



REVIEW ARTICLE

COACHES' TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND ATHLETES' SELF - EFFICACY TOWARDS A TEAMWORK SYNERGY PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between coach leadership styles and athlete self-efficacy at Guangzhou Sport University, China. The research focuses on transformational leadership practices and their impact on student-athletes. The majority of student-athletes, primarily males aged 21-23, participate in football. Coaches' transformational leadership practices were assessed across five dimensions: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. Results indicate that coaches excel in inspiring a shared vision and encouraging the heart. Student-athletes perceive their coaches as role models who set examples and build consensus. Coaches are also effective at fostering a collective vision and celebrating accomplishments. Challenging the process, coaches actively encourage innovation and risk-taking. They support athletes in their pursuit of improvement, emphasizing doubting ideas rather than individuals. Enabling others to act, coaches treat athletes with respect, value diverse perspectives, and empower decision-making. This dimension highlights coaches' commitment to guiding rather than directing performance. No significant differences were found in assessments based on athlete profiles (sex, age, sports area), suggesting consistent leadership effectiveness. Furthermore, the study reveals high levels of athlete self-efficacy in professional thought, personality, sport discipline, and psychological aspects. Athletes show confidence in their abilities, fair play, personal development, and emotional control. Significantly, a strong relationship exists between coaches' transformational leadership and athlete self-efficacy, emphasizing coaches' influence on athletes' confidence and belief in their capabilities. This research suggests the implementation of a Teamwork Synergy Program to enhance teamwork and collaboration, further leveraging transformational leadership and self-efficacy among coaches and athletes. In conclusion, this study underscores the vital role of coaches in fostering athlete self-efficacy through transformational leadership practices. Coaches' ability to inspire, challenge, and empower athletes significantly impacts their self-belief and performance. The proposed Teamwork Synergy Program offers practical insights for optimizing leadership and self-efficacy in sports environments.

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INTRODUCTION

Coach leadership can be defined as a process of interpersonal influence that promotes the athlete's outcomes of competence, confidence, connection, and character and is reliant on the relationship between coach and athlete. The person who inspires others to achieve more than they think they are capable of is a transformational leader. A competent coach can inspire people to go above and beyond their goals. The person who inspires others to achieve more than they think they are capable of is a transformational leader. A coach or transformational leader looks for ways to boost the self-assurance, resiliency, and happiness of their team, including staff. In a sporting environment, leaders demonstrate their transformational leadership style by showing concern for, inspiring, and even trusting players. They also impart valuable life lessons, all of which have an impact on the performance of the athletes.

Past studies have highlighted how transformational leaders motivate their followers to go above and beyond their initial expectations and typical performance levels, having a positive and significant impact on outcomes at the group level (Smith et al., 2013). Athletic self-efficacy encompasses an athlete's skills, physical and mental fitness, leadership and coaching, and situational supremacy. It also has an impact on an athlete's success in the sport as well as their capacity to handle stress (Sivrikaya, 2019). It goes without saying that the function of a coach in a team determines which athletes have high self-efficacy. Coaches should strive to become a transformative leader as a coach. They need to have faith in other people and be able to communicate at really high standards in order to accomplish this. If the coaches believe in their players, they will be liberated to reach their highest potential.

Background of the Study: An athlete's commitment, psychological health, and development are thought to be significantly influenced by leadership in the environment (Vella et al., 2013). Due to this, research on leadership and how it impacts athletes has grown to be a significant area of discussion in the literature on sport psychology (O'Boyle et al., 2015). This is because context-specific factors, such as the coach's leadership style and personality, have a significant impact on whether an athlete has a positive or negative sport experience (Turnidge., 2019). As a result, coaches have a significant impact on athletes and can inspire lifelong participation in sports. The majority of sports training activities are performed by athletes, who also take on the burden of athletic training and display the results of sports training as a team. The coaches are in charge of planning the sports training schedule, coordinating and supervising the sports training activities. As a result, coaches and athletes have intricate social interactions (Guo and Hu, 2011). Due to specific national conditions, frameworks, and practices, Chinese sports coaches may have higher positions and roles than their counterparts in other countries (Chen and Chen, 2021). This is especially true given how paternalistic leadership is viewed in traditional Chinese culture. The Guangzhou Sport University currently plays a significant role in the development of athletes. Being a Professional Physical Education School in Guangzhou, there is a lot of pressure to produce good student athletes who can compete in the national sports leagues of the nation. Coaches currently exert the most direct control over University Sports teams within the school organization, and their management philosophies and techniques have a direct impact on the psychological well-being of their athletes. The study's goal is to examine how coaches' transformational leadership styles affect athletes' feelings of self-efficacy in Guangzhou Sport University.

