

Modeling the Effect of Coaches' Leadership Styles on Athletes' Satisfaction and Commitment in Iranian Handball Pro League

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to providing a relationship modeling for the effect of transformational-transactional leadership styles of coaches on athletes' satisfaction and commitment in the Iranian handball pro league. The coaches' leadership style was measured by Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), players' satisfaction was measured by Athlete's Satisfaction Questionnaire (ASQ) and players' commitment was measured by (SCMS). These Questionnaires was distributed between 218 athletes after determining validity by confirmatory factor analysis and reliability by Alpha Cronbach coefficient ($\alpha=0.95$ for MLQ, $\alpha=0.95$ for ASQ and $\alpha=0.90$ for SCMS). Descriptive statistics was used to data analysis and in order to apply (SEM), univariate regression and multivariate multiple regression were utilized to predict athletes' satisfaction and commitment from transformational-transactional leadership styles of coaches. The results show that transformational leadership with ($\beta=0.66$) and transactional leadership with ($\beta=0.19$) can predict athletes' satisfaction. Also transformational leadership with ($\beta=0.53$) and transactional leadership with ($\beta=0.44$) can predict athletes' commitment. In addition laissez-fair leadership with ($\beta=-0.31$) can predict athletes' satisfaction and could not predict athletes' commitment. We can implicate that transformational leadership more than transactional leadership can predict athletes' satisfaction and commitment. So the results suggest to coaches to improve transformational characteristics in their own leadership style.

Key words: Model • Leadership style • Satisfaction • Commitment • Handball

INTRODUCTION

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 [1]. 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, Chelladurai (2001) and Kolaric, (2005) believe that coaches play the role of managers and they are supposed to do similar duties as managers do [2-3].

Leadership is the process of influencing and supporting others to work enthusiastically toward achieving objectives [4]. 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, but most of them have focused on administrative, business and industrial areas [5].

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 [6]. Many researchers believe that all managers can be divided into two categories of transactional and transformational leadership based on

leadership styles. 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 [7-9].

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 [9-10-11]. Research witnesses indicate that transformational leaders are more successful as compared with transactional leaders [12-13].

Satisfaction of followers is one of the most important consequences of leadership [14]. Fredrick (2005) presented the dimensions of job satisfaction [15]. The player's satisfaction as a dependent variable of this research indicates a positive emotional status which is obtained as a result of a complex evaluation of structures, procedures and results related to sport experiences [16]. The level of satisfaction is obtained through determining the difference between what sportsmen wants and his understanding of what he has gained in psychological, physical and environmental forms. Such a satisfaction might be considered as the end of organization (team) effectiveness of a sport program. Chelladurai (1997) think that sportsman (player)'s satisfaction is under the influence of some factors such as: individual and team results, individual and team procedures and social procedure [16].

In this research, the variable of commitment besides satisfaction is considered as the consequence and result of leadership within the framework of Bass's model [12-14]. Andrew (2004) states that most of conducted researches are focused on commitment in organizations [17]. According to the definition of Scanlan (1993), sport commitment is the psychological structures which indicate the tendency and will of an individual to continue construction in sport activities. The model of sport commitment (Scanlan 1993) has been designed to evaluate the reasons of individuals in continuing contribution in sport. In this model, the sport commitment is divided into five key factors. These factors include: Level of sport enjoyment, Involvement alternative, Personal investment (in sport), Social constraints and, Involvement opportunity. All mentioned features are indexes of the rate of individual's commitment to the continuation in a specific sport [18].

Due to the importance of awareness of relation between leadership styles in particular transactional and transformational styles and its impact on satisfaction and commitment, certain researches have been conducted so far. The findings of the mentioned researches show a positive relation between the style of transformational leadership and job satisfaction and organizational commitment [2, 11, 12] and some have referred to the factor of provisional or contingent rewards [19, 20]. With regard to the relation and impact of transformational and transactional leadership styles on job satisfaction, players of sport team have confirmed the existence of a positive relation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction [4-21]. Some of the studies which have been performed on sport to analyze and understand the factors related to transformational leadership in the management of sport activities do not present the same results. They suggest that transformational leadership is of great significance because the transformational leadership helps with the increase of satisfaction and commitment of staff through giving impetus and vision, whereas some others cast doubt on its application [2-22]. So, question in respect of the necessity of giving attention to this style of leadership in sport either for the present time or in the future is of great significance [23]. Since finding a leadership style for coaches to enable them gain the satisfaction and commitment of players is among the challenges of coaches and in turn supervisors and managers of clubs, therefore it can be said the question of this research is the lack of awareness of connection and partly the impact of transformational and transactional leadership styles of coaches on the rate of players' sport satisfaction and commitment. Thus, in this research, while applying the transformational and transactional leadership model of Bass (1985), the researcher intends to show the impact of transformational, transactional and Laissez Fair Leadership within the framework of the mentioned model on the rate of players' satisfaction and commitment of Handball pro League of Iran.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is of the descriptive and analytical type; emphasizing on the assumption of locating (and in this research on widthwise locating) as one of the most prevailing descriptive research methods [24]. In this research, description, forecasting and analyzing relations and a comparison between variables under consideration will be dealt with.

