

The Relationship Between Leadership Coaching Style and Team Cohesion in Team and Individual Sports

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Abstract: The present study aims to review the relationship between coaching leadership style and Team cohesion. The subjects of the study were all the elite athletes of team and individual disciplines in Tabriz in 2011 that would be sent to the provincial championships. 250 athletes were randomly selected. The instruments for the research were: standard leadership scale for sport questionnaire (LSS) and Team cohesion questionnaire (TCQ). The questionnaires were reviewed and their validities were approved by 15 academic experts and professors. Using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the researchers calculated the reliabilities of 95%, 90% respectively. This study is a descriptive -correlative one which is performed using field study method. Descriptive-Statistical method was used to present the information in tables and graphs and inferential statistical method (Spearman Correlation) was used to determine the relationship between coaching styles and Team cohesion and finally Mann-Whitney U test method was utilized to statistical comparison between coaches and male and female athletes in team and individual sports. The results showed that there was a clear and significant positive relationship between all aspects of team cohesion and training and practice leadership, task-oriented leadership, and relationship-oriented leadership styles. But there is no significant positive relationship between team cohesion dimensions and directive leadership style. The behavior of coaches in leadership style has a determining role in team cohesion, so coaches can improve the team cohesion by choosing an appropriate leadership style which consequently leads to success of athletes and achievement in competitions.

Key words: Leadership styles of coaches, team cohesion, team and individual sports.

Introduction

Since leadership has an effective role on the effectiveness of individuals and group, it is considered an important process in human resource management. Effective leadership improves performance, motivates subordinates, and satisfies them. In any organization or group, leadership is the major process and the success or failure of the organization or the team is attributed to it (Chelladurai, 1998). When a sports team wins, the privilege is often given to the coach. There are many definitions for leadership some of which we wish to express briefly here:

- Leadership as a process is making use of influence, without force, to guide and coordinate the activities of members in order to achieve a defined goal.
- Leadership as a quality means a set of features which is given to those who successfully apply such influence.
- Barrow (1977) defines leadership as a behavioral process of influencing individuals and groups for achieving goals.

This definition is important from the point that it reveals the need for integration between the leadership and the members of the group.

It seems that different task or tasks require specific leadership styles, and offering the obligations of individuals and teams is an important part of leadership. Research has shown that the type of the leadership of coaches has a decisive role on sports participation among individuals (Joaquin, 2006).

Educators are also aware of the fact that they have vital roles and impact on athletes, sports teams, processes, and individual and social consequences in sports teams. The extension of this impact even goes beyond the sports environment and affects other spheres of the lives of the athletes, so educators can have positive or negative impacts on the living environment of athletes at different levels of championship.

Coaches are trying to create conditions for any athlete to maximize opportunities for talents to be updated at the same time to achieve team success (Martens, 2006).

Coaches are people who are capable to understand athletes and games at the peak and know how to teach the athletes to try with regard to specific rules of a game.

Coaching is also a process in which the coach tries to affect on the behavior of athletes to perform his desired reaction, but the coaching is more than just a coach to tell the athlete what to do. Coaching covers many

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situational features for example a coach should know what to say to a specific athlete and how to say them. (Kolaric 2004)

Leadership model in exercise is a framework for testing and evaluating the effective processes the recognition of which can affect the activities and reactions of athletes. The central process of leadership model shows the behaviors of the coach in a certain way which reflect the views of all athletes and their behavior is based on it and it is considered a criterion for the athletes to evaluate the behavior of the coaches.

One of the most important aspects in making the decision in coaches is choosing coaching style; that is how the coach decides, what skills and strategies he teaches, how he organizes practice and race and what role he considers for athletes. (Hosseini 2007)

Since most of sporting activities are performed in group forms, when players play for getting results, rather than trying to improve the performance and the progress of individual athletes, the forces and internal processes and factors affecting the performance of their group should be considered. (Bird & Ann Mary, 1991)

Ramazani-zhad and Hosseini (2009) reviewed the relationship between leadership styles of coaches and team cohesion in the Iranian football league clubs. The results showed that most coaches make use of exercise behavior and practice instead of using democratic behavior. The findings also revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between task and social cohesion behavior and training and practice leadership, democratic, social support. While this with the authoritarian leadership style reported is reported to be significant and negative.

