



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLE AND COACHING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR SELECTED TEAM SPORTS IN UNIVERSITIES OF SANANDAJ

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Abstract:

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between leadership style (LS) and emotional intelligence (EI) of coaches in selected team sports in universities of Sanandaj (Iran). An applied-correlational descriptive-survey method was used. Statistical population included all male and female coaches in sports chosen from volleyball and handball in universities of Sanandaj during the 2014-2015 academic year (n=58). Whole subjects were selected as the sample. Two questionnaires of Emotional Intelligence (Syber Yashring), and leadership style (L.S.S) were used to collect data. Research reliability was determined with Cronbach's alpha test for intelligence emotional ($\alpha=0.824$) and leadership style ($\alpha=0.718$) questionnaires. Data analysis was carried out through Kolmogorov-Smirnov test in order to determine normal distribution for data. Moreover, person's correlation coefficient test was applied to measure research hypothesis. Result of Pearson's test showed that there was relatively positive relationship between leadership style of "positive feedback" and coaching emotional intelligence in selected team sports ($r=0.275$, $p=0.036$). However, there was no significant relationship between other leadership styles and emotional intelligence ($p>0.05$). Due to significant relationship between some factors of emotional intelligence and leadership styles, it is recommended to consider emotional intelligence competencies to select team coaches, in addition to alternative coaching skills. Also, training courses before holding sports events may be established to enhance emotional intelligence of coaches, as the emotional intelligence abilities can be educated.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, leadership styles, coaching

1. Introduction

Like any social areas, the survival of sports needs to seek for its development and to expand and strengthen its dimensions. As much as societies have stepped towards participation in sports, the role of coaches becomes more apparent (Eskandarlu, 2010). One of the most important aspects of coaching is to determine leadership styles. This aspect determines that: how coaches decide? Which skills and strategies are taught? How such skills are taught? How practice and championship programs are organized? And more importantly, which role he/she make for athletes in decision-making process? In some cases, it is necessary coaches be able to combine and adopt two roles or more. Coaches, for example, should be able to offer roles of teacher, management, etc. simultaneously when needed (Jabbari, 2000). As a leader, coach has to create the most powerful motivations in their athletes by selecting best leadership style, and therefore result in improved athletic performance and achievements on sport fields (Moradi, 2006). Coaches have a chance to develop self-control in learners' life by teaching teamwork and cooperative skills; it means how they must show respect for the rights of others, while responding their behaviors (Lumpkin, 2008).

For the purpose of this study, the focus is on the leadership scale developed by Chelladurai and Saleh, and coaching leadership styles will be discussed under five common leadership styles; namely, training and instruction, social support, democratic, autocratic, and positive feedback. The authors surrounded three common processes of the leadership scale for sports:

1. identifying preferences of leadership (coaching) behavior from athletes' viewpoints;
2. assessing perceived leadership (coaching) behavior from athletes' viewpoints; and
3. Evaluating perceived leadership (coaching) behavior from coaches' viewpoints (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1978).

In recent years, on the other hand, the concept of Emotional Intelligence has been increasingly studied in the literature as the structure associated with different human behaviors within different situations (Chan, 2004). Martinez defines the emotional intelligence as the array consisting of skills, capabilities, and non-cognitive merits affecting on individual coping ability with environmental demands and pressures (Rainer, 1994).

However, research has shown evidences that EI is correlated with health, happiness, life effectiveness, and performance desirability in workplaces (Tischler et al., 2002).

Among theorists on emotional intelligence, Goleman (1995) describes EI in five clusters: self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills (Golman, 1995).

Furthermore, among the subjects investigated by leadership studies is leaders' emotional intelligence, since the appropriate application of emotions in human relationships, understanding self's and others' moods, self-control, sympathy with others, and the ability to use emotions positively for thinking and understanding are the notions of EI which greatly affect behaviors of leaders with subordinates. Regarding the definitions of EI different subscales for a wide range of professionals, tasks, and responsibilities like management, the role of EI seems undeniable and significant due to the importance of interaction and transaction involving different individuals from different personality and emotional characteristics (Moradi, 2006). The effectiveness of great leaders is associated with their strong insights and ideas or their strategies; however, the most important is that great leaders act with the use of emotions (Golman et al., 2002). Since EI, unlike intellectual intelligence, can be changes and learned (Ansariet al., 2010), the relationship between leadership style and EI can help managers enhance their effectiveness, encourage athletes to make efforts and improve the quality of skills, and play their role in leadership desirably by using scientific findings and new managerial approaches.

