

The impact of basketball coach's leadership style on perfectionism of basketball players

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Abstract:

Leadership in sports is a collaborative, cooperative, and interactive process between coaches and athletes. A coach's most important abilities include athlete motivation, creating a productive environment in the group, and pursuing success. The aim of this research was to determine the influence of the coach's leadership style on basketball players' perfectionism. The sample of participants for the purposes of this research consisted of 104 respondents (51 male, 53 female), who play the second rank of the national competition. In order to examine the coach's behavior, the online questionnaire Leadership Scale for Sport and Competitive perfectionism Scale was used to determine the positive and negative dimensions of competitive perfectionism. The influence of leadership style on the pursuit of perfectionism and changes in the values of the pursuit of perfectionism is determined by changes in instructiveness 7.1%, democratic behavior 16.9%, autocratic behavior 26.3%, social support 16.5% and positive feedback 33.6%. The obtained results indicate the influence of leadership style on the perfectionism of the basketball players and statistical significance, and that each coach type tends towards perfectionism and it is not possible to generalize which style is more appropriate in which situation. The impact on the scale of competitive perfectionism and changes in the values of striving for perfectionism was determined by changes in instructiveness 3.1%, democratic behavior 5.6%, autocratic behavior 8.3%, social support 1.9% and positive feedback 10.3%. Based on the obtained results, we conclude that autocratic behavior (8.3%) and positive feedback (10.3%) showed statistically significant values in relation to other values of the coach's behavior style on competitive perfectionism.

Key Words: *sport performance, team sport, behavior, perception.*

Introduction

Leadership in sports is a collaborative, cooperative and interactive process between coaches and athletes. The learning process, success, motivation and achievements in sports influences leadership style, because a positive relationship with the coach provides motivation and desire for success (Barić, 2007). A coach's most important abilities include athlete motivation, creating a productive environment in the group and pursuing success (Bajraktarević, 2004). Among the development of human psychological resources that enable athletes to use their cognitive, emotional and behavioral mechanisms to prevent psychological problems, aiming to maintain or improve their performance is mental toughness (Beattie et al., 2019; Jones & Parker, 2019). Athletes spend a significant amount of time with their coaches and peers in sports, which has an impact on their development, both inside and outside of sports (Froyen & Pensgaard, 2014). The 'coach-athlete' relationship is critical in defining an athlete's experience and performance because coaches supervise, organize, educate and advise players about the teams they work with (Keegan et al., 2010). As a result of a coach's experience, approach, and knowledge, the coach influences psychosocial development (Barić, 2004). Similarly, a coach's work is reflected, not only in technical and tactical success, but also in acceptance of another coach or athlete, honesty, support, giving, friendship, respect, encouragement, help in difficulties and decision-making (Jowett, 2005).

A substantial amount of research examines the extent to which leaders' personal behavior qualities influence their conduct, as well as the reasons that explain these links. According to various research, leadership influences the approach to consideration and focal leadership structures (Črešnar & Nedelko, 2020). This framework was used to propose common patterns of leaders offering guidance, implementing goals, and

inspiring individuals (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996; Yammarino et al., 2005), resulting in the formation of various leadership styles (Martindale, 2011).

Although models of coach effectiveness differ in terms of behavior, effectiveness, motivation of a team and an individual athlete performance (Feltz et al., 2008), the mul-tidimensional model of leadership in sports is the most commonly used theoretical framework for researching and explaining coach's leadership styles (Chelladurai, 1990). Chelladurai & Saleh (1980) have created a sports leadership scale (LSS) with five sub-scales (instructive style, democratic behavior, autocratic behavior, social support and positive feedback). The coach's psychological characteristics, knowledge and experience have a positive effect on team success (Tenenbaum et al., 2012), while the coach's leadership style has a relatively strong relationship with athlete motivation (Duda, 2001), as well as their psychological health (Reinboth & Duda, 2006). Situational characteristics (contextual factors such as the nature of the sport and associated social norms), leader characteristics (aspects that can influence behavior), and member characteristics (ability, intelligence, motivation etc.), are thought to influence leadership behaviors (Hoigaard et al., 2015; Moen, 2014). Furthermore, the coach's de-sire to achieve results and positive behavior play an important role in shaping the ath-lete's motivation and creating democratic behavior, both of which contribute to the de-velopment of adaptive perfectionism (Aleksic-Veljkovic et al., 2019).