Mohaddes (2010) studied the relationship between leadership style of coaches and team cohesion and satisfaction of athletes in Iranian National teams and found that there was a significant positive relationship between training and practice leadership, duty and relationship oriented styles and all aspects of team cohesion.

Nazarudin (2009) reviewed the leadership styles and athletes' satisfaction of college basketball teams in Malaysia. The findings showed that athletes preferred the behaviors of training and practice leadership, feedback, social and democratic support, but authoritarian behavior proved to have the least average.

In Richard Norris' Research (2010), The relationship between coaching style and its impact on athletes' motivation and also on their learning in the college teams was reviewed. The findings of this study showed that dynamic leadership style had the most significant impact on the internal motivation of athletes, while the use of mild behavior had the greatest impact on the external motivation of athletes, so he realized that in this type of the coaches' leadership style, when the emotional message turns to be negative, the stimulus stops.

In this research we intend to determine the Relationship between Leadership Coaching Style and Team Cohesion of Elite Sportsmen and Sportswomen in Team and Individual Fields

1. What impact does coaching leadership style have on team cohesion in team and individual athletes among elite disciplines?
2. What is the difference between team cohesion in team and individual elite athletes with regard to coaching leadership style?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is a descriptive – correlative type in which the subjects were all of the elite male and female athletes in individual and team sports consisting of 97 people in team sports and 101 in individual sports.

Sampling of this research was of available type and then random selection was done. In team sports we chose all the teams sent to the championship competitions. They included 75 athletes including 38 male and 37 female athletes. The number of elite individual athletes was 123 including 59 male and 64 female athletes.

A total of 198 elite athletes in team and individual athletes were elite as examples.

The measuring tools for the study were two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was about the leadership style scale in sports which has been used repeatedly by researchers in physical education field in the country. This questionnaire consisted of 43 questions considering Likert scale. Its validity was determined and the reliability in this study was 95%.

The next measurement tool was the team cohesion questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 18 questions which ranged from completely disagree to completely agree, and it was validated by Mohaddes in 2010 and was used in her research, in the present study its reliability is 90%.

The reliability of the research questionnaires was verified by 15 experts in sports management. First, the necessary research permits were obtained from the physical education department officials of the city in Tabriz. Then referring to practice area for preparing the teams, we distributed the related questionnaires among the elite athletes of team and individual sports. In the presence of the researcher the athletes filled in the forms and handed them in to her. Descriptive statistical method (Spearman correlation method) was used to determine the relationship between coaching styles and team cohesion and for comparing coaches and male and female athletes in different individual and team sports, Yuman Witney's Statistic method was used. For the analysis of the data SPSS software version 18 was used.

Results:

The subjects of the study consisted of all elite team and individual athletes (male and female) of Tabriz, including 97 males and 101 females. The highest frequency (39.4) was about those of less than 20 years old and the lowest (5.1) was about those of above 35 years old. The highest frequency of team sports (13.6) belonged to volleyball team and the lowest (4.5) was about swimming and table tennis. In the male group, team cohesion of the athletes in task integration and social tendency to group were significant at ($p < 1\%$) level, and in task tendency to group at ($p < 5\%$) level it was significant. But in female group none of the reviewed team cohesion factors were significant.

Table 1: Comparison of the dimensions of team cohesion from the perspective of male athletes.