Statement of the Problem: This study examined the relationship between coaches' transformational leadership practices and athletes' self-efficacy at the Guangzhou Sport University in Guangdong Province, Guangzhou City, China, with the goal of developing a teamwork synergy program.

In particular, it looked for answers to the following inquiries:

What is the profile of the student athlete respondents in terms of the following variables?

- Sex
- Age
- Sports area

What is the student athletes' assessment of their coaches' transformational leadership practices based on the following:

- Modelling the way
- Inspiring a shared vision
- Challenging the process
- Enabling others to act
- Encouraging the heart

Is there a significant difference in the student athletes' assessment of their coaches' transformational leadership practices when their profiles are taken as test factors?

What is the students' assessment of their own self-efficacy in terms of:

- Professional thought efficacy
- Personality efficacy
- Sport discipline efficacy
- psychological efficacy

Is there a significant difference in the students' assessment of their self-efficacy when their profiles are taken as test factors?

Is there a significant relationship between the coaches' transformational leadership practices and athletes' self-efficacy? What program can be proposed based on the result of the study?

Significance of the Study

The following people will benefit from this research in different ways:

Coaches: They will be able to realize the consequences of their particular transformational leadership style on the athletes' sense of self-efficacy with greater clarity.

Student Athletes: This will guide them on the value of leadership in terms of developing or enhancing their self-efficacy. They will realize that different transformational leadership styles of coaches can have effects on their confidence.

School Administrators: The findings of this study will act as a guide for them and give them the chance to compare their initiatives with those of other organizations working to enhance coaches' leadership capacities and student athletes' sense of self-efficacy.

Future Researchers: This study will act as a template for future researchers who would be interested in conducting a pertinent investigation into the relationship between coaches' transformational leadership styles and athletes' self-efficacy and applying the findings to their own scenarios.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study: With the intention of developing a teamwork synergy program, this study examined the relationship between coaches' transformational leadership practices and athletes' self-efficacy at the Guangzhou Sport University. Athletes from the institution's various sports programs were chosen as study subjects. In order to choose the respondents, a simply random sampling was utilized.

Theoretical Framework: It will be based on two theories, namely Transformational Leadership of Kouzes (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 9) and Posner and Self-Efficacy Theory of Bandura. A transformational leader inspires others to go beyond what they previously believed was possible. A skilled coach can motivate athletes to surpass their objectives. In universities, leading a group of athletes can be challenging. A coach or transformational leader searches for strategies to instill strength, courage, and joy in their team. When the coach or leader is doing a good job of inspiring the team, the level of commitment is maintained at a high level.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives a general summary of the research design, study subjects, research tool, data collection procedure, and suggested data analysis method.

Research Design: Quantitative comparative and correlational methods are the main approaches used in this study. The goal of correlational studies is to ascertain whether or not a population's characteristics change depending on whether or not its members have experienced a notable event in a naturalistic setting.

Sample and Sampling Technique: The focus of the study was on student athletes who compete in basketball, volleyball, football, tennis, badminton, and table tennis at the Guangzhou Sport University in Guangdong Province, China. Irrespective of their sex, age, or sports area, they were chosen at random from the group of student athletes. With a confidence level of 95% and a 5% margin of error, the Qualtrics calculator predicts that 154 participants will be selected from the 255 student athletes.

Research Locale: Founded in 1958, Guangzhou Sport University is the only higher education institution majoring in sports in South China. It offers three main subjects namely, Physical Education, Literature and Economics which include 8 specialties such as Physical Education, Sports Training, Human Kinesiology and Science, Sports Sociology, Traditional Sports Education, Sports Correspondence and Modeling, and Sports Economics.

Research Instrument: The coaches' transformational leadership practices and athletes' self-efficacy were assessed using the modified and adapted questionnaires.

Given that they are pre-existing, almost verbatim, and have been utilized in previous study inquiries, the questionnaires' validity and reliability cannot be refuted.

Data Gathering Procedure: The content on the survey questionnaires was reviewed by experts in sports psychology and physical education by the researcher. The Guangzhou Institute of Physical Education's director then received a letter from the researcher directly requesting permission to conduct the study. The survey questionnaires were distributed to the student athletes once they have been approved in order to gather data. The school year 2022–2023's second semester was when this research was carried out.

Statistical Treatment of Data: Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program, the following statistical techniques were used to evaluate the data for the study at the significance level of 0.05:

T-test /ANOVA: The researcher utilized the t-test, Analysis of Variance, or F-test to see if there are significant changes in the student athletes' assessment of their coaches' transformational leadership practices and their own self-efficacy when their profiles are taken into consideration.

Pearson's r Correlation Analysis: The correlation between the coaches' transformational leadership practices and the athletes' self-efficacy was determined by the researcher using Pearson's r correlation analysis.

Decision Criteria: For the examination of the hypotheses, the 0.05 level of significance was applied. The null hypotheses were accepted when the calculated significance value is greater than the threshold value of 0.05; otherwise, they were disregarded.