On the other hand, perfectionism is a personality trait characterized by high stand-ards; in the broadest sense, it means striving for perfection (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). Athletes who strive for perfection have higher personal standards and are more organized (Hogg, 1997), and only their participation in additional training results in improved competitive performance, reducing the harmful impact of psychological stress on performance itself (Kim et al., 2019). External expectations, on the other hand, can cause psychological stress, which has a negative impact on athletes' performance (Stoeber & Otto, 2006).

There have been studies that examined perfectionism in sports as well as the influ-ence of leadership style (Anshel & Mansouri, 2005; Hill et al., 2014; Madigan et al., 2018; Stoeber et al., 2009). Stoll et al. (2008) discovered that perfectionistic as-pirations predict better overall training task performance in sports students, whereas (Madigan et al., 2018) discovered that perfectionistic aspirations predict better performance results in basketball players. A bad relationship with the coach, characterized by an increased number of conflicts and reduced support, an autocratic leadership style, and weight criticism, is associated with the development of eating disorders (Shanmugam et al., 2013). Setting high standards is an essential aspect of top sports, and it is frequently advantageous to the athlete's performance. Those, on the other hand, who are characterized by frequent thoughts about achieving the ideal and by perfectionistic ideals have been demonstrated to be more prone to suffer heightened levels of anxiety owing to inconsistencies between the ideal and the existing self/situation. Of course, this might have a negative impact on their athletic performance (Koivula et al., 2002). Sports collaboration is now described as the pursuit of individual and group goals, as well as their combination to generate a certain athletic behavior (Garcia-Mas et al., 2009). It may also be defined as dynamic decision making based on recurrent interaction between individuals aiming to attain certain goals and their integration into a sport team (Olmedilla et al., 2011). According to Dosil (2008), the autocratic leadership style is defined by coaches who believe that athletes should not "talk" about their recommendations, which means that athletes have no one to turn to for advice, which is why eating disorders are so common. Some authors (Bajraktarević, 2004; Stephens & Waters, 2016) show that athletes value the coach's instructive and democratic behavior more than the coach's autocratic behavior. That is, a coach who provides social support and provides more positive information can expect better results. However, personality is one of the most important predictors of success in any sport, and diagnosing the athlete's conative traits is frequently critical, both for the selection process and for the focused training of top athletes (Cox & Cox, 2002). Previous research has found that leadership styles centered on training and instruction, positive feedback, social support, and democratic behavior are all positively associated with collective high confidence in individuals/teams and increase beliefs of high efficacy (Soyer et al., 2014; Vieira et al., 2015). A democratic coaching style, in particular, has been shown to increase athletes' sense of competence, independence, satisfaction, and self-esteem, as well as to result in more adaptive behaviors, stronger commitment, a higher level of sportspersonship, and a focus on task and achievement (Moen, 2014; Park et al., 2016). There have been studies that observed, not only the behavior of coaches, but also the positive and negative aspects of competitive perfectionism. Given that, to the best of the author's knowledge, no research has included the previously mentioned in one study and that on the population of basketball players, the goal of this study is to determine the influence of the coach's leadership style on basketball players' perfectionism.

Material & methods

Participants Sample

For the purposes of this study, a sample of 104 participants (51 male, 53 female) who compete in the second rank of the national competition was used. Participants were chosen based on their status as active basketball players over the age of 17. All participants were healthy individuals with no noticeable abnormalities concerning physical characteristics and abilities (Table 1). The study's participation was entirely voluntary. Written informed consent was obtained from the minor players and their parents. Moreover, the ethics board of

the State University of Novi Pazar provided the approval of the research experiment (Ethical Board Approval No: 399/22).

Table 1. Participants and group in-close characteristics

	Age (years)	Height (cm)	Weight (kg)	Body Index	Mass	Training (years)	experience
Male	23.49±6.71	189.51±11.99	74.18±7.20	19.18±2.89		5.86±3.68	
Female	22.25±5.60	182.41±5.89	70.49±6.92	20.94±2.36		4.88±2.21	

Procedures

Each participant provided basic anthropometric characteristics such as body height, body mass, number of years, how long they had been playing basketball for, and whether or not they are currently active players. Based on the inclusion criteria in the study, a sample of 104 participants was drawn and asked to complete the LSS (Leadership Scale for Sport - LSS) online questionnaire.

LSS

The Leadership Scale for Sport - LSS is the most commonly used questionnaire to assess coaches' behavior (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Loughead & Hardy, 2005) It has five subscales that correspond to the dimensions of coaching behavior: (1) instructiveness, which refers to coaches' sports skills and tactical instructions aimed at improving athletes' performance; (2) democratic behavior; (3) autocratic behavior, which refers to making a coach's decision without the possibility of involving the athlete in making the same; (4) social support, and (5) positive feedback, which characterize the athlete's motivational style (Cruz & Kim, 2017).