Team Cohesion Factors Kind of Sport		Tendency to Social Group	Task Integration	Tendency to Task Group	Social Integration
Average	Individual Sport	7.34	7.83	7.11	7.03
Number		59	59	59	59
Deviation		1.67	1.45	1.78	1.63
Median		8.00	8.67	7.67	7.50
Average	Team Sport	6.43	6.82	6.33	6.35
Number		38	38	38	38
Deviation		1.64	2.07	2.08	1.84
Median		6.50	7.00	6.83	6.83
Average	Total	6.98	7.43	6.81	6.76
Number		97	97	97	97
Deviation		1.71	1.78	1.93	1.74
Median		7.00	8.00	7.33	7.17

Table 1 shows that among the dimensions of team cohesion, task integration was a priority task in both groups. With regard to total mean, we can say that social integration had the least priority.

Table 2: Comparison of the dimensions of team cohesion from the perspective of female athletes .

Team Cohesion Factors Kind of Sport		Tendency to Social Group	Task Integration	Tendency to Task Group	Social Integration
Average	Individual Sport	7.86	8.15	7.55	7.35
Number		64	64	64	64
Deviation		1.52	1.22	1.45	1.61
Median		8.67	9.00	7.75	7.67
Average	Team Sport	7.22	7.83	7.68	7.48
Number		37	37	37	37
Deviation		1.92	1.62	1.30	1.35
Median		7.67	8.33	8.00	7.83
Average	Total	7.62	8.03	7.60	7.40
Number		101	101	101	101
Deviation		1.70	1.38	1.40	1.51
Median		8.33	8.67	7.83	7.83

Table 2 shows that among the dimensions of team cohesion, task integration was a priority task in both groups. With regard to total mean, we can say that social integration had the least priority.

Table 3: There is a significant relationship between leadership style of male coaches and team cohesion of elite athletes in Tabriz.

Leadership Style	Democratic	Training and Practice	Task Oriented	Relationship Oriented	Authoritative
Team Cohesion					
Social Unity					
Spearman Correlation	0.488**	0.573**	0.594**	0.622**	-0.035
Mutual Significance	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.731
Tendency to Task Group					
Spearman Correlation	0.391**	0.589**	0.625**	0.653**	-0.087
Mutual Significance	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.398
Task Unity					
Spearman Correlation	0.372**	0.508**	0.544**	0.592**	-0.069
Mutual Significance	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.501
Tendency to Social Group					
Spearman Correlation	0.424**	0.490**	0.468**	0.548**	0.096
Mutual Significance	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.347

Table 3 Shows that except in the authoritative style between all reviewed leadership styles and team cohesion there was a significant relationship as a result the hypothesis of the research is approved, that is to say there is a significant relationship between leadership style of male coaches and team cohesion of elite athletes in Tabriz.

Table 4: There is a significant relationship between leadership style of female coaches and team cohesion of elite athletes in Tabriz.

Leadership Style	Democratic	Training and Practice	Task Oriented	Relationship Oriented	Authoritative
Team Cohesion					
Spearman Correlation	0.374**	0.350**	0.436**	0.413**	0.025
Mutual Significance	0.00	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.808
Tendency to Task Group					
Spearman Correlation	0.181	0.379**	0.472**	0.465**	-0.104
Mutual Significance	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.299
Task Unity					
Spearman Correlation	0.205*	0.330**	0.362**	0.436**	-0/0101
Mutual Significance	0.040	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.313
Tendency to Social Group					
Spearman Correlation	0.368**	0.215*	0.282**	0.314**	0.107
Mutual Significance	0.000	0.031	0.004	0.001	0.286

Table 4 Shows that except in the authoritative style between all reviewed leadership styles and team cohesion there was a significant relationship as a result the hypothesis of the research is approved, that is to say there is a significant relationship between leadership style of female coaches and team cohesion of elite athletes in Tabriz.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The results showed that coaches in sports clubs in Tabriz make use of training and practice leadership style. About the coaches' use of different leadership and behavioral styles, the research results of Jabal Ameli (2009), Khuran, et al (2008), Fallah (2008), Yousefi (2007), Hosseini (2007), Moradi (2001), Chelladurai (1995), Riemer and Chelladurai (1995), Serpa (1999), Tsutsumi (2000), Villainy, Martin and Mulsky (2006) and Nazarudin (2009) show that coaches use training and practice style most. Chelladurai and Carron (1983), also found that elite athletes are concerned about their coaches' knowledge and awareness of personal communications.

