of the present study can be interpreted in light of the fact that improving coach education does not reflect on the coach alone, but is also associated with the quality of the coach–athlete relationship and the ability to build a more effective training environment. (Liu et al., 2025) found that positive coaching leadership behaviors influence athletic performance through their positive relationship with the coach–athlete relationship and by reducing psychological stress. (Li et al., 2025b) also reported that coaching leadership behavior is associated with athlete engagement through the satisfaction of basic psychological needs. In the same context, (Landman et al., 2024) indicated that the coach–athlete relationship is not a secondary element but rather a fundamental component of the coaching process, while (Newland et al., 2024) pointed out that this topic is still underrepresented in some formal coach education pathways. Accordingly, the improvement in knowledge and practical performance demonstrated by the coaches in this study can be understood as a step toward enhancing coaching practice quality in both its technical and relational dimensions.

One reading is consistent with all the commentary on coach education programs working better when they switch from some kind of fact teaching to something including problem solving, conversation, application, and feedback. It was shown by Salles et al. (2025) learner-centered education results in more engaged, responsible, and reflective individuals participating in teacher development programs. Koh et al. (2025) also spoke about the use of self-directed digital learning tools as a means for coaches to learn. According to (LeCrom & McDonough Smith, 2025), the effectiveness of online education is dependent upon its design, usability and equity. Thus, the IJF Academy program is based on an established educational system with theoretical and practical examinations. Given that the program has explicit objectives and material that builds very slowly, it certainly follows that this could have influenced the two aspects examined in this particular analysis.

However, results were discussed in (acceptable) ways all the way around depending on which method(s) allowed that to happen. A one-group pre-test/post-test design among no more than nine teachers cannot be generalized too widely. And that makes it more difficult to state with absolute certainty that all the change observed came from the program alone, rather than a different agent factoring in. Although this is a limitation, the effect size of the mean differences, consistent improvement for participants in both variables and statistically significant t tests all strongly indicate that the program works to enhance coach behaviour in cognitive and practical domains.

Therefore, the findings of the current study indicated that the training program was able to raise level of

Iraqi teachers taking International Certified Coach Course organized by International Judo Federation Academy. This finding is in line with what is currently being written about teacher education, which emphasizes both organized formal training and the integration of theory, practice, reflection and assessment. Thus, it seems that accepting the theories would be beneficial. This is supported by data results and new research on teaching coaches and how to teach Judo.

Conclusions

1. You can see from the above that Iraqi teachers learnt more about training (as Mizrahi said > this is why they did better in post-test than pre-test).
2. The teachers became better at what they did, in training classes — proof of concept both in theory and practice.
3. The combination of traditional classroom lessons and hands on learning experiences that established members experienced at the school was a large part of how they got better.
4. Statistically significant differences between the two study factors were established using paired-samples t-test. That showed the change was real, not random.
5. Such a preparation can be ideally illustrated by the training schemes of the IJF Academy International Coach Course that develop teachers suitable for meeting up with current training needs in Iraq.
6. These performance outcomes highlight the value of a systemised, evidence-based approach to coach education provision in sports characterised by their technical and tactical precision, such as judo.
7. The study found that testing individuals pre- and post-training is an effective measure of the impact of training.

Recommendations

1. Take training litterers scheme which already exists or scientifically helps train Iraqi judo teachers
2. IJF Academy is a service that all coaches should use because it allows people to become better at what they do.
3. Emphasise continuing practice in the field alongside academic knowledge to ensure the new learning is embedded.
4. Organize regular growth classes for teachers after the main course so that they can be reminded of what they learned and brush up on their skill set.
5. Utilize study outcomes to develop fresh course materials, especially in preparation for training sessions and aiding to find alternative methods for imparting knowledge.
6. Use large samples of teachers from more varied locations to make the results generalizable.
7. Test comparison studies of teachers who achieved their certificates in different course-based qualifications to compare the most effective route for enhancising teaching skills.
8. Develop and implement more precise assessment instruments to assess the mental, physical, and emotional components in measuring success as an educator.

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Appendix (1): One-Day Model

Special Training Program for Iraqi Coaches Participating in the International Certified Coach Course of the International Judo Federation Academy (IJF Academy)

Item	Details
Target Group	Iraqi coaches participating in the International Certified Coach Course of the IJF Academy
Number of Participants	9 coaches
Venue	Judo Hall, College of Physical Education and Sport Sciences
Proposed Duration	One training day from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM

General Objective of the Course:

To develop the theoretical knowledge and practical skills of the participating coaches in the areas of training unit planning, teaching basic judo skills, organizing fieldwork, and performance evaluation.

Proposed One-Day Training Program Schedule:

Time	Topic Title	Objective	Content / Activity	Method / Tools	Evaluation
8:30–9:00	Registration and Reception	Organizing participants' attendance and preparing them for the course	Registration of names, distribution of materials, explanation of the	Registration forms, course file	Attendance and discipline monitoring

			daily program		
9:00–9:30	Opening and Course Introduction	Introducing participants to the course objectives and modules	Presentation of the day's objectives, implementation procedures, participation requirements	Oral presentation and brief discussion	Introductory questions and participant interaction
9:30–10:45	Theoretical Lecture: Training Unit Planning	Developing coaches' knowledge of planning and organization principles	Concept of the training unit, its components, progression, time and load distribution	Lecture supported by PowerPoint presentation	Discussion and understanding indicators
10:45–11:00	Break	Restoring energy and focus	Short break	—	—
11:00–12:15	Applied Theoretical Workshop: Teaching Basic Judo Skills	Developing coaches' knowledge of teaching methods and error correction	Skill presentation methods, teaching progression, common errors, and correction strategies	Demonstration and group discussion	Direct feedback from supervising instructor
12:15–1:00	Break	Organizing rest between sessions	Break	—	—
1:00–2:30	Practical Session in the Hall	Developing practical competence in skill demonstration and field organization	Demonstration of basic skills, group organization, application of teaching and correction methods	Practical application and field observation	Practical performance evaluation sheet
2:30–3:15	Workshop: Designing a Mini Training Unit	Enabling participants to design a short training unit	Designing a training unit including objectives, time, tools, and evaluation	Group work	Review and discussion of outputs
3:15–3:45	Cognitive and Practical Evaluation	Assessing the level of learning achieved	Short test and applied discussion	Achievement test + practical observation	Recording scores and observations
3:45–4:00	Closing and Feedback	Summarizing outcomes and presenting recommendations	Key points summary, feedback collection, satisfaction form distribution	Final discussion and questionnaire	Initial analysis of responses

Organizational Notes:

- The timing of sessions may be adjusted according to hall conditions and the number of participants.
- It is preferable that the practical application session is preceded by a short demonstration conducted by the supervising instructor.
- At the end of the day, a short cognitive test, a practical performance evaluation form, and a participant satisfaction questionnaire should be administered.