On the assessment of relationship between leadership styles and EI among organizational managers, many research studies transformational and transactional leadership styles, while the framework developed by Chelladurai and Saleh has been of great importance for sports coaches.

Some findings of similar studies are summarized at below.

Tsai, Tsai and Wang (2011) found that EI has positive effect on leadership styles ($t= 5.383$, $p< 0.05$), and that people with higher emotional intelligence adopt transformational leadership style (Tsai et al., 2011). However, Weinberger (2010) observed no relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles among managers (Weinberger, 2010).

Investigating 146 managers, Burbach (2004) applied regression analysis and received a significant common variance between participative leadership style and EI. The author concluded that there is positive relationship between participative and transactional styles and EI (Burbach, 2004).

By a qualitative investigation on intercollegiate teachers, Miller (2003) found that all EI factors can enhance perceptions of coaches from humanitarian leadership (Miller, 2003). Further, Mandel and Pherwani (2003) obtained a predictability relationship between EI and LS and concluded that emotional intelligence can be a predictor of

leadership styles. As the findings indicated, there is a positive significant relationship between participative leadership style and EI ($p < 0.05$) (Mandell and Pherwani, 2003).

Studying the relationship between EI and LS, Palmer (2003) claimed that managers with participative and transactional leadership styles show higher emotional intelligence than those with autocratic and executive leadership styles (Palmer et al., 2003a).

Farhangi et al. (2009) showed that there is a positive relationship between EI and transformational leadership style, and that this style can be affected by EI and all its subscales.

In his research named "*The relationship between emotional intelligence, leadership style and management efficiency*", Bani Haseemian (2006) concluded that managers with higher emotional intelligence have a tendency to use participative leadership styles, compared to those with lower emotional intelligence.

In the research named "*Relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles in managers of state universities of physical education and sport sciences from Sanandaj (Iran)*", Abdullahi (2009) obtained no significant relationship between EI and leadership style (transformational, transactional).

In their study titled "*Relationship between emotional intelligence and transformative leadership style*", Yaghubi et al. (2009) provided evidences that there is no significant relationship between two variables of EI and LS. Also, there is no significant relationship between variables of EI and non-interventional leadership style.

As seen, contradictory findings have been provided on the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership style. Because of the significance of EI and appropriate leadership styles of sports coaches, and since universities play a great role in nourishing creative human resource; in sports areas, faculties of physical education and sport sciences are regarded as the top and dominant authority to train specialized forces at sports and to develop and promote sports courses. In this line, academic teachers and coaches creates the most important foundation to get success.

Undoubtedly, coaches should have unique capabilities; hence, their position and participation in sport events are of great importance. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership style at this group, so that findings of research and scientific techniques can be used to improve efficiency and effectiveness of coaches and athletes, and as well as to achieve great success in university sports. Many questions may be raised about understanding leadership style of coaches and its relationship with EI, including what is the status of coaches of team sports in universities of Sanandaj in relation to EI? Is there any relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles of the coaches? To

answer the questions, the current study will investigate "the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership style among volleyball and handball coaches of universities of Sanandaj".

Methods

An applied-correlation descriptive-survey research method is used. The statistical population composes of all male and female coaches in sports chosen from volleyball and handball from faculties of physical education and sport sciences of universities of Sanandaj during the 2014-2015 academic year (n=58). Since a limited number of coaches were available, whole subjects are selected as the research sample.

Universities of Sanandaj include University of Kurdistan, Sanandaj branch from Payame Noor University and Sanandaj branch from Islamic Azad University that where courses on sport sciences are offered.

Given the nature of the present study, the leadership scale for sports (LSS) questionnaire with 40 questions and Syber Yashring's emotional intelligence questionnaire with 33 questions are used to collect data. Two latter questionnaires are rated on a five-point Likert scale. Research reliability is determined by using the Cronbach's Alpha test, and its values are calculated for the emotional intelligence ($\alpha = 0.824$) and leadership scale for sports (LSS) ($\alpha = 0.718$) questionnaires.

Results

As seen from Table 1, the numbers of male and female coaches were 63.79%, and 36.20%, respectively.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution and Percentage by Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Female	21	36.21%
Male	37	63.79%
Total	58	100%

Based on sports, the highest percentage of the sample was involved with coaches in volleyball (58.71%), whereas the lowest value was designated to handball (41.29%).

Table 2: Frequency Distribution and Percentage by Sports

	Frequency	Percent
Volleyball	34	58.71 %
Handball	24	41.29%
Total	58	100%

Table 3 shows the descriptive indices for the subscales of EI. The highest and lowest mean scores were achieved by the subscales of "Social skills" (m= 4.01, SD= 0.44) and "Self-regulation" (m= 2.52, SD= 0.64), respectively.

