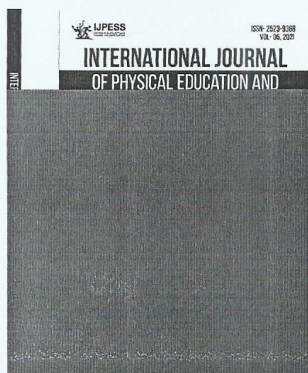




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Current Issue



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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COACHES' LEADERSHIP STYLE AND ATHLETES' PERFORMANCE IN KWARA STATE SPORTS COUNCIL

Dr. Adebayo Babatunde Samson¹, Dr. Surajudeen Tosho Bakinde²

Abstract

Leadership in coaching is a critical component to enhance and sustain optimal sports performance and athletes' satisfaction. This study investigated the influence of coaches' leadership styles on athletes' performance in Kwara State Sports Council. Descriptive survey design of correlational type was employed. The sample of the study comprised 150 athletes selected using simple random and proportionate sampling techniques. Standardized questionnaire (Leadership Scale for Sports) was the instrument for data collection. Descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistic was used to analyze the data. The findings of the study revealed that training behavior, autocratic behavior, democratic behavior, social support, and rewarding behavior of the coach have significant influence on athletes' performance in the study area. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the management of Kwara State Sports Council should establish a mechanism for positive feedback and social support to foster good leadership behaviour to assist in enhancing athletes' performance.

Key words: Leadership style, Coaches' behaviour, Athletes, Performance

Introduction

Background to the Study

Leadership has been a subject of much debate and deliberation and how the different styles of leadership evoke different responses from followers. In sports context, the dynamics of the leader which is the coach and the led (athlete) play a key role in shaping the destiny of the team. Although leadership has great value in sport, most of the time majorities of coaches do not give much attention to determine the coaching leadership styles that best suits athletes. The study of leadership is of importance to understand the performance and effectiveness of organizations. The study of leadership continues to increase in importance as a determinant of effective functioning of the organization; there seem to be growing numbers of research and publications on leadership, which have increased the understanding of the concept.

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According to Bass (2015), leadership is an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring and restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members. Furthermore, leadership entails acts, behavior, or roles played; it is central to group process; and compliance with the observed performance and also perceived influence and power relations according to aspects of leadership in which one is interested in. Lord and Maher (2016) submitted that effective leaders influence subordinates' decisions or policies in ways that change subordinates' tasks or behaviors and have an impact on performance and accomplishment organizational objectives.

Leadership in sports team is called coaching and it is a critical component to enhance and sustain optimal sports performance and athletes' satisfaction. A coach is typically responsible for making final decisions on the subject of several team matters, such as strategy, tactics and team personnel (Longhead, Hardy & Eys, 2006). An important factor identified by researchers (Ipinmoroti, 2011; Ongalo, 2014), in the pursuit of peak athletic performance is the coaching styles or coaches' leadership styles. In particular, coaches are perceived to be central figures in all aspects of athlete's career, as well as in training and competition.

Coaches are perceived to have an important influence in all aspects of athletes' preparations, competition and in determining athletes' performance and development. The relationship between coach and athlete is critical to success in elite sport and is viewed as being related to athletes' psychological development and mental preparation (Soyer, 2014). Coaching style is tied to descriptive categorization of how an individual aggregates the behavior of a coach. This could be a useful mechanism in analyzing coaching practice or it may be a superficial way of caricaturing the most obvious elements of the behavior of a coach (Cross & Lyle, 2003).

Coaching style also reflects the value frameworks of coaches (Lyle, 2006). There are different coaching styles, such as laissez-fair and humanistic approach. But the most common styles used in sports are participative and autocratic coaching style. Autocratic coaching style or "intense style" is applied when the coach assumes authority and decision-making is centralized. An advantage of this coaching style includes a directive and dominating coach who prepares the group or the individual for any type of competition. However, the down side of this coaching style is its one-way learning process. The coach tends to show lack of empathy and he is the only one determining the rules, rewards, and the standards (Lyle, 2006).

While participative coaching style or "nice-guy style," focuses more on allowing high levels of participation with the members of the group. The advantageous outcomes of this

coaching style include: a cohesive team and a relaxed atmosphere, which makes members more involved in the teaching-learning process. On the contrary, the coach may be seen as weak and there is a tendency for members to ignore his directives (Lyle, 2006). Autocratic leadership style is when leaders make all decisions and use power to command and control the followers to achieve a goal (Bass, 2008). Autocratic leaders can be effective because they create good structure and determine what needs to be done. They provide reward for compliance, but punish disobedience (Giltinane, 2013).

The Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MML; Chelladurai, 2001, 2007) remains a fundamental framework for several empirical studies (Fletcher & Roberts, 2013; Hoigaard, De Cuyper, Fransen, Boen, & Perters, 2015; Leo, S'anchez-Miguel, S'anchez-Oliva, Amado, & Garcia Calvo, 2013; Toros, Salman, & Sari, 2013). The MML proposes that group performance and member satisfaction are a function of the congruence of required, actual, and preferred leadership style, conceiving of leadership in sports as a dynamic process that involves the interaction of a coach, an athlete and situational factors.

It is therefore obvious that the type of leadership style a coach adopts will have a significant effect on the athlete, this is because coaches are ultimately responsible for all aspects of the team as well as for the athletes' performance; therefore, their decisions and actions play a key role and influence both the individual level and the internal dynamics of their teams (Brando & Carchan, 2010; Buceta, 2009; Kleinert, 2012). In this sense, a sports team is subject to various influences including individual differences among athletes (for example, physical and mental skills, sports skills, psychological dispositions and coaches behavior (Fenoy & Campoy, 2012; Ponseti, 2012; Vella, Oades, & Crowes, 2013).

It is important that coaches adopt a leadership style orientated to help team members to achieve a higher level of team performance and to elevate the need of the members from self to collective interests, i.e, transformational leadership, that will tend to inspire higher levels of commitment (Hoigaard, 2015) and cooperation (Carvalho, 2013; Swanson & Kent, 2014). On an opposite side, coaching leadership research has shown that an autocratic leadership style is negatively related to both task and social cohesion (Vincer & Loughhead, 2010), tend to promote a motivational climate focused on interpersonal competition and comparison, which can impair the functioning of the group, as the athletes feeling a decreased sense of closeness, bonding, personal acceptance and involvement. Given the importance of the coaches' leadership style and behaviour on the performance of athletes and the limited number of studies on the interrelations between these two factors, the purpose of this study

was to understand the influence of coaches' leadership style on athlete's performance in Kwara State Sport Council.

Statement of the Problem

Coaches within the study area hardly take cognizance of the dynamics of leadership, maybe it is not well understood by them or maybe they think the old method of coaching (autocratic style) is the best, and therefore they have no intention of adopting a more flexible and modern method of coaching (democratic style). The researcher observed that there are problems associated with the traditional leadership styles adopted in handling athletes which has led to experiences of low self-esteem, lack of motivation and the will to increase performance and loss of interest in the game among the athletes due to the coach's autocratic leadership style. It is on this premise that this research investigated the influence of coaches' leadership style on athletes' performance, there is need for coaches in Kwara State Sports Council to understand the dynamics of leadership and the need to acquire knowledge how their leadership style impacts on athletes both positively and negatively.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no significant relationship between training behavior of the coach and performance of athletes in Kwara State Sport Council.
2. There is no significant difference between autocratic behavior of the coach and performance of athletes' in Kwara State Sports Council.
3. There is no significant relationship between social support behavior of the coach and performance of the athletes in Kwara State Sports Council
4. There is no significant relationship between rewarding behavior of the coach and performance of athletes in Kwara State Sports Council.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design of correlational type was used for this study. The population comprised 270 athletes drawn from Kwara State Sports Council. The sample comprised 93 male and 57 female totaling 150 in the age range of 18 to 23 years. The researcher employed proportionate and simple random sampling techniques to select the respondents for the study. The research instrument is a standardized scale, Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) developed by Chelladurai and Saleh (1980). The instrument has 40 items divided into (5) subscales. The questionnaire was divided into two different sections A and B. Section 'A' contained the

demographic information of the respondents. Section 'B' contains items on Training behavior of the coach, Autocratic behavior of the coach, Democratic behavior of the coach, Social support from coach and Rewarding behavior of the coach .

The instrument was rated on five (5) point Likert-type Rating Scale format of: A: Always O: Often O: Occasional S: Seldom. N: Never. The participants responded to the items by ticking the option as applicable to them. In order to establish the validity of the instrument, copies of the questionnaire, four (4) Lecturers in the Departments of Human Kinetics Education and Psychology, University of Ilorin for local validation. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the test re-test method, reliability value of 0.73 was obtained.

