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Relationship between Coach's Leadership Styles and Group Cohesion in the teams participating in the 10th Sport Olympiad of male Students

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the relationship between coach's leadership styles and group cohesion in the individual and group teams participating in the 10th sport olympiad of male students. 321 students (N=1906 selected as sample of this study). Athletes completed two instruments in this study; Leadership Scale for Sport and the Group Environment Questionnaire. The LSS contains 40 items that measures five dimensions of leadership styles and The GEQ with 18 items assess the two dimensions group cohesion. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was utilized to examine the internal reliability of LSS ($r=0.85$) and GEQ ($r=0.72$). Data were analyzed with one-sample kolmogrov-smirnov, repeated measures ANOVA, Bonfferoni post hoc test, Pearson Correlation coefficient, and T-test (for independent groups), in significance level of $P \leq 0.05$. Result showed that coaches exhibited higher in training and instruction and lower in autocratic style among both interactive group teams and co-acting teams. Result showed that there are no significant differences in task and social level's of interactive group teams and co-acting teams. Results showed coach's styles of training and instruction, democratic, social support and positive feedback were all positively correlated to group cohesion and autocratic style negatively correlated to group cohesion.

Key words: Coach's Leaderships Styles, group Cohesion, Sport Olympiad

INTRODUCTION

According to Frast, among the three factors of athlete, coach, and spectator, coaches are the pivots and important principles of sport teams. The coach is thought to be a powerful organizer and the basis of improvement [16]. Anshel (1997) believes that coaches can be examples of correct behavior for their followers [2]. Marthens' view point is that the coach's leadership style is the method the coach obviously chooses to help the group in order to carry on the assumed responsibilities and to meet the group's needs as well [17]. Most of the successful coaches make use of various coaching styles which are sometimes altered immediately. Effective leadership in sports results from the application of various roles and styles to meet athlete's needs and to reach the team's objectives [2]. It is necessary for coaches to pay attention not only to performance of athletic skills but also to mental skills of individuals and the team. Therefore, paying attention to individual and group processes or the needs of individual

athletes and the team seems necessary and is a part of coach's efficiency. Consistent research on coach's leadership style can help ameliorate his/her performance. Effective assessment of coach's leadership style proves very effective in bringing about athlete's satisfaction as well as their good performance. As a result, coach's behavior can have important and determining role in athlete's success and satisfaction [4]. Athletes' groups can turn into a team through a complimentary process. Though the formation of a team doesn't always follow a step-by-step procedure, there is a process through which a group of individuals gather and through a series multiple interactions, a unified whole-i.e. a team- appears. The coach's knowledge of group formation and sport can lead to application of solutions that can help increase cohesion among team members [18]. Carron (1981) defines cohesion as dynamic process that the group intent to empower intimacy, loyalty and integration. The authors specified two different cohesion: 1. Social cohesion as interpersonal attractiveness among team members and level that allows group to obtain its goal. 2. Task cohesion: objective evaluation by athletes of coordinated struggle or level that represents obtaining related goals [7]. Cohesion is of extraordinary importance in dynamicity of the team and group in sports since, when it comes to group processes, it has an overall effect on the number of individual variables such as unity, cooperation, attempt and motivation. As a result, this process maintains not only individual output like satisfaction and performance but also group output like team reinforcement and efficiency of performance [14].

We often hear the experts say a champion team can beat up a team consisting of champions, which is why team cohesion can be as important as individual talents and abilities of team members [16]. Carron (1983) identified four effective factors in team cohesion. Environmental factors; like cultural considerations of organizations and geographical considerations. Personal factors; refer to individual characteristics, knowing, motivation and behavior. Team factors; consist of group size, the complexity of group member's roles, collective efficacy and group member's background. Finally leadership factors that include leadership styles and coach's decisions, team members personal relationships with each other and with coach and the relationships between the team and the coach. Thus, coaches have the potential to affect group cohesion. These leadership factors may have either direct or indirect influence, through individual interference or team factors [14]. Anshel (1997) believes that coaches pay certain attention to team unity since they believe, it's the basic principle behind team's success, and therefore, they use certain techniques to make sure that the spirit of intimacy and unity exists among team members [2]. It's when a coach's role as a leader becomes apparent and prominent regarding team members' cohesion.

Though there are abundant approaches concerning the leadership style and behavior in proposed texts, it seems that relatively little research is done in this field due to lack of proposed theories and specialized models in sports field. Through the use of multi-dimensional leadership design in sports, Chelladurai concludes that coach's behavior results from 3 main variables of leader's characteristics, the circumstance characteristics and member's characteristics. However, it seems that this approach contains limitations as well because this model has emphasized on only two outcomes of coach's behavior on athletes' satisfaction and performance [15].