The statistical community of this research comprises of male players of Handball pro League of the country. These teams were competing in the competitions of Pro League of 2008. The sample under investigation includes 10 teams of the League 2008 and two selected team of League sub-groups (who will join to the competitions in the following year). 235 people received the research questionnaires and only 228 were completed fully. Participants of this research were all men with an average age of 23 and a five year record of play in their present club. The forecasting variables in this research were transformational and transactional leadership styles of coaches and standard variables (forecasting ones) were players' commitment and satisfaction. The above variables were both quantitative and constant and measures at distance level.

With regard to the method and objectives of research, three questionnaires were used as described below: The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) has been designed by Bass and Avolio (2000). The MLQ-5x has put together some aspects of transformational and transactional leadership styles within a standard tools and without limitation in being employed in different societies to measure the style of leadership in order to develop a broad range of leadership behaviors [25]. The second questionnaire was the Athlete Satisfaction Questionnaire (ASQ) which is developed by Chelladurai and Riemer (1997) [26]. This questionnaire has 56 questions which is distributed in 15 factors or petite scales of athletes' satisfaction. The Cronbach's Alpha of sub-scales of this questionnaire is reported by its authors in average 85% and its internal consistency as 70% [26]. The third questionnaire is the Sport Commitment Model Scale which was developed by Scanlan *et al.* (1993). This questionnaire has 28 questions which are distributed in six components. The Cronbach's Alpha of sub-scales of this questionnaire is reported by its authors to be in average 0.89 [18].

In this research, emphasizing on the method of model finding of structural equations and using Lisrel software 9.2, the method of path analysis was used. So in this research the single variable and multi-variable regression was employed to predict the relation among variables and

more than that to predict the impact of the standard variable (dependent variable) based on predicting variable (independent variable).

RESULTS

The findings of this research are presented by using structural equation modeling (SEM). SEM includes a general technique for statistical modeling being used broadly in behavioral sciences. Researchers use SEM to confirm the theoretical models among variables so that SEM is a confirmatory technique rather than an explorative one.

One of the objectives of this research is to achieve the model of the connection path among factors under consideration. For this purpose, the regression was used to determine the connection and impact among mentioned factors and path analysis model to present a model. Table (1) shows the descriptive statistics of the variables and the Figure (1) shows the path analysis model. According to the theoretical foundations and within the framework of Bass model, by omitting sub-scales of Laissez Fair Leadership and transactional Management by Exception the rate of players' satisfaction and commitment changes.

Since in new model, two mentioned components are detached from transactional leadership, the study of their impact on the rate of increase or decrease of satisfaction and commitment is of great significance. Gradually by deleting sub-scales of Laissez Fair Leadership and Management by Exception from the transactional leadership, the rate of players' commitment increases. But this trend is not true for the case of satisfaction. According to the coefficients of the path, it is likely the existence of sub-scale of Laissez Fair Leadership and Management by Exception to cause the increase of satisfaction. So, it can be inferred that players' satisfaction and commitment against the deletion of scales of Laissez Fair Leadership and Management by Exception show a reverse reaction.

There appears a slight difference between the coefficients of regression and coefficients of path. That is why in model making, there is a less measuring error and

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the Variables

Variable		Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Coach' Leadership Styles	Transformational Style	0	76	50.63	13.91
	Transactional Style	0	68	40.68	13.21
	Laissez-faire Style	1	20	7.77	5.33
Athlete' Satisfaction		20	100	68.17	16.54
Athletes' Commitment		20	100	54.25	11.24