The researcher personally administered one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires to respondents with the help of four (4) coaches trained as research assistants. The respondents were assured that all information given would be treated with confidentiality. The respondents were encouraged to be honest by giving sincere responses to the items, the instruments were collected immediately on the spot. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics for the demographic data and research questions respectively while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

Data Analysis

Respondents' Demographic Information

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents' Based on Age and Gender

Variables		Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Age	15 - 20 years	81	54.0
	20 - 25 years	58	38.7
	26 - 30 years	11	7.3
	Total	150	100.0
Gender	Male	68	45.3
	Female	82	54.7
	Total	150	100.0

Table 1: Demographic information of the respondents based on Age and Gender

Table one presents the information on age and gender of respondents, 81 (54%) were within the age range of 15-20 years, 58 (38.7%) were within the age range of 20 – 25 years

while 11 (7.3%) of the respondents were within the 26-30 years' age range. The table further revealed that there were 82 (54.7%) Female respondents and 68 (45.3%) Male respondents.

Table 2: descriptive statistics on respondents view on the training behavior of the Coach in Kwara State Sports Council.

Item no	My Coach,	Mean	Rank
8	Explain to every athlete to carry out his assignment to the last detail	3.64	1 st
6	Figure ahead on what should be done	3.45	2 nd
7	Explain to every athlete what he should not do	3.25	3 rd
12	Explain how each athlete's contribution fits into the whole picture	3.21	4 th
13	Specify in detail what is expected of each athlete	2.91	5 th
3	Pay special attention to correcting athletes' mistakes	2.88	6 th
5	Instruct every athlete individually in the skills of the sport	2.87	7 th
4	Make sure that his part in the team is understood by all athletes	2.81	8 th
9	Point out each athlete's strengths & weaknesses	2.80	9 th
10	Give specific instruments to each athlete as to what he should do in every situation	2.72	10 th
2	Explain to each athlete the techniques and tactics of the sport	2.50	11 th
1	See to it that every athlete is working to his capacity	2.03	12 th
11	See to it that efforts are coordinated	1.59	13 th

Table two presents the rank order analysis on the training behavior of the coach. The result in the table revealed that items 8, 6, 7, 12 and 13 ranked as top items. Item 8 which states that ranked first with a mean score of 3.64. Item 6 ranked second with a mean score of 3.45. Item 7 ranked third with a mean score of 3.25 while Item 12 ranked fourth with a mean score of 3.21. The information also shows that items 9, 10, 2, 1 and 11 ranked lowest. Item 9 was ranked ninth with a mean score of 2.80, item 10 ranked tenth with a mean score of 2.72. Item 2 ranked eleventh with a mean score of 2.50, item 1 with a mean score of 2.03 ranked twelfth and item 11 with a mean score of 1.59 ranked thirteenth. All the items except item 1 and 11 with a mean score of 2.03 and 1.59 ranked above 2.50, it could be affirmed that all the items except items 1 and 11 measure positive training behavior of the coach in Kwara State Sports Council. Therefore, training behavior of the coach has influence on the performance of athletes in Kwara State Sports Council.

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Table 3a: Descriptive Statistics on Influence of Autocratic Behavior of Coaches on Athletes' Performance in Kwara State Sports Council.

S/N	Statement	Always (F)	Often (F)	Occasional (F)	Seldom (F)	Never (F)
1	Work relatively independent of the athletes	—	—	—	—	50
2	Not explain his action	—	—	—	—	81
3	Refuse to compromise a point	—	—	—	—	12
4	Keep to himself	—	—	—	—	6
5	Speak in a manner not to be questioned	1				

Table 3b: Percentage distribution of Autocratic Behavior level of Coaches in Kwara State Sports Council.

Autocratic Behavior	Frequency	Percent
High	1	0.7
Low	149	99.3
Total	150	100

Tables 3a and 3b presents information on the Influence of autocratic behavior of coaches on athletes' performance in Kwara State Sports Council. The table shows that 99.3% of the respondents scored their coaches low on autocratic behavior while 0.7% scored their coaches high on autocratic behavior. It could therefore be affirmed that autocratic behavior of the coach has no influence on athletes' performance in Kwara State Sport Council.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics on Respondents' view on Democratic Behavior of the coach in Kwara State Sports Council.

