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### Comparative study of leadership styles among Iranian super-leagues coaches

Zynolabedin Fallah<sup>1</sup>, Hamid Janani<sup>2</sup>, Amir Dana<sup>3</sup>, Ahsan Fallah<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Physical Education, Gorgan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Gorgan, Iran

<sup>2</sup>Department of Physical Education, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

<sup>3</sup>Department of Physical Education, Aliabad Katoul Branch, Islamic Azad University, Aliabad Katoul, Iran

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#### ABSTRACT

*This research aims to comparative study of leadership styles among Iranian super-leagues coaches. Study population included all Iranian super-leagues players (volleyball, basketball, badminton, wrestling, karate) (N=396). The samples included 328 players. They were randomly selected from the super-leagues. Coaches' leadership styles were measured by MLQ (1996) questionnaire. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire in the target population was examined and approved at  $\alpha=0.05$ . In order to data analysis descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were employed. ANOVA indicated that there was great difference in the leadership styles among Iran super leagues coaches ( $p<0/001$ ,  $F=7/031$ ).*

**Key words:** leadership styles, super-leagues, coaches.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Leadership and its styles are considered to be an act of influencing the individuals of an organization such that they make effort eagerly towards achieving group goals. In the past decades, many reports have been published on this subject [1], but most of them have focused on administrative, business and industrial areas. The style which is displayed by coaches in leadership, according to most of researchers performed on effective coaches indicate the rate of their influence on performance, behavior and ideal psychological performance (such as motivation, satisfaction and commitment) of sportsmen on one side and team integration on the other side.

Burans (1978) believe that all managers can be divided into two categories of transactional and transformational leadership based on leadership styles [2]. While interacting with their own followers, the Transformational leaders seeking new ways to solve problems, such that when compared with regular conditions, they themselves and their followers reach a higher level of success [3].

The transactional leaders in interacting with their own followers has a contract-based or transactional relations such that subordinates receive a more touchable rewards for doing a better performance and improve in performing duties and are controlled. In case of lack of observing regulations or failure in achieving goals in agreement with standards, they are punished [4-5]. Research witnesses indicate that transformational leaders are more successful as compared with transactional leaders [6-7].

Transformational leaders are proactive, raise follower awareness for transcendent collective interests, and help followers achieve extraordinary goals. Transformational leadership is theorized to comprise the following five first-order factors: (a) Idealized influence (attributed) refers to the socialized charisma of the leader, whether the leader is perceived as being confident and powerful, and whether the leader is viewed as focusing on higher-order ideals and ethics; (b) idealized influence (behavior) refers to charismatic actions of the leader that are centered on values, beliefs, and a sense of mission; (c) inspirational motivation refers to the ways leaders energize their followers by viewing the future with optimism, stressing ambitious goals, projecting an idealized vision, and communicating to followers that the vision is achievable; (d) intellectual stimulation refers to leader actions that appeal to followers' sense of logic and analysis by challenging followers to think creatively and find solutions to difficult problems; and (e) individualized consideration refers to leader behavior that contributes to follower satisfaction by advising, supporting, and paying attention to the individual needs of followers, and thus allowing them to develop and self-actualize[8]. Howell and Higgins (1990) identified the transformational leadership behavior as a cause to build champion in organizations. They identified in their prescribed model that emergence of a champion is based upon personality characteristics, transformational leadership behavior, and variety of influence tactics [9].

Transactional leadership is an exchange process based on the fulfillment of contractual obligations and is typically represented as setting objectives and monitoring and controlling outcomes. Transactional leadership is theorized to comprise the following three first-order factors: (a) Contingent reward leadership (i.e., constructive transactions) refers to leader behaviors focused on clarifying role and task requirements and providing followers with material or psychological rewards contingent on the fulfillment of contractual obligations; (b) management-by-exception active (i.e., active corrective transactions) refers to the active vigilance of a leader whose goal is to ensure that standards are met; and (c) management-by-exception passive (i.e., passive corrective transactions) leaders only intervene after noncompliance has occurred or when mistakes have already happened [8] .

The components of transactional leadership style consist of the following items: contingency rewards referring to a situation where a leader makes use of reward / punishment to achieve performance. Active management by exception is when the leader supervises the performance of his followers and does not tolerate the violations of the standards by emphasizing the standards.