CPS

To determine the positive and negative dimensions of competitive perfectionism, the Competitive Perfectionism Scale (CPS) was used elsewhere (Hamidi & Besharat, 2010). Striving for perfectionism (adaptive perfectionism) and negative reaction to imperfection (nonadaptive perfectionism) were rated on a Likert scale from 1 (very little) to 5 (extremely much) (completely).

Statistical Data Processing

All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS v. 20 (IBM Corporation; Armonk, NY, USA). Descriptive statistics was calculated for all the previously mentioned data. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine the correlation between all the tests. The magnitude of the correlations was interpreted using the following criteria: < 0.1, trivial; 0.1–0.3, small; 0.3–0.5, moderate; 0.5–0.7, large; 0.7–0.9, very large; and > 0.9 almost perfect. The level of significance for the correlation analysis was set at $p \leq 0.05$ (Hopkins et al., 2009). For determining the significance of the linear connection, i.e., the impact of each coaching style on perfectionism variables, we have applied the univariate linear regression analysis.

Results

Average values of representation scores for style of the interviewees' coaches and competitive perfectionism dimensions, for the entire data, are shown in Tables 2 and 3. The normality of distribution analysis for all the representation scores variables are shown in Table 4. The correlation analysis results are shown in Table 5, whereas the impact of the leadership style on the striving for perfectionism and perfectionist perfectionism are shown in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 2. Representation of the participant's coaching style for the entire data

Coach type	Mean±SD
Instructiveness	4.04±.61
Democratic behavior	3.67±.79
Autocratic behavior	3.42±.73
Social support	3.61±.64
Positive feedback	3.21±.70

Among the coaches who took part in this research, the characteristics of an instructional coach were represented the most (4.04±0.61) and the characteristics of a coach with positive feedback were represented the least (3.21±0.70). Therefore, these characteristics are represented in the coach sample of our participants.

Table 3. Representation of the competitive perfectionism dimensions for the entire data

Competitive perfectionism dimensions	Mean±SD
Striving for perfectionism	2.9530±.67845
Competitive Perfectionism Scale	3.6578±.85501

Table 4. Coaching style and competitive perfectionism dimensions distribution normality

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Instructiveness	.118	104	.027	.931	104	.001
Democratic behavior	.088	104	<.200*	.969	104	.103
Autocratic behavior	.121	104	.021	.976	104	.234
Social support	.135	104	.006	.970	104	.123
Positive feedback	.131	104	.008	.963	104	.054
Striving for perfectionism	.110	104	.052	.875	104	.000
Competitive Perfectionism Scale	.112	104	.047	.962	104	.045

Tests of normality have shown that our variables can all be considered normally distributed with the level of significance of 1%, and for most of them even for the level of significance of 5%. Some issues concerning the contradiction of conclusions for different normality tests, here Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test, can be seen. These issues can be neglected due to the confirmed normal distribution in most cases and large sample size (Barić, 2007). Also, further parametric analysis results can be considered discriminant and reliable.

The values of Spearman's correlation coefficient and its significance for the correlation between coaching styles and the tendency towards perfectionism, i.e. leadership styles and the scale of competitive perfectionism are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Leadership styles and scales of competitive perfectionism – Correlation analysis

Coach type	Striving for perfectionism	Competitive Perfectionism Scale
Instructiveness	r .241	.242
	p .055	.054
Democratic behavior	r .363	.309
	p .003	.013
Autocratic behavior	r .343	.269
	p .006	.032
Social support	r .286	.223
	p .022	.077
Positive feedback	r .438	.284
	p .000	.023

Based on the data shown in Table 5, we see that a significant positive correlation (increasing the independent variable - the left margin - also increases the dependent variable - the upper margin) is present in the impact:

1. Democratic behavior, autocratic behavior and positive feedback both on the striving for perfectionism and on the scale of competitive perfectionism;
2. Social support for the pursuit of perfectionism (the impact on the scale of competitive perfectionism is not significant at the significance level of 5%, while it is at the 1% level);
3. Coach's instructiveness has no significant impact - for a significance level of 5% - neither on the striving towards perfectionism nor on the scale of competitive perfectionism.

Pearson correlation has confirmed these results.

