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The relationship between leadership styles and coaching emotional intelligence in selected individual sports of universities of Tehran

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ABSTRACT

The current study investigates the relationship between leadership style (LS) and emotional intelligence (EI) among coaches of selected individual sports in universities of Tehran (Iran). An applied descriptive-correlational research method is used. Statistical population includes all male and female coaches in sports chosen from badminton and table tennis in universities of Tehran during the 2011-2012 academic year ($n=52$). Whole subjects are selected as the sample. The personality, Syber Yashring's emotional intelligence, and leadership scale for sports (LSS) questionnaires are applied to collect data. Research reliability is calculated by Cronbach's alpha test for intelligence emotional ($\alpha = 0.824$) and LSS ($\alpha = 0.718$) questionnaires. Data analysis is carried out through Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test in order to determine whether data is normally distributed. Further, Pearson's correlation coefficient test is applied to measure research hypotheses. The Pearson correlation test shows that there is a moderate positive relationship between leadership style of "positive feedback" and emotional intelligence of coaches in chosen individual sports from universities of Tehran ($r=0.46$, $p=0.037$), and that there is a low positive correlation between leadership style of "training and instruction" and coaching emotional intelligence in chosen individual sports from universities of Tehran ($r=0.198$, $p=0.020$). However, there is no significant relationship between other leadership styles and emotional intelligence ($p > 0.05$). Due to the significant relationship between some subscales of emotional intelligence and leadership styles, it is recommended to consider the skills of emotional intelligence with other coaching skills in order to select coaches for individual sports. Since this form of intelligence can be intentionally learned, improving the emotional intelligence among coaches requires holding teaching courses.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Styles, Coach, Universities of Tehran.

INTRODUCTION

Like any social areas, the survival of sports needs to seek for its development and to expand and strengthen its dimensions. As societies have stepped towards participation in sports, the role of coaches becomes more apparent [8]. One of the most important aspects of coaching is to determine leadership styles. This determinant element means that: how coaches decide? Which skills and strategies are taught? How the skill is taught? How practice and championship programs are organized? And more importantly, which role is made 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, and etc. simultaneously when needed [12]. 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 [18]. Coaches have a chance to develop self-control in learners' life by teaching teamwork and cooperative skills; how they must show respect for the rights of others, while responding their behaviors [14].

For the purpose of this study, the focus is on the leadership scale developed by Chelladurai and Saleh (1978), 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[7]:

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.

In recent decades, the concept of Emotional Intelligence has been increasingly studied in the literature as the structure associated with different human behaviors within different situations[6]. 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[16].

However, research has shown evidences that EI is correlated with health, happiness, life effectiveness, and performance desirability in workplaces [22].

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

On the other hand, 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[2]. 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[11]. Since EI, unlike intellectual intelligence, can be changes and learned[3], 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 (1978) 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. However, Weinberger (2010) observed no relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles among managers[23].

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[5].

By a qualitative investigation on intercollegiate teachers, Miller (2003) found that all EI factors can enhance perceptions of coaches from humanitarian leadership[17].

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 ($p< 0.05$)[15].

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[19].

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[9].

In his research named "The relationship between emotional intelligence, leadership style and management efficiency", Bani Hasemian (2006) concluded that managers with higher emotional intelligence have a tendency to use participative leadership styles, compared to those with lower emotional intelligence[4].

In the research named "Relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles in managers of state universities of physical education and sport sciences from Tehran (Iran)", Abdullahi (2009) obtained no significant relationship between EI and leadership style (transformational, transactional)[1].

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[25].

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 individual sports in universities of Tehran 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 badminton and table tennis coaches of universities of Tehran".

MATERIALS AND METHODS

An applied-correlational descriptive-survey research method is used. The statistical population composes of all male and female coaches in sports chosen from badminton and table tennis from faculties of physical education and sport sciences of universities of Tehran during the 2011-2012 academic year (n=52). As a limited number of coaches are available, whole subjects are selected as the research sample.

Universities of Tehran include Tehran, Tarbiat Moallem, Shahid Beheshti, Shariati, Shahed, Shahid Rajaie, and Payame Noor universities as well as Central Tehran, South Tehran and Research & Science branches of Islamic Azad University where courses on sport sciences are offered.

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

RESULTS

Research reliability was evaluated with Cronbach's alpha test. The values obtained revealed that the emotional intelligence ($\alpha = 0.824$) and leadership scale for sports (LSS) ($\alpha = 0.718$) questionnaires were valid.

As seen from Table 1, the numbers of male and female athletes were 42.31%, and 57.69%, respectively.

Table 1- Frequency Distribution and Percentage by Gender

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|
| Female | 30 | 57.69% |
| Male | 22 | 42.31% |
| Total | 52 | 100% |

The overall percentage of coaches in badminton was 59.61% which is the highest percentage of the sample, whereas the lowest value was obtained in table tennis by 40.39%.

Table 2- Frequency Distribution and Percentage by Sports

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|
| Badminton | 31 | 59.61% |
| Table Tennis | 21 | 40.39% |
| Total | 52 | 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= 4.06, SD= 0.50) and "Self-regulation" (m= 2.53, SD= 0.66), respectively.