Table 3: Descriptive Indices for Subscales of Emotional Intelligence

	Min.	Max.	SD	Mean
Self-awareness	2	4.00	0.37524	2.82
Self-motivation	2.57	4.29	0.43903	3.2069
Empathy	2.00	4.00	0.45898	2.8621
Social skills	3.20	4.80	0.44305	4.0138
Self-regulation	1.43	4.57	0.64457	2.5271

For the subscales of leadership scale for sports (LSS) among coaches in universities of Sanandaj , two subscales of "Training & Instruction" and "Social Support" have the highest (n= 27, 46.6%) and lowest (n=2, 3.4%) frequency scores in the measurement.

Table 4: Descriptive Indices for Subscales of Leadership Styles

	Min.	Max.	SD	Mean	Freq.	Percent
Training and Instruction	3.08	4.69	0.35	3.77	27	46.6%
Democratic	2.56	4.78	0.58	3.64	9	15.5%
Autocratic	1.40	4.80	0.78	3.08	12	20.7%
Social Support	2.62	4.38	0.48	3.53	2	3.4%
Positive Feedback	2.80	5	0.47	3.73	8	13.8%

Before the research hypotheses tested, a Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was carried out in order to determine whether data is normally distributed. The test indicates that data of all variables follows a normal distribution.

According to Table 5, the Pearson correlation test supports the Null Hypothesis #1 and reveals a significant relationship between the leadership style of "training and instruction" and emotional intelligence among coaches of chosen team sports selected from universities of Sanandaj (r=0.185, p= 0.164). There is, however, a significant relationship between the leadership style of "training and instruction" and two

components of "self-motivation" ($r=0.317$, $p= 0.015$) and "self-regulation" ($r=0.547$, $p= 0.001$).

Furthermore, the Pearson correlation test supports the Null Hypothesis #2 and indicates that there is no significant relationship between the "democratic" leadership style and emotional intelligence among coaches in chosen team sports from universities of Sanandaj ($r=0.170$, $p= 0.201$). A significant relationship exists between the "democratic" style and the subscale of "self-motivation" ($r=0.443$, $p= 0.001$) and "self-regulation" ($r=0.459$, $p= 0.001$). The Pearson correlation test supports the Null Hypothesis #3 and reveals no significant relationship between the "autocratic" leadership style and emotional intelligence of coaches in chosen team sports from universities of Sanandaj ($r=0.193$, $p= 0.146$). The leadership style of "autocratic" is only correlated with the subscale of "self-awareness" ($r=0.353$, $p= 0.007$).

Supporting the Null Hypothesis #4, the test indicates that there is no significant relationship between the leadership style of "social support" and coaching emotional intelligence in chosen team sports from universities of Sanandaj ($r=0.314$, $p= 0.016$); however, this style shows a significant relationship with two subscales of "self-awareness" ($r=0.314$, $p= 0.016$) and "self-regulation" ($r=0.802$, $p= 0.001$). The Pearson correlation test denies the Null Hypothesis #5 and provides a significant relationship between the leadership style of "positive feedback" and emotional intelligence of coaches in chosen team sports from universities of Sanandaj ($r=0.275$, $p= 0.036$). About the components of EI, the results show significant relationships between the "positive feedback" style and the subscales of "self-awareness" ($r=0.417$, $p= 0.001$), "self-motivation" ($r=0.296$, $p= 0.024$), "empathy" ($r=0.300$, $p= 0.022$), and "self-regulation" ($r=0.452$, $p= 0.001$). On this style, non-significant relationship only is observed with the "social skills" ($r=0.153$, $p= 0.253$).

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Test for Relationships between Leadership Styles and EI Subscales of Coaches of Team Sports

		Self-awareness	Self-motivation	Empathy	Self-regulation	Social Skills	EI
Positive Feedback	Pearson Cor.	0.417	0.296	0.300	0.452	0.153	0.275
	Two-tailed Sig. level	0.001	0.024	0.022	0.001	0.253	0.036
Social Support	Pearson Cor.	0.314	0.080	0.074	0.802	-0.011	0.062
	Two-tailed Sig. level	0.014	0.549	0.579	0.001	0.933	0.641