Table 6. The impact of coaching style on the pursuit of perfectionism

Model	Beta	t	p	R	R ²
(Constant)	1.76	3.15	.003	.27	.07
Instructiveness	.29	2.17	.034		
(Constant)	1.66	4.47	.000	.411	.17
Democratic behavior	.35	3.55	.001		
(Constant)	1.33	3.78	.000	.51	.26
Autocratic behavior	.47	4.70	.000		
(Constant)	1.40	3.12	.003	.41	.17
Social support	.43	3.50	.001		
(Constant)	1.16	3.52	.001	.58	.34
Positive feedback	.56	5.60	.000		

The univariate linear regression analysis for the impact of coaching style on pursuit for perfectionism (Table 6) has yielded the following results:

- 7.1% of the changes in the values of perfectionism were determined by the changes in instructiveness. If the value of instructiveness scale is increased by 1, the value of striving towards perfectionism scale increases by 0.29. The increase is statistically significant ($t=2.17$; $p=0.034<0.05$).
- 16.9% of the changes in the values of perfectionism are determined by changes in democratic behavior. If the value of democratic behavior scale is increased by 1, the value of striving for perfectionism scale increases by 0.35. The increase is statistically significant ($t=3.55$; $p=0.001<0.05$).
- 26.3% of the changes in the values of striving for perfectionism were determined by changes in autocratic behavior. If the value of autocratic behavior is increased by 1, the value of striving for perfectionism scale increases by 0.47. The increase is statistically significant ($t=4.70$; $p=0.000<0.05$).
- 16.5% of the changes in the values of striving for perfectionism were determined by changes in social support. If the value of social support is increased by 1, the value of striving for perfectionism increases scale by 0.43. The increase is statistically significant ($t=3.50$; $p=0.001<0.05$).
- 33.6% of the changes in the values of striving for perfectionism were determined by changes in positive feedback. If the value of positive feedback scale is increased by 1, the value of striving for perfectionism increases by 0.56. The increase is statistically significant ($t=5.60$; $p=0.000<0.05$).

Table 7. The impact of coaching style on the competitive perfectionism scale

Model	Beta	t	p	R	R ²
(Constant)	2.67	3.71	.000	.18	.03
Instructiveness	.25	1.40	.167		
(Constant)	2.72	5.45	.000	.24	.06
Democratic behavior	.26	1.92	.059		
(Constant)	2.51	5.07	.000	.29	.08
Autocratic behavior	.34	2.37	.021		
(Constant)	2.99	4.88	.000	.13	.02
Social support	.18	1.10	.275		
(Constant)	2.40	5.00	.000	.32	.10
Positive feedback	.39	2.66	.010		

The univariate linear regression analysis results for the impact of coaching style on the competitive perfectionism scale (Table 7) has yielded the following results:

- 3.1% of the changes in the values of perfectionism were determined by the changes in instructiveness. If the value of instructiveness scale is increased by 1, the value of the competitive perfectionism scale increases by 0.25, but this rise is insignificant ($t=1.40$, $p=0.167>0.05$).
- 5.6% of the changes in the values of competitive perfectionism were determined by the changes in democratic behavior. If the value of democratic behavior scale is increased by 1, the value of the competitive perfectionism scale increases by 0.26, but this increase is insignificant ($t=1.92$; $p=0.059>0.05$).
- 8.3% of the changes in the values of competitive perfectionism were determined by the changes in autocratic behavior. If the value of the autocratic behavior is increased by 1, the value of the scale of competitive perfectionism increases by 0.34. The increase is statistically significant ($t=2.37$, $p=0.021<0.05$).
- 1.9% of the changes in the values of competitive perfectionism were determined by the changes in social support. If the value of the social support scale is increased by 1, the competitive perfectionism scale value increases by 0.18, but this increase is insignificant ($t=1.10$, $p=0.275>0.05$).
- 10.3% of the changes in the values of competitive perfectionism were determined by the changes in positive feedback. If the value of positive feedback scale is increased by 1, the value of the competitive perfectionism scale increases by 0.39. The increase is statistically significant ($t=2.66$, $p=0.010<0.05$).

The multivariate linear regression approach would yield inconclusive results due to the significant correlation among the coaching style variables. Namely, using the multivariate regression analysis, one of the variables could be used as a mediator and its impact would be shown as significant, but for other variables the conclusion would have shown the opposite. However, it would be incorrect, because that way the combination of all styles would be considered, which is not the aim of the research. One example of such approach can be found in study elsewhere (Bajraktarević, 2004). That way, we could neglect the real significant impact. Here, we aim to contribute via results that might indicate comparison of competitiveness of various coaching styles when it comes to impact on perfectionism variables.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the coach's leadership style on the perfectionism of basketball players. Striving for perfectionism and competitive perfectionism obtained significant correlations between democratic behavior, autocratic behavior, and positive feedback, whereas social support on striving for perfectionism has no significant influence, and coach's instructiveness has no significant influence. Changes in instructiveness (7.1%), democratic behavior (16.9%), autocratic behavior (26.3%), social

support (16.5%), and positive feedback (33.6%) determine the influence of leadership style on the pursuit of perfection and changes in the values of the pursuit of perfection.