Inactive management by exception refers to a situation where the leader simply expects violations and deviations. Unlike active leadership styles (transformational and transactional), laissez-faire leadership is regarded as an inactive style in which the leader pays no heed to the events and has no interest in the needs of his subordinates [10].

Danielson et al (1975) believe that professional sports environment / setting is a suitable location for the study of organizational behaviors. They say that the leadership style of the great and celebrated coaches is a pattern for the leadership of non-sport and commercial organizations [11]. However, nowadays the sports researchers have borrowed the leadership patterns from organizations [12]. When a group of individuals strives to achieve a goal, a person is usually takes over the leadership or management of that group. This person should enjoy the necessary requirements for the leadership so as to lead the members towards the goal. In sport settings, it is usually the coach who leads the players and is the one who can play a pivotal role in the group's performance [13]. Therefore, we can say the sport teams are a kind of organization. Unlike the commonly held belief, the result of a game is not determined on the match day because there are numerous factors affecting the final outcome.

In order to indicate major goal of the present paper, many investigations have been carried out. The study believes in this point that professional sports and sport organization are major pivots of society development, and their response to changes has a great effect on carrying out their assignment. Focus is on this point that coaches of super leagues are one of the most significant and fundamental parts, and they have a great effect on expanding and developing country sports. This paper will let to have a comparative study of leadership styles among Iranian super-leagues coaches.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This was a descriptive study. Statistical population consisted of 369 players who were play in 5 super league (Volleyball, Basketball, Wrestling, Badminton and Karate). From among them 328 players, were chosen randomly based on Morgan table. Ultimately, 228 players participated in this research (Table 1).

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass, 1996) included of 9 factors (micro-scale) and 41 closed-ended questions of Likert-type scale. In this questionnaire, transformational leadership style contains five micro-scales namely: charisma, idealized behavior, intellectual stimulation, and personal considerations. Transactional leadership style consists of three micro-scales including: contingency reward, active management by exception and inactive management by exception. In order to determine basic questionnaire validity, the study used viewpoints of 20 sport management experts (Faculty or PhD), and for more reliability, questionnaire was distributed among 50 player, and reliability was calculated by Cronbach alpha method (86%).

In order to conduct the data analysis, descriptive statistics and inference statistics were employed. Utilized method for measuring frequencies, means, percents, standard deviations was descriptive statistics and results are presented in tables. Unilateral analysis of variances and T-test were used for comparing the attitude of participants. If variances were the same tukey test would be utilized.

## RESULTS

As shown in table 2, the participants' mean score of Transformational leadership was 3.33, out of the total score 5, with the standard deviation of 0.77 and the participants' mean score of Transactional leadership was 3.27, out of the total score 5, with the standard deviation of 0.72.

In order to compare groups' viewpoints in 5 super leagues (Volleyball, Basketball, Wrestling, Badminton and Karate) toward mentioned variable, one-way analysis variance method was used. Results showed that calculated level of significance ( $P < 0.001$ ) is less than 0.05. This relation indicates that this test in mentioned level is great. So, almost certainly, it can be said that there is a significant difference among Transformational leadership styles and Transactional leadership of coaches in 5 super leagues (Table 3 & 4).

In order to determine average difference, it is necessary to use analysis like tukey test for the same and different variances. Table 5 shows the method of two groups' comparison. As shown, there is a significant difference between 5 groups' of coaches.

## DISCUSSION

In order to succeed in winning international competitions in all fields of team sport such as Handball, there is a need to reconsider all success factors including: goals, talent search programs, athlete orientation, skillful coach employing (leadership), etc [14]. Coaches as the most important success factors utilize different leadership styles in orienting sport teams. If we consider sport teams as an organization and its members as the staff of an organization, in that case, the coaches play the role of managers and orient a team. Furthermore, one of their duties besides planning is to deploy players and control their performance and perform leadership. Confirming this ideal, many researchers believe that coaches play the role of managers and they are supposed to do similar duties as managers do [15-16].