Ethical Considerations: The study conducted took into account a number of variables, including risks, incentives and compensation and privacy and confidentiality.

RESULTS

The following describes the data collected, findings, and the analyses that fit the problem description.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents: The respondents' demographic profile is summarized in table 1.

The profile of the student athlete respondents

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	101	57.7%
Female	74	42.3%
Total	175	100%
Age		
18-20 years old	65	37.1%
21-23 years old	83	47.4%
24 years old & above	27	15.4%
Total	175	100%
Sports Area		
Basket ball	24	13.7%
Volley ball	36	20.6%
Football	49	28.0%
Tennis	17	9.7%
Badminton	25	14.3%
Table Tennis	24	13.7%
Total	175	100%

This study aimed to assess the relationship between coaches' transformational leadership practices and athletes' self-efficacy at the Guangzhou Sport University in Guangdong Province, Guangzhou

City, China, with the goal of developing a teamwork synergy program.

Profile of the Respondents: The results show that more than half of the student athlete respondents are male who are mostly within the age group of 21-23 years old. Moreover, the data acquired indicated that the majority of them are in area of football.

The Assessment of the Student athlete of their coaches' transformational leadership practices: The student athlete respondents assessed their coaches' transformational leadership practice in terms of modelling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process and enabling others to act.

Modelling the way: The student athlete respondents all agreed that their coaches set a personal example of what they expect of others, spends time and energy making certain that the people he/ she works with adhere to the principles and standards that we have agreed on, follows through his/ her promises and commitment, builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization and clear about his/her philosophy of leadership. As a coach, being a role model is a 24/7 job. According to an article in Ohio University, approachable and interested coaches will attract players, both those interested in a relationship and those who don't know if they want one.

Inspiring a Shared Vision: The student athlete respondents all agreed that their coaches do inspire a shared vision. According to Kouzes and Posner (2017) the domain of leaders is the future. The work of leaders is change. The most significant contribution leaders make is not to today's bottom line; it is to the long-term development of people and institutions so they can adapt, change, prosper, and grow. In addition, when creating a vision statement, leaders should involve people right from the start. (Sloan, 2019)

Challenging the Process: Students athlete respondents unanimously agreed that their coaches challenge them for improvement. Leaders who Challenge the Process are constantly seeking innovative ways to improve through experimenting and taking risks, then learning from any mistakes or failures along the way. In his Ted talk in 2016, Adam Grant sums it up nicely: "It's about being the kind of person who takes the initiative to doubt the default and look for a better option." Grant notes that even though the "Originals" as he would call them, Leaders don't have all the answers, they focus on doubting the ideas, not themselves. That's what allows them to Challenge the Process so effectively—they're continually pushing for better by refining and testing ideas without fearing failure.

Enabling Others to Act: Student athlete respondents agree that their coaches treat others with dignity and respect. Likewise, they also agree that their coaches actively listen to diverse points of view, support the decision that people make on their own, and give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work. This indicates that enabling others to act as one of the transformational leadership practices of the coaches is highly manifested among them. According to Vince Wilczynski (2022) A leader who is committed to "enabling others to act" understands that they must coach their team to establish a growth mindset and to guide – and not direct – performance. As a coach, a leader helps each team member become the best person they can be.

Encouraging the Heart: Student athlete respondents agree that their coaches publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values. Similarly, they also agree that their coaches find ways to celebrate accomplishments. This means that that encouraging the heart as one of the transformational leadership practices of the coaches is highly manifested among them.

The differences on the assessment of the student athlete of their coaches' transformational leadership practices based on their profiles: The student athlete respondents assessed their coaches' transformational leadership practices when their sex, age and sports area are taken as test factors.

Sex: When sex is taken into account as a test factor, there are no significant differences in the student athlete respondents' assessments of their coaches' transformational leadership practices. This could imply that respondents' assessment on the transformational leadership practices of their coaches in terms of modelling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others, and encouraging the heart are essentially the same for both male and female respondents.

Age: When age is considered as a test factor, there are no significant differences in the student athlete respondents' assessments of their coaches' transformational leadership practices. This could imply that respondents' assessment on the transformational leadership practices of their coaches in terms of modelling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others, and encouraging the heart are essentially the same regardless of their age. However, it can also be seen on the results that the age of most of the respondents are within the range of 18-20-year-old.

Sports Area: When their sports area is considered as a test factor, there are no significant differences in the student athlete respondents' assessments of their coaches' transformational leadership practices. This could mean that respondents' assessment on the transformational leadership practices of their coaches in terms of modelling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others, and encouraging the heart are essentially the same regardless of the sports area they are in.