Horn (2002) designed a more complex model than those of Chelladurai and Carron which, in 3 parts, deals with explanation on effective factors on coach behavior, coach behavior influence on athlete's satisfaction and performance, and indirect relationships between coach's behavior and athlete's performance [5]. In a study that was carried out by Chelladurai and Carron (1978), it became clear that child athletes preferred relationship based leadership style to that based on task. In other words, they needed coach's friendship as an inseparable part of his leading role. On the other hand, they found out that college athletes had lesser relationship needs and instead, preferred task-based coach behavior [2].

The same researcher found out in a study in 1983 that social support leadership style was increasing progressively in coaches ranging from junior high-school to university [9]. This can be an expected style considering the increase in mental maturity and task.

Serpa *et al.* (1991) in a study entitled leadership pattern in Handball international matches showed that both athletes and coaches training and instruction style was the dominant style while autocratic style was used less [24]. Hosseini (2010) showed in a study that coaches in Iranian Premier League used more of training and instruction leadership style and less of Democratic style [15]. Chelladurai and some of his Japanese co-workers got some interesting results regarding the relationship between culture and coach's leadership style. Results showed that at academic level, Canadian male athletes prefer the training and instruction style, democratic behavior and positive feedback while Japanese are more in favor of autocratic and social support styles [11].

Alferman (2005) suggested that in order to develop team skills in athletes of team sports, social support leadership behavior was more effective while in individual fields, training and instruction style proved more efficient [1]. After Carron et al. (1985) proposed a conceptual model of team cohesion, more studies were conducted, most of which were concerned with effective factors on team cohesion. Moradi et al (2004) in "Iranian Basketball Premier League Teams" and Hosseini (2010) in "Iranian football Premier League Teams" got similar results. Results showed that except autocratic style that had negative and significant effect on group cohesion, other styles indicated a significant and positive relationship [15, 19]. However, when studying the players in young adolescent's football league, Shamsaei (2007) found significant and negative relationship with group cohesion between autocratic and democratic style. It seems that the reason for negative relationship between democratic styles with cohesion is the low level of mental maturity and task in young adolescent players [28].

At the level of high school teams, Chaw (1999) found out that the high levels of task cohesion are related to training and instruction leadership style and democratic style and high levels of social cohesion are related to democratic relationship style, social support and positive feedback [10]. Though most of the conducted studies show relationships between different types of coaches' leadership styles with increase in cohesion among team members in team sports, there are some contradictory results regarding this as well. For instance, Peace and Kozub (1994) didn't find a significant relationship between leadership behavioral dimensions and social cohesion in high school girls' basketball team [20]. At academic level, similar studies have been conducted. Catharine (2002) showed in university football teams whose coaches use training and instruction, democratic, social support and positive feedback styles, there are more cohesive teams [9]. Ronayne (2004), in a study entitled "The effect of coach's behavior on team's dynamicity in university sports team", showed that there is positive correlation between athletes' understanding of group cohesion during the season with their understanding of higher levels of democratic training and instruction, social support and positive feedback styles [23]. Rebecca (2007) found a significant difference between coaches' and athletes' approach to team cohesion [21]. Hans Lenk (1969), in his studies on two German rowing teams, came to the conclusion that co-acting sport groups could achieve maximum performance results despite severe internal conflicts. It means low group cohesion had positive effect on German Olympic rowing team [2]. In the present study, coaches' leadership styles are examined in 5 style frameworks: 1- training and instruction style: is applied to all behavior that coach designs in order to improve athlete's performance through technical trainings and in group sports in order to coordinate team members' activities. 2- Democratic style: is a behavior in which the coach gives the athletes the permission to participate in decisions related to determining group aims and the methods to achieve them. 3- Autocratic style: is reflected when coach separates him/ herself from the athletes and emphasizes his/her power. 4- Social support style: relates to the issue that to what extent the coach is involved in meeting the concerned athletes' interactive needs and finally 5- Positive feedback style is the limit where the coach, encourages and praises his athletes and admires their play and cooperation [18].

However, considering Carron's model of team cohesion, group cohesion can be studied through the two dimensions of social cohesion and task cohesion. Social cohesion means the degree of interpersonal interest among group members, i.e. the degree to which group lets the individual achieve his favorite objective. In other words, task cohesion shows the extent to which the team and group members can get their goals [6]. Most of conducted studies and researches about leadership style and team cohesion are limited to a certain field and few studies have been done comparing the two factors above in teams with interactions (group) like football and basketball and co-acting teams (individual) like rowing and tennis, such a study has never been done in the country (Iran).