Item No.	My Coach,	Mean	Rank
3	Let his athletes share in decision making	3.59	1 st
5	Let the group set its own goals	3.52	2 nd
2	Get group approval on important matters before going ahead	3.40	3 rd
7	Ask for the opinion of athletes on important matters	3.35	4 th
8	Let athletes work at their own speed	3.30	5 th
6	Let the athletes try their own way even if they make mistakes	3.28	6 th
4	Encourage athletes to make suggestions for ways of conducting practices	3.24	7 th
9	Let the athletes decide on the plays to be used in the game	2.92	8 th
1	Ask for the opinion of the athletes on strategies for specific competitions	2.76	9 th

Table four shows the rank order analysis on the democratic behavior of the coach. The result revealed that items 3, 5, 2, 7 and 8 ranked top. Item 3 ranked first with a mean score of 3.59; item 5 ranked second with a mean score of 3.52; item 2 ranked third with a mean score of 3.40; Item 7 with a mean score of 3.35 ranked fourth while item 8 ranked fifth with a mean score of 3.30. The result also revealed that items 6, 4, 9, and 1 ranked lowest. All the items ranked above 2.50, therefore it can be concluded that the coaches were rated high on democratic behavior which means democratic behavior of the coach has influence on athletes' performance in Kwara State Sport Council.

Table 5: Respondents View on Social Support Behavior of the coach in Kwara State Sports Council.

Item No	My Coach,	Mean	Rank
3	Look out for the personal welfare of the athletes	3.64	1 st
5	Express affection he feels for his athletes	3.62	2 nd
2	Help members of the group settle their conflicts	3.50	3 rd
7	Encourage close and informal relations	3.45	4 th
8	Invite athletes to his home	3.20	5 th
6	Encourage the athlete to confide in him	3.17	6 th
4	Do personal favors to the athletes	3.10	7 th
1	Help the athletes with their personal problems	3.02	8 th

The information in table five revealed that items 3, 5, 2, 7 and 8 ranked as top items. The result on the table also revealed that items 8, 6, 4, and 1 ranked as lowest items. Incidentally, all the items ranked above the benchmark of 2.50, therefore it can be concluded that all the

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items measure high social support behavior of coaches in Kwara State Sports Council. From the analysis, the social support from the coach has influence on athletes' performance in Kwara State Sports Council.

Table 6: Percentage Distribution of Positive Feedback (Rewarding Behaviour) of the coach experienced by Athletes in Kwara State Sports Council

Feedback	Frequency	Percent
Positive	136	90.6
Negative	14	9.3
Total	150	100

Table six shows the percentage distribution of feedback (rewarding behavior) of the coach experienced by Athletes in Kwara State Sports Council. The table shows that 90.6% (136) of the respondents had positive feedback while 9.3% (14) had negative feedback. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the respondents who participated in the study had positive feedback from their coaches. The rewarding behavior of the coach has influence on athletes' performance in Kwara State Sport Council

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between training behavior of the coach and performance of athletes in Kwara State Sports Council.

Table 7: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Showing the relationship between the training behavior of the Coach and Athletes' performance.

Variable	No.	Mean	Standard deviation	Cal. r value	Crit. r value	p value
Training behavior	150	29.99	10.18	.207**	.195	.000
Athletes' performance	150	35.44	6.56			

** - correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

From table seven, the calculated r value of .207 is greater than the critical r value of .195 (p value .000 < 0.05). Therefore, hypothesis one which states that there is no significant relationship between training behavior of the coach and performance of athletes in Kwara State Sport Council is rejected. This means that there was a significant relationship between the training behavior of the coach and performance of athletes in Kwara State Sport Council.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between autocratic behavior of the coach and performance of athletes in Kwara State Sports Council.

Table 8: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value of Autocratic Behavior of the coach and Athletes' Performance.

Gender	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	df	Calc. value	t- Crit. value	t- p value
Autocratic behavior	150	28.71	9.85	148	1.11	1.96	.035
Athletes' performance	150	30.86	10.33				

From table eight, the calculated t-value of 1.11 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 (p value $.035 > 0.05$). Therefore, hypothesis two which states that there is no significant relationship between autocratic behavior of the coach and performance of athletes' in Kwara State is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference between autocratic behavior of the coach and performance of athletes' in Kwara State Sports Council. It can therefore be affirmed that autocratic behavior of the coach has no influence on the performance of athletes' in Kwara State Sports Council.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between social support behavior of the coach and performance of the athletes in Kwara State Sports Council

Table 9: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Showing the relationship between the Social Support from the Coach and Athletes' Performance.