Table 3- Descriptive Indices for Subscales of Emotional Intelligence

| | Min. | Max. | SD | Mean |
|------------------------|------|------|---------|--------|
| Self-awareness | 2.13 | 4.13 | 0.40232 | 2.9231 |
| Self-motivation | 2.29 | 4.57 | 0.47172 | 3.2582 |
| Empathy | 1.83 | 4.00 | 0.45476 | 2.8462 |
| Social skills | 3.00 | 5.00 | 0.50080 | 4.0692 |
| Self-regulation | 1.00 | 4.14 | 0.66050 | 2.5330 |

For the subscales of leadership scale for sports (LSS) among coaches in universities of Tehran, 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 | Frq. | 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 (K-S) test was carried out in order to determine whether data is normally distributed. The test indicates that data of all variables follows the normal distribution.

According to Table 5, the Pearson correlation test provides a significant relationship between the leadership style of "training and instruction" and emotional intelligence among coaches of individual sports selected from universities of Tehran ($r=0.198$, $p= 0.020$).

The test reveals that there is no significant relationship between the "democratic" leadership style and emotional intelligence of coaches in chosen individual sports from universities of Tehran ($r=0.220$, $p= 0.117$). However, there is a significant relationship between the "democratic" style and the subscale of "self-regulation" ($r=0.469$, $p= 0.001$). The leadership style of "democratic" is moderately correlated with the subscale of "self-regulation" ($0.300 < r < 0.700$).

The Pearson correlation test shows that there is no significant relationship between the "autocratic" leadership style and emotional intelligence of coaches in chosen individual sports from universities of Tehran ($r=0.429$, $p= 0.06$). For the subscales of EI, a positive significant relationship is achieved between the "autocratic" style and the subscale of "self-regulation" ($r=0.329$, $p= 0.017$). Further, this leadership style reveals no significant relationship with the subscales of "self-awareness" ($r=0.178$, $p= 0.207$), "social skills" ($r=0.102$, $p= 0.473$), "empathy" ($r=0.279$, $p= 0.51$), and "self-motivation" ($r=0.136$, $p= 0.337$).

The test indicates that there is no significant relationship between the leadership style of "social support" and coaching emotional intelligence in chosen individual sports from universities of Tehran ($r=0.45$, $p= 0.994$); however, this style shows positive significant relationship with two subscales of "self-regulation" ($r=0.697$, $p= 0.001$) and "empathy" ($r=0.544$, $p= 0.001$).

The Pearson correlation test provides significant relationship between the leadership style of "positive feedback" and emotional intelligence of coaches in chosen individual sports from universities of Tehran ($r=0.46$, $p= 0.037$).

Table 5- Pearson Correlation Test for Leadership Styles and EI Subscales

| | | Self-awareness | Self-motivation | Empathy | Self-regulation | Social Skills | EI |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|---------------|-------|
| Positive Feedback | Pearson Cor. | 0.54 | 0.113 | 0.38 | 0.570 | 0.123 | 0.46 |
| | Two-tailed Sig. level | 0.021 | 0.424 | 0.043 | 0.001 | 0.385 | 0.037 |
| Social Support | Pearson Cor. | 0.339 | 0.035 | 0.544 | 0.697 | 0.087 | 0.45 |
| | Two-tailed Sig. level | 0.214 | 0.807 | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.538 | 0.994 |
| Autocratic | Pearson Cor. | 0.178 | 0.136 | 0.279 | 0.329 | 0.102 | 0.429 |
| | Two-tailed Sig. level | 0.207 | 0.337 | 0.051 | 0.017 | 0.473 | 0.06 |
| Democratic | Pearson Cor. | 0.171 | 0.208 | 0.181 | 0.469 | 0.017 | 0.220 |
| | Two-tailed Sig. level | 0.226 | 0.138 | 0.198 | 0.001 | 0.904 | 0.117 |
| Training & Instruction | Pearson Cor. | 0.338 | 0.177 | 0.028 | 0.357 | 0.092 | 0.198 |
| | Two-tailed Sig. level | 0.014 | 0.032 | 0.432 | 0.001 | 0.216 | 0.020 |

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 the coaches exercise[21].

The purpose of current paper was to evaluate the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles among coaches of selected individual sports from universities of Tehran. 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, also that there is a low positive correlation between leadership style of "training and instruction" and emotional intelligence of coaches in chosen individual sports from universities of Tehran.

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. 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 highly 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. Hence, Shahlayi Bagheri (2004) yields equivalent results.

The leadership style of "training and instruction" aims to achieve improvement in athletic performance by training techniques. This has been confirmed by the findings of Jabbari (2000) indicating that team coaches have a tendency to task-oriented styles. 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).

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 of athletes, the result would be inconsistent with Kivanlu et al (2011). In contract, when the coach only encourages and strengthen athletes spiritually, the result indicating a positive relationship between EI and positive feedback style will agree with the findings of above 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 individual sports is likely associated with the variables used. 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 styles and EI. Also, Bani Hashemian (2006) stated that managers with higher EI tend to participative leadership style compared to those with lower EI. The same conclusion was provided by Mandell and Pherwani (2003) and Palmer (2003a). 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 with other competences in order to select coaches in badminton and table tennis sports. Since this form of intelligence can be intentionally learned, improving the emotional intelligence among coaches requires holding teaching courses. Moreover, the contradiction of present findings with some studies demonstrates the need for further research in this field.

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