The obtained results indicate the influence of leadership style on basketball players' perfectionism, and that each coach type tends towards perfectionism. Hence, it is impossible to generalize which style is more appropriate in which situation. Changes in instructiveness (3.1%), democratic behavior (5.6%), autocratic behavior (8.3%), social support (1.9%), and positive feedback (10.3%) had an impact on the scale of competitive perfectionism and changes in the values of striving for perfection. Based on the findings, we can conclude that autocratic behavior (8.3%) and positive feedback (10.3%) had statistically significant values in comparison to the other values of the coach's behavior style on competitive perfectionism.

The characteristics of an instructional coach who provides them with more positive feedback and social support are the most prevalent among the interviewees' coaches, while the characteristics of a coach who provides them with positive feedback are the least prevalent. A coach's responsibilities include both technical and interpersonal aspects aimed at improving player performance.

Training athletes and developing game strategies are technical aspects of sport, but a coach's interpersonal role includes encouraging and inspiring players, as well as being aware of their specific strengths and limitations in order for them to perform to their full potential (Fletcher & Roberts, 2013). Sport psychologists are responsible for developing psychological abilities to deal with the demands of the sporting environment. However, it has been noticed that sports coaches, via their everyday contacts in the training environment and contests, play an essential role in the psychological and emotional growth of athletes (Kegelaers & Wylleman, 2019; Nicholls et al., 2016; Wylleman et al., 2016). Attachment Theory, which provides a psychological framework that adds considerably to the understanding of emotional attachments developed in personal relationships, as well as those that pervade the sport setting, supports its function in the socio-emotional construction of the athlete (Davis & Jowett, 2010).

Coaching leadership behavior is one of the factors that can influence players' motivation and some studies (Moen et al., 2014; Soyer et al., 2014) have attempted to investigate the most important factors influencing coaching leadership behavior. This relationship has an impact on the development of athletes and their sporting careers. The way players perceive their coaches' actions affects everyone involved, as well as sports achievements, and is influenced by a variety of psychological factors (attitudes, emotions, and goals) (Aleksić-Veljković et al., 2017).

The impact of coaching leadership behavior on athlete performance, team cohesion, satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, and team success is significant (Abedini et al., 2014; Karimi et al., 2012). Based on this fact, it has been established that coaches of elite athletes frequently see them solely as competitors, rather than as individuals with unique needs and desires (Balague, 1999). Athletes who experienced verbal and physical aggression from coaches during their athletic careers reported feeling stupid, worthless, upset, angry, depressed, humiliated, and hurt (Gervis & Dunn, 2004; Stirling & Kerr, 2008, 2013), and they felt the negative consequences of the coach's behavior long after their sports careers had ended (Gervis & Dunn, 2004).

Finally, the perception of high expectations stemming from the coach's attitude that winning is the only measure of sports success is linked to anxiety (Vazou et al., 2006) and the development of maladaptive perfectionism (Dunn et al., 2006) which underpins a variety of psychological difficulties as well as more serious psychopathological deviations. In the future, more research into their relationship is required.

Conclusions

The findings indicate the importance of training coaches on the characteristics and consequences of a specific leadership style, with team sports coaches receiving special attention. The results show that each type of trainer has a tendency toward perfectionism, and it is impossible to generalize which style is more appropriate in which situation. In team sports, there was a higher prevalence of negative and a lower prevalence of positive coach behavior. Hence, it is critical to include coaches in training programs that address behavior, nutrition, and the influence and roles of coaches in the lives of athletes. It is necessary to work on strengthening the coach's positive influence on the group and on the individual in terms of social support and positive feedback.

Striving for perfectionism and competitive perfectionism has a substantial relationship with democratic conduct, autocratic behavior, and positive feedback. It is important to notify that the positive feedback has yielded the best impact on both pursuit for perfectionism and competitive perfectionism. In that regard, future research can apply the obtained results via large scale experimental models, including one coaching style at a time, several or all of them combined.

The qualitative application plan of styles in cases of combining them can be directly drawn from this paper results. From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study emphasize the importance of adopting specific coaching behaviors that are congruent with the idiosyncratic characteristics of the various team members, as well as the importance of implementing leadership concepts that are adapted to the situational demands, primarily oriented to training and instruction using positive feedback, in order to promote cooperation, in either situation.

Conflicts of interest - The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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