That's why, in the present study, we deal with the relationship between coaches' leadership style and team cohesion of teams participating in the 10th athletic Olympiads for country boys which was hosted by Mazandaran University. Furthermore, in this study, we compare the two factors of coaches' leadership style and team cohesion in fields with interacting groups and in co-acting (individual) fields.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is descriptive and correlation and it is a field study from data gathering. The statistical population involves students participated in the 10th sport olympiad of male students in Iran. 321 students (N=1906) selected as sample of this study (M = 22.69 yrs, SD = 2.18).

Three instruments were used in the study: The Demographic Questionnaire, Leadership Scale for Sport [11] and the Group Environment Questionnaire [8]. Each study participant completed a demographic questionnaire that asked

him to report age and academic background. The LSS measures five dimensions of leadership style - training and instruction (TI) democratic style (DB), autocratic style (AB), social support (SS) and positive feedback (PF). The LSS comes in three versions: the athlete's preference for coaching style, the athlete's perception for coaching style and the coaches' perception of their own style. The athletes in this study only completed the athlete's perceived coaching version. The athlete's perception version of LSS contains forty items prefaced by "My coach...", and is followed by statements such as "sees to it that athletes work to capacity". Each item is scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "always" to "never." There are thirteen items for TI, nine items for DB, five items for AB, eight items for SS and five items for PF. The psychometric properties of the LSS have been demonstrated in several studies [11]. The GEQ assess the four dimensions of team cohesion - Individual Attraction to group task (ATG-T), Individual Attraction to Group-Social (ATG-S), Group Integration-Task (GIT) and Group Integration-Social (GI-S). The questionnaire contains 18 items that are scored on a 9-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Each item is either positively stated or negatively stated. The questionnaire has five items for ATG-S, four items for ATG-T, five items for GI-T, and four items for GI-S. The score for each category is calculated by summing the values and dividing by the number items in that category. Administration of the GEQ and LSS occurred immediately following the end of season. The athletes were asked to indicate their coach's actual style when filling out the LSS. Each gave approval on the head coaches' approval. After practice, the coaches or assistant coach brought the team together and questionnaire was always administered by the researcher. Players first completed the demographic questionnaire, then the LSS questionnaire, and finally the GEQ. The instruments were completed individually and anonymously, and the coaches did not have access to the individual information received. Data were analyzed with Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Pearson correlation coefficient, ANOVA, and Bonferroni post hoc test, T-test in significance level of $P \leq 0.05$.

RESULTS

- Scale Reliabilities

Previous LSS studies have generally indicated acceptable internal consistency scores for LSS scales, although some problems with the Autocratic Style Scale have been reported [11]. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was utilized to examine the internal reliability of both scales. The internal reliability for the LSS and the GEQ is represented in table 1 and 2.

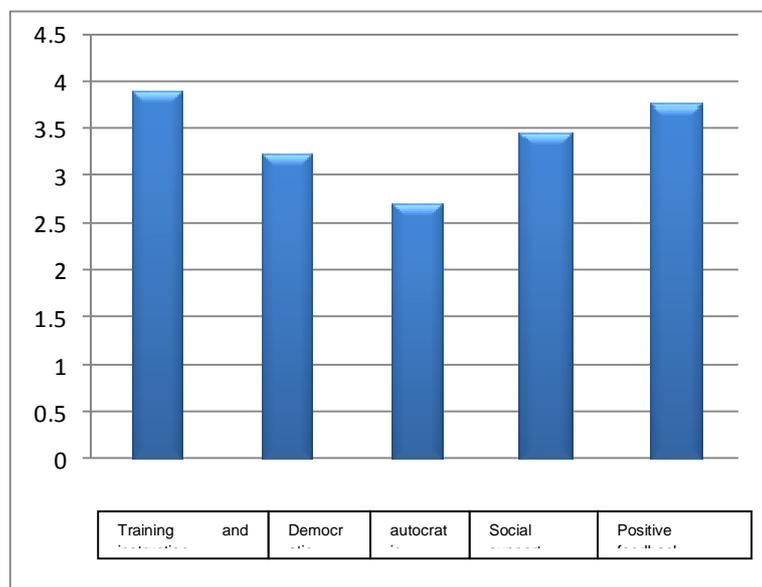


Figure 1. Comparison of coach's leadership styles

Table 1. Internal reliability scores for the LSS

LSS Scale	Training and Instruction	Democratic Style	Autocratic Style	Social Support	Positive Feedback
Cronbach's Alpha	0.84	0.79	0.78	0.83	0.73

Table2. Internal reliability scores for GEQ

GEQ Scale	Task Cohesion	Social Cohesion
Cronbach's Alpha	0.72	0.73

After getting sure of giving data by using Kolmogrov-Smirnov test, they used parametric tests for data analysis. The result of ANOVA showed that there are significance differences among leadership styles. In this research coaches use training and instruction leadership styles more than autocratic leadership styles and this difference was also significant (Figure 1).