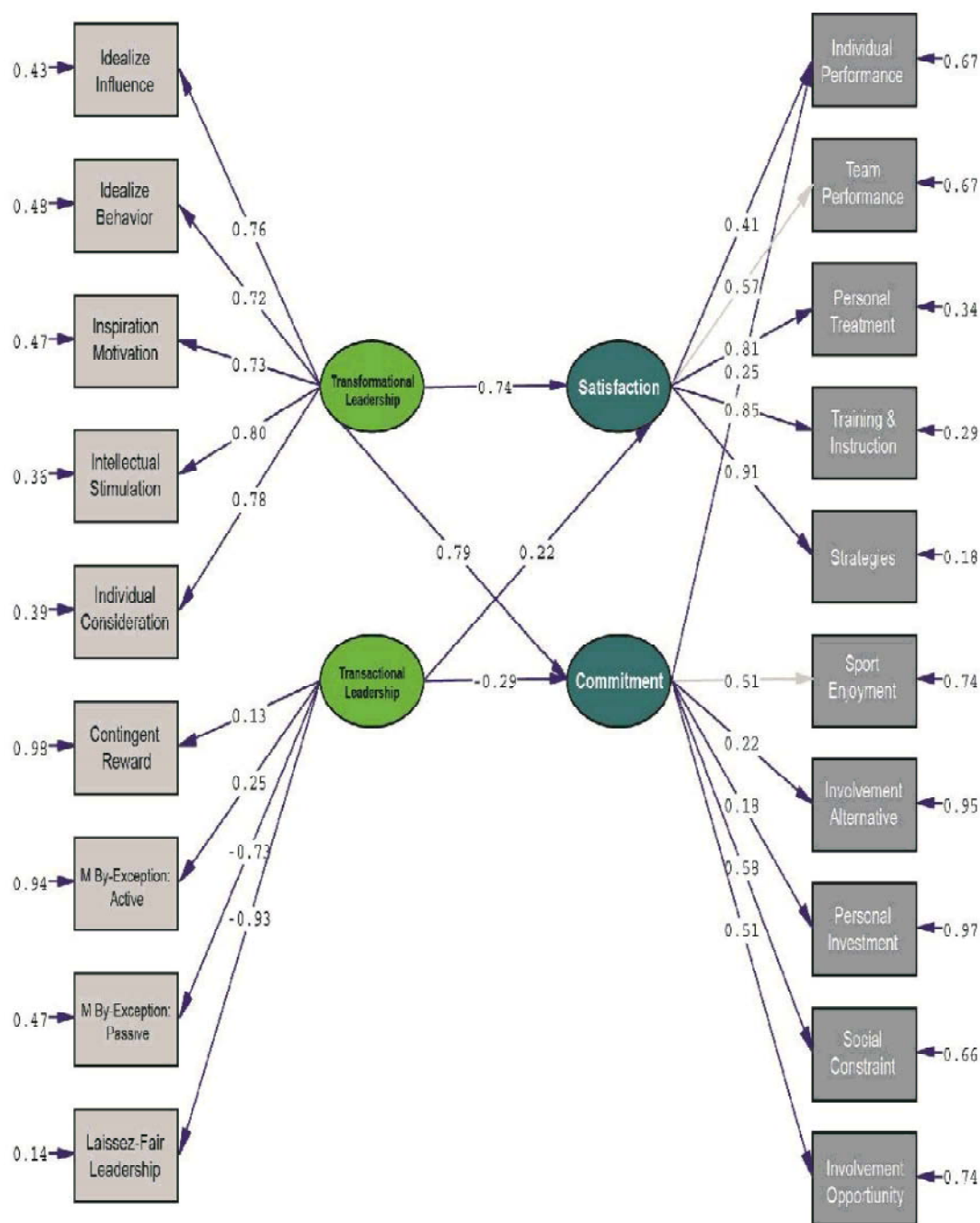


Fig. 1: The model of connection path between Coach' Leadership Styles and Athlete' Satisfaction and commitment in Iranian Handball Pro League.

the sequence of causative relations is considered. For this reason, in order to determine the share and role of predicting variables, they find a higher rate of accuracy. So, the regression was used to test the assumptions and path analysis was used for presenting the model.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the findings of this research, it is possible to predict the "players' satisfaction and commitment through "transformational and transactional leadership styles" accordingly with regression standard

coefficient of ($\beta=0.50$) and ($\beta=0.58$). This result indicates that there appears a meaningful and positive relation between the transformational and transactional leadership styles and players' satisfaction and commitment. As it was said, some of the researches refer to the importance of both transformational and transactional leadership styles in achieving objectives and success [22, 27, 28]. Zardoshtian (2009) 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 [29]. It is worth noting that the scholars who in their research findings have seen transactional leadership in conflict with commitment, have implemented their researches at the environment of sport organizations and with components of organizational commitment and the researches which dealing with the relation and impact of transactional leadership style with players' sport commitment are very rare. 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.