Autocratic	Pearson Cor.	0.353	0.188	-0.035	0.010	0.052	0.193
	Two-tailed Sig. level	0.007	0.157	0.749	0.940	0.701	0.146
Democratic	Pearson Cor.	0.140	0.443	0.095	0.459	0.051	0.170
	Two-tailed Sig. level	0.295	0.001	0.477	0.001	0.706	0.201
Training & Instruction	Pearson Cor.	0.218	0.317	0.189	0.547	0.119	0.185
	Two-tailed Sig. level	0.100	0.015	0.156	0.001	0.372	0.164

Discussion and Conclusion

All coaches and managers adopt certain management or coaching philosophy to perform their duties; and based on such philosophy, they apply different behavioral approaches. As a leader and motivator, the coach has to create effective and secure methods to improve athletes. The most important feature affecting athletes' motivation and their perception of coaching behaviors is the leadership style coaches exercise (Shahlayi Bagheri, 2004).

The purpose of current paper was to evaluate the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles among coaches of selected team sports from universities of Sanandaj. The results were as follows:

Assessing the relationship between leadership styles and EI subscales, the Pearson correlation test showed that there is a moderate positive relationship between leadership style of "positive feedback" and emotional intelligence of coaches in chosen team sports from universities of Sanandaj. No significant relationship is observed between remaining leadership styles and EI.

In the research, the leadership style of "training and instruction" provided the highest scores in mean and frequency. The style emphasizes on understanding athletes' strengths and weaknesses and improving their skills; therefore, coaching focus is on performance through this leadership scale.

Shabani Bahar et al. (2011) and Shahlayi Bagheri (2004) claimed that coaches and managers often have a tendency to a human-oriented style, and that there is a positive significant relationship between human-oriented style and EI. In contrast, the findings of Jabbari (2000) indicate that team coaches have a tendency to task-oriented styles. By a human-oriented style, leaders care about individuals, their wants and needs, and try to

achieve the goals through establishing appropriate friendly relationships with subordinates. It seems that the leadership style of "positive feedback" is more consistent with such style, since the "positive feedback", style considers spiritual needs of individuals by motivating their performance and this encourages athletes to make hard efforts. Therefore, it can be concluded that Shahlayi Bagheri (2004) yields equivalent results, but the findings of Jabbari (2000) are inconsistent with the current results. The sample Jabbari selected includes coaches in national first and second football clubs (Azadegan Cup), and such inconsistency may be justified that coaches in Jabbari's sample performed at the championship level. However, academic coaches' performance is mostly intended to train coaches, and furthermore, both male and female coaches were investigated in the present study. On the assessment of transformational and transactional leadership styles among team sports coaches, Kivanlu, Kushan, and Ahmadi (2011) concluded that team coaches have a tendency to transformational leadership style, and that there is no significant relationship between EI and transactional style. The same results were provided by Farhangi et al. (2009), Tsai et al. (2011), and Yaghubi (2009) in a management population.

With the transactional style, rewards and punishments are contingent upon the performance of people. However, transformational leaders offer insight into followers in order to meet objectives, emphasizing morality and spirituality. If material rewards are granted for accurate performance to athletes, the result would be inconsistent with Shabani Bahar et al. (2011). In contrast, when the coach only encourages and strengthens athletes spiritually, the result will be consistent with these authors. Since university coaches usually appreciate athletes verbally with no material rewards, the findings of the study are consistent with those of Kivanlu, Kushan, and Ahmadi (2011), Farhangi et al. (2009), Tsai et al. (2011), and Yaghubi (2009).

In the research, the presence of insignificant relationship between other leadership styles and EI among coaches of chosen team sports is likely associated with the variables used for measuring leadership styles. The LSS questionnaire was used to measure leadership styles; however, many studies above mentioned adopted Luthans' (1985) leadership style questionnaire with different scales for human- and task-oriented styles. Participative and transactional styles are among other leadership scales investigated on some studies dealing with EI. Burbach (2004) obtained a positive relationship between these two styles and EI. Also, Bani Hashemian (2006) stated that managers with higher EI tend to participative leadership style, compared to ones with lower EI. The same conclusion was provided for these styles by Mandell and Pherwani (2003) and Palmer (2003). A review on most research reveals that managers and coaches with higher emotional intelligence tend to use human-centered leadership styles such

as participative, transactional, democratic, human-oriented, and transformational. Given the significant relationship between some subscales of emotional intelligence and leadership styles, it is recommended to consider emotional intelligence skills accompanying with other competences in order to select coaches in team sports. Since this form of intelligence can be intentionally learned, improving the emotional intelligence among coaches requires holding teaching courses, particularly before pre-courses of sport competences. Moreover, the contradiction of the present findings with some studies demonstrates a need for further research in this field.

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