The results of T-test showed there is not a significant difference between task and social cohesion of individual teams to group teams.

Table3. Compare between cohesions dimensions in teams

cohesion dimensions	groups	M	T	df	0.34
Task	Individual teams	6.64	0.95	319	0.34
	Group teams	6.68			
Social	Individual teams	6.49	1.32	319	0.18
	Group teams	6.65			

The result of Pearson correlation coefficient test showed that there are positive and significance relationship among task cohesion to training and instruction (r=0.49), Democratic (r=0.24), social support (r=0.25) and positive feedback(r=0.34). And also there is positive and significance relationship among social cohesion to training and instruction style (r=0.44), Democracy (r=0.17), social support (r=0.23) and positive feedback(r=0.29). On the other hand there is not significance relationship among autocratic style to cohesion dimensions (table4).

Table4. Pearson correlation coefficient among leadership styles and group cohesion

	Training and Instruction	Democratic Style	Autocratic Style	Social Support	Positive Feedback
Task cohesion	0.49*	0.24*	-0.10	0.25*	0.34*
Social Cohesion	0.44*	0.17*	-0.14	0.23*	0.29*
Total cohesion	0.47*	0.20*	-0.12	0.25*	0.31*

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this research showed that coaches exhibited higher in training and instruction and lower in autocratic style. In athletes viewpoints, they consider technical and tactical training of individuals and teams. Less autocratic style indicate that the coaches allow athletes to participate in decision making related to determination of group goals and goal achievement methods. Hoseini (2010) and Ramazaninezhad (2009) concluded that in professional leagues volleyball and football teams use training and instruction mostly and they employ democratic style less. Autocratic style is task based leadership method. Coach responsibility based style in professional and championship sports has been reported in researches. The results of Hoseini (2010) and Ramazaninezhad (2009), Moradi (2009), Rimmer and Chelladurai (1995) and Bennet&Maneual(2000) confirm these findings. According to the dynamic nature of sport, training and instruction are common and the coaches concentrate on teaching of tactics and techniques. of course, related to less usage of autocratic style by university coaches, the results are in agreement with Moradi (2009), Rimmer and Chelladurai (1995) and Bennet & Maneual (2000). Hoseini (2010) and Ramazaninezhad (2009) donot agree with these results. They reported that the coaches of volleyball and football leagues use less democratic style .It seems that type of sport and also level of teams cause this difference in using autocratic and democratic leadership styles.

Other research's result showed there is no significant difference between task and social cohesion of individual teams to group teams. Considering this point that this research is alone in many different fields and checked samples were the college students who were hailfellow. There was no significant differences in group cohesion of group teams to individual teams. Results showed coach's styles of training and instruction, democratic, social support and

positive feedback were all positively correlated to group cohesion and autocratic style negatively correlated to group cohesion that agrees with findings of, Katarine (2002), Moradi (2004), Shamsaei (2007), Hoseini (2010) and Ramazaninezhad (2010). They found that there is a significant relationship among training and practice, democratic leadership styles and social support, positive feedback to cohesion. While, there is a negative relationship among autocratic style to team cohesion. Training and instruction, democracy and social support require collaboration and interaction and involvement of the athletes that it leads to increase in team cohesion. So asserting propositional Carron (1982) can be said that leadership is one of the important and effecting for group cohesions of teams. Coaches who use mostly training and instruction, democratic, social support and positive feedback styles and less from autocratic style, have teams with more cohesion.

Finally, we proffer to leaders to make a suitable social-mental environment to obtain team aims. Coaches should use suitable leadership styles in different cases to afford athlete's needs, make players familiar with their teamer's responsibilities, and while playing and teaching use positive feedback. They should meet athletes' needs and get familiar the athletes with their responsibilities by using best leadership style. The coaches should contact with athletes and have their personal information and try to empower their strong points and eliminate weak points by offering optimal technical and tactical plans.

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