Leadership is a voluntary influencing process for the direction of group activities towards the goals and it also consists of a set of effective characteristics in affecting others [17]. The managers of organizations use a variety of methods to direct their staff which is called leadership style. Leadership style has been defined as an individual's stable behavioral patterns observed by others [18]. The theory of transactional and transformational leadership styles was initially proposed by Burns (1978) and was further completed by Bass (1985) [2-19]. According to Bass, transformational leadership is based on emotional and interpersonal relations between the leaders and subordinates. This theory focuses on stimulation and provocation of the followers to gain extra performance, whereas the transactional leadership is based on interactions between the leader and subordinates and tries to motivate the followers through contingency rewards [20-21]. According to Bass (1985) the characteristics of Transformational Leadership Style include: charisma where the self-confidence and personal authority of the leader results in the followers' respect and trust. Idealized behavior is related to a respected leader trying to promote the followers' ideas and opinions. Inspiration is related to a leader who tries to encourage his followers to boost morale so they can attain higher expectations. Intellectual stimulation refers to the case when the leader encourages his followers to examine and resolve the problems by means

of innovation and new methods. Personal considerations relate to the emphasis by the leader on interpersonal relations and individual growth of his followers.

Leadership has proved itself to be an interesting topic for researchers. Numerous investigators have studied leadership styles in different cultures, occupations, organizational settings. Since no such research has been done on sports organizations and teams, the results of this research and few other research conducted in non-sport organizations, are discussed below. As it was said, some of the researches refer to the importance of both transformational and transactional leadership styles in achieving objectives and success: Doherty and Danylchuk (1996) pointed out that the transformational leadership style increases the transactional leadership style [22]. Ardichvili (2001) believes that the transformational leadership is not an alternative for transactional leadership style but it can supplement it, reinforce the impacts of transactional style and increase that [23-24-25]. Anyway, without observing transactional aspects in sport teams, in particular the management component based on contingent reward and management by exception (active), the management and leadership of teams will face serious problems and following that the players' commitment will reduce.

**Table 1. Examiner distribution**

Super League	population number	Sample number	Return number	Participation percent
Volleyball	98	80	51	64
Basketball	98	80	57	71
Wrestling	80	66	52	78
Badminton	40	36	28	77
Karate	80	66	40	61
Total	396	328	228	69

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean $\pm$ Std. Deviation					
	Volleyball	Basketball	Wrestling	Badminton	Karate	Total
Transformational leadership	2.93 $\pm$ 0.72	3.38 $\pm$ 0.73	3.61 $\pm$ 0.62	3.59 $\pm$ 0.92	3.22 $\pm$ 0.72	3.33 $\pm$ 0.77
Transactional leadership	2.89 $\pm$ 0.76	3.37 $\pm$ 0.63	3.53 $\pm$ 0.64	3.50 $\pm$ 0.75	3.15 $\pm$ 0.67	3.27 $\pm$ 0.72

**Table 3. Results related to one-way analysis variance about comparing Transformational leadership styles of coaches**

Changes resources	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between groups	14.560	4	3.640	6.751	<0.001
Within groups	120.232	223	0.539		
total	134.791	227			

**Table 4. Results related to one-way analysis variance about comparing Transactional leadership styles of coaches.**

Changes resources	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between groups	13.525	4	3.381	7.105	<0.001
Within groups	105.642	222	0.476		
total	119.167	226			

**Table 5. Tukey test to compare change management ability of coaches**

Groups	Transformational leadership			Transactional leadership		
	Mean difference	Standard deviation	P	Mean difference	Standard deviation	P
Volleyball - Basketball	-0.446	0.1415	0.016	-0.482	0.1329	0.003
Volleyball - Wrestling	-0.676	0.1447	0.001	-0.615	0.1366	0.001
Volleyball - Badminton	-0.651	0.1727	0.002	-0.615	0.1622	0.002
Volleyball - Karate	-0.285	0.1550	0.353	-0.265	0.2653	0.364
Basketball - Wrestling	-0.230	0.1408	0.475	-0.158	0.1329	0.755
Basketball - Badminton	-0.204	0.1694	0.746	-0.132	0.1592	0.920
Basketball - Karate	0.160	0.1514	0.826	0.217	0.1422	0.544
Wrestling - Badminton	0.025	0.1721	0.999	0.026	0.1622	0.980
Wrestling - Karate	0.391	0.1544	0.009	0.376	0.1457	0.007
Badminton - Karate	0.365	0.1809	0.044	0.350	0.1699	0.211

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