It is obvious that a coach should not only consider training and performing athletic skills but he should also pay attention to psychological processes of an athlete and the entire team. Since the performance of an individual athlete affects on many physical and psychological factors, the recognition of these factors has a determining role in coaching.

From the points of view of athletes, in this study, coaches rarely used democratic and authoritative leadership styles which are consistent with the results of the researches of Hosseini (2007), Sherman (1996), Lin and Chia (2005). Of course Jabal Ameli (2009), Kazemi (1990), Moradi (2004), Serpa (1991) and Bennett and Manuel (2000) showed that the degree of using democratic leadership style is more than that of authoritative style. But with regard to the theoretical principles, we can consider these two styles determining in decision making which are rarely used by coaches.

Thus, seldom do coaches consider players' view in making decisions about training practices and adopting appropriate strategies for competition and general issues related to the team (democratic style), and usually they decide on their own. Feedback from players on important coaching issues and considering their view points in decision making about how to play in competitions are the behavioral characteristics of a democratic coach.

In the review of the priority of team cohesion, in Men's group task cohesion (Tendency to Task Group and Task Integration), had the highest priority, in other words, athletes had better understanding of the two group and team cohesions related to duty or task group than the social cohesion, and in women's group social tendency to group and task integration had the highest priority. This shows the significance of integration and unity in achieving team goals, acceptance of responsibility for losses or poor performance of players in the team and good communication between team members on duty and during practice and competition. There is also a significant relationship between male and female coaches leadership style and team cohesion of team and individual elite athletes. Furthermore the present study showed that there are significant differences between team cohesion of team and individual elite male athletes in Tabriz, while the elite female athletes in Tabriz in team and individual sports, there is no significant difference. In males' group, team cohesion of thletes, in task integration and social tendency to group, was significant at ($p < 1\%$) level and it was significant in task tendency at ($p < 5\%$) level. While in females' group in none of the reviewed team cohesion factors there was no significant difference

About the relationship between leadership styles of coaches and team cohesion Moradi (2004), Hosseini (2007), Shields and colleagues (1997), Chaw and Bruce (1999), Range (2002), Carron (2004), Murray (2006), RamezaniNazhad (2009) and Mohaddess (2010), reported a significant positive relationship between task and social cohesions and training and practice, democratic, social support and positive feedback leadership styles,

and a significant negative relationship with the authoritarian leadership style. But Kolaric (2004) did not notice a significant relationship between leadership style of coaches and team cohesion of high school players.

In general, when players basically concentrate on the team's performance and success, cohesion leads to improvement (such as task cohesion). It is possible for a team to have a strong cohesion but when athletes participate in the team only to satisfy their own social needs and affiliations, the team does not have a good performance, because in this case the forces of cohesion among team members is associated with the growth of friendship and camaraderie, but if cohesion is directed to on task and achievement it can lead to team's success. Success mostly depends on the constructive interaction of team members during the race and using appropriate approaches and skills than on friendly and harmonious atmosphere in which players may be.

Team cohesion is part of a team's success because the more the cohesion among the team members the better they will be able to demonstrate their abilities. That way coaches can create high levels of team cohesion depends on the coach's motivational techniques to ensure that his athletes will compete at the highest level.

Based on the research results coaches should emphasize more on team cohesion and use training and practice and relation oriented styles which have the greatest impact on task cohesion and social cohesion to help establish friendly relationship among the players, create social peace, resolve disputes among team members and create maximum opportunities for team members to be together. At the same time improving their understanding of the behavior of their players and also supporting them, coaches should behave honestly and kindly with athletes and acknowledge them in time and appropriately.

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