Variable	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Calc. t- value	Crit. t- value	p. value
Social Support	114	12.71	6.343	1.88	1.57	.001
Athletes' Performance	114	12.94	6.686			

From table nine, the calculated t-value of 1.88 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.57 ($p = .001 < 0.05$). Therefore, hypothesis three which states that there is no significant relationship between social support behavior of the coach and performance of the athletes in Kwara State Sport Council is rejected. This means that there is significant relationship between social support behavior of the coach and performance of the athletes in Kwara State Sport Council.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between social rewarding behavior of the coach and performance of athletes in Kwara State Sports Council

Table 10: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Showing the relationship between the Rewarding Behavior of the Coach and Athletes' Performance.

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Variable	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Calc. t-value	Crit. t-value	p. value
Rewarding behavior	136	14.56	4.043	1.65	1.26	.000
Athletes' Performance	136	15.64	5.171			

From table ten, the calculated t-value of 1.65 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.26 ($p = .000 < 0.05$). Therefore, hypothesis four which states that there is no significant relationship between rewarding behavior of the coach and performance of the athletes in Kwara State Sport Council is rejected. This means that there is significant relationship between rewarding behavior of the coach and performance of the athletes in Kwara State Sports Council.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one was rejected meaning that there is a significant relationship between the training behavior of the coach and performance of athletes in Kwara State Sports Council. The finding implies that training behavior of the coach has influence on the performance of athletes in Kwara State Sport Council. This finding is in consonance with the study of Asiah and Rosli, (2009) which reported that the athletes preferred training and instruction leadership styles. Based on the results obtained from the study, there was a moderate correlation between coaching leadership styles and athlete performance in universities hockey team. Perceived training and instruction behavior positively related to general performance.

Also, hypothesis two was not rejected, which means that autocratic behavior of the coach has no influence on the performance of athletes in Kwara State Sports Council. This finding suggests when a team is not doing well, it needs more social support from leaders to sustain motivation. A study conducted by Vallerand and Losier (1999) examined the relationship between coaching styles and intrinsic motivation within athletes. Results showed that coaches exhibiting more of autocratic style engaged lower levels of intrinsic motivation and perceived competence in athletes.

Welty Peachey, Zhou, Damon, and Burton (2015), reported that, higher education programmes led by strong democratic coaches outperformed, and maintained stronger, positive team performance. Comparable to the positive impact of democratic behaviour. Alvarez, Castillo, Molina-Garcia, and Balague (2016) concluded that extra efforts from athletes was a product of democratic behavior of the coach similar to the results of the present study. Furthermore, Cronin, Arthur, Hardy, and Callow (2015) found a positive relationship

between democratic behaviour and athletes' performance, and an increase in athletes making more sacrifices for their team as a result of democratic behaviour exhibited by coaches.

Hypothesis three was rejected, there was significant relationship between social support of the coach and performance of the athletes in Kwara State Sports Council. This supports the findings of Yusof, (2002) who measured the practice of social support leadership among Malaysian high school coaches and its impact on athletes' performances. The results indicated that social support leadership behaviors of the soccer and netball coaches were significantly related to athletes' performances.

There was significant relationship between rewarding behavior of the coach and performance of the athletes in Kwara State Sports Council. The present study has proven what Amorous and Horn (2000) reported, that using positive feedback behavior by coaches and none use of negative feedback with high levels of motivation in athletes has a significant positive relationship with the performance of the athletes. In this research also the relationship between positive feedback behaviors with motivation of athletes (0.39) was more than the relationship of negative feedback behaviors with motivation of athletes (-0.28).

Also researchers such as Amorous and Horn (2001) and Hollembeak and Amorous (2004) also reported a significant relationship between the behavior of coaches and performance. In this study, they followed up these relationships in professional sports and, the results indicated that there is significant positive relationship between the positive feedback behaviors with athletes' performance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study the following conclusions were drawn in line with the research objectives.

1. There was a significant relationship between the training behavior of the coach and performance of athletes in Kwara State Sport Council
2. There was no significant relationship between autocratic behavior of the coach and performance of athletes' in Kwara state Sports Council
3. There was significant relationship between social support behavior of the coach and performance of the athletes in Kwara State Sports Council.
4. There was significant relationship between rewarding behavior of the coach and performance of the athletes in Kwara State Sports Council.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The management of Kwara State Sports Council should focus on engaging athletes in decision making process, the coaches have to communicate to their athletes positively and be supportive in order to sustain good leadership structure.
2. Since the leadership behaviour of the coach greatly influences athletes' performance, the researcher recommends that Kwara State Sports Council should train to adopt progressive leadership style that will in turn motivate their athletes.
3. The management of Kwara State Sports Council should establish a mechanism for positive feedback and social support to foster good leadership behaviour to assist in enhancing athletes' performance.

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