There exists the ability of forecasting the players' satisfaction and commitment through transformational leadership with regression standard coefficients of ($\beta=0.66$) and ($\beta=0.53$). This result indicates that there is a meaningful positive relation between the transformational leadership style and players' satisfaction and commitment. The findings of this research on satisfaction and transformational leadership in sports team is in the same direction of findings of Gomez (2006) and Yousef (2006). In the findings of this research, out of all components of transformational leadership, only the component of idealized influence has a significant relation with all components of players' satisfaction which is under the influence of coach's leadership behavior. This result indicates that the players' satisfaction of Handball pro League out of coaches' transformational behaviors is more under the influence of self-scarification, behaviors associated with respect, merit and maintaining relaxation at critical moments. Due to the fact that so far the researchers has not observed a research to deal with the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership styles and commitment in sport teams, so the mentioned findings is studied and compared with the findings of researchers in sport organizations (transformational leadership and organizational commitment). Many of researcher state: A

transformational leadership has a considerable link with the organizational commitment in sport environments [2, 30-32]. Opposite of the above views, Doherty, et al (1996) states that none of the components of transformational and transactional leadership styles of managers has a link with the coaches' organizational commitment or their share is very slight.

According to the result of the test of assumption, the prediction of sport commitment based on sub-scales of coaches' transformational leadership styles was as follows: It is observed that there is a significant and positive relation between intellectual stimulation ($\beta=0.28$), giving attention to individual differences ($\beta=0.32$) with sport commitment. The result shows that the feature of Intellectual Stimulation or Cognitive Motivation and also giving attention to individual differences of athletes by coaches can serve as a prediction for players' sport commitment. The same result was obtained in respect of social constraints. The component of sport enjoyment is an important factor in regular participation of players in exercises and competitions [18]. In the study of transformational leadership styles, findings indicate more the impact of two components of idealized influence and the spirit of stimulation in reinforcing sport enjoyment. With no doubt, the items being measured in the idealized influence such as ignoring one's interests for the sake of others, respect, humiliation, merit and etc. on one side and items being measured in stimulation spirit such as presenting an optimistic image of future and new and exciting facilities in Handball sport branch will prepare grounds for enjoying sport activities. The idealized behavior as one of the components of transformational leadership had a high link with enjoyment of sport activities. This finding indicates that expressing features such as emphasize on beliefs and commitment to beliefs besides patience against problems reinforces the enjoyment of future facilities.

It is possible to predict the players' satisfaction and commitment through transactional leadership style with regression standard coefficients of ($\beta=0.19$) and ($\beta=0.44$). This result indicates that there is a positive and significant relation between the transactional leadership style and players' satisfaction and commitment. Though most of researches confirm a slight or even negative relation between transactional leadership style and players' satisfaction [33]. the findings of this research shows that there is a meaningful and positive link between the transactional leadership style and players' satisfaction. This result is due to the high impact of two components of Contingent Reward and Management by

Exceptions (Active). These findings are compatible with the emphasis made by Bass (2006) and findings of Gary (2001) that refer to the great correlation between Contingent Reward and of transformational leadership components [14-20]. Findings show that more than other transactional leadership components, the Contingent Reward has a higher forecasting ability for components of sport commitment. This finding is in agreement and compatible with the findings of Doherty, *et al.* (1996) which indicate Contingent Reward has a positive and strong relation with commitment as one of the consequences of leadership.

The Figure (1) shows the model of connection path between transformational and transactional leadership styles and players' satisfaction and commitment at Iranian Handball Pro League. The results of findings of Koh, *et al.* (2001), Javedani (2002) and Golshani (2001) which indicate the transactional leadership style has a weak link with organizational commitment as compared with transformational leadership style are in conflict with the findings of this research[30-31-34]. All components of sport commitment of players were under the influence of the component of contingent reward of coaches' transactional leadership styles. Anyway, findings show that the existence of contract-based relation (reward vis-à-vis work), specifying the terms of enjoyment of athletes from reward and also meeting all expectations being made by coach in due time have positive impacts on all components of sport satisfaction (enjoyment) and commitment.

Findings of all researches including this research emphasize on the negative relation between the Laissez Fair Leadership with satisfaction and commitment. In the full model of leadership by Bass (2002), the management by exception and transactional leadership has been detached from each other fully. This action shows a great difference between transactional (practice-oriented) behaviors and Laissez Fair Leadership (lack of interference). The application of this type of leadership style is very limit and in particular they have no application in sport teams where members are young and variables are subject to constant change.

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