The Student Athlete Respondents' Assessment of their level of Self-Efficacy

Professional Thought Efficacy: The respondents agree that the level of their self-efficacy is highly manifested in terms of professional thought efficacy. It can infer that the student athletes can work devotedly to achieve my performance goals. In order to protect their performance, they train individually in and out of season. They take care of their health, organize their everyday lives so it will not affect their performance negatively and carry out the tasks that are expected of them.

Personality Efficacy: Personality Efficacy is also interpreted as highly manifested by the respondents. The survey shows that the student athletes act in accordance with fair play, they receive education for my personal development in every field, they take responsibility during the competition, they effectively cooperate and work in cohesion with my stakeholders in the field of sports and of course, they all agree that they have high self-confidence.

Sport Discipline Efficacy: The respondents acknowledge having high level of Sport discipline efficacy. Thus, it demonstrates that they play fair and show good sportsmanship at all time. They have the motor skills, technical skills and physical fitness required for sport discipline. They successfully apply individual and team tactics during the competition.

Psychological Efficacy: The respondents agree to have high level of self-efficacy in terms of Psychological efficacy. Results showed that student athletes respondents generally enjoy life, are optimistic, can control their emotions, motivate themselves while also providing encouragement to their team members.

The differences on the assessment of the Student athlete of their Self-Efficacy based on their profiles: The student athlete respondents assessed their level of self-efficacy when their sex, age and sports area are taken as test factors.

Sex: When their sex area is considered as a test factor, the result showed that there are no significant differences in the student athlete respondents' assessments of their coaches' transformational leadership practices. This could mean that that male and female student athlete respondents have relatively the same assessment of their self-efficacy

in terms of professional thought efficacy, personality efficacy, sport discipline efficacy, and psychological efficacy.

Age: When age is considered as a test factor, there are no significant differences in the student athlete respondents' assessments of their coaches' transformational leadership practices. This could mean that the respondents' assessment of their self-efficacy in terms of terms professional thought efficacy, personality efficacy, sport discipline efficacy, and psychological efficacy are the same regardless of their age.

Sports Area: When their sports area is considered as a test factor, there are no significant differences in the student athlete respondents' assessments of their coaches' transformational leadership practices. This could mean that the respondents' assessment of their self-efficacy in terms of terms professional thought efficacy, personality efficacy, sport discipline efficacy, and psychological efficacy regardless of the sport they play.

The significant relationship between the coaches' transformational leadership practices and athletes' self-efficacy: This study sought to comprehend the relationship between the athletes' level of self-efficacy and the coaches' transformational leadership practices at Guangzhou Sport University. The findings demonstrated that there was a significant relationship between the two factors. Hence, it can be claimed that the transformational leadership practices of the coaches greatly affect the self-efficacy of the student athletes.

The Proposed Teamwork Synergy Program: Through this study, it turned out that the coaches' transformational leadership had a favorable effect on the student athletes' self-efficacy. Inspiring and motivating followers to realize their full potential while fostering a sense of confidence, empowerment, and personal growth is a defining trait of transformational leadership. The proposed teamwork synergy program would concentrate on team synergy, which is the process by which a group of athletes and coaches collaborate to carry out a goal by harnessing the talents and experiences of each member to produce extraordinary achievements that would be impossible to achieve on their own. Specific details of the program will be seen on the succeeding pages of this paper.

CONCLUSION

The study's reported findings served as the inspiration for the researcher's formulation of the subsequent conclusions.

- In the profile set for this study, it was determined that more than half of the student athlete respondents are male who are mostly within the age group of 21-23 years old. The data acquired indicated that the majority of them are playing in the football team.
- Student athletes view "encouraging the heart" as coaches' top transformational leadership practice. This highlights the vital role coaches play in boosting team morale through effective encouragement, which keeps team members motivated.
- The results suggest that, regardless of sex, age, or sports area, student athletes see their coaches as effective transformational leaders. Demographic factors don't seem to affect this perception, indicating consistent and effective coaching across various groups of athletes.
- Among the student athlete respondents, the highest levels of self-efficacy are observed in the areas of professional thought and psychological efficacy. In practical terms, this suggests that these student athletes feel most confident and capable in their ability to think professionally and manage their psychological well-being in the context of their athletic pursuits.
- Regardless of their sex, age, or the sports they participate in, student athletes tend to have similar levels of self-efficacy. These demographic factors don't appear to have a big impact on

their self-belief, indicating consistent self-confidence across different groups of student athletes.

- This research conducted at Guangzhou Sport University discovered a substantial link between the transformational leadership practices of coaches and the self-efficacy levels of student athletes, indicating that coaches' leadership styles significantly influence the confidence of their athletes.
- It is recommended that a Teamwork Synergy Program be implemented to enhance the mutual influence of transformational leadership and self-efficacy between coaches and student athletes at this university.

RECOMMENDATION

In light of the findings of the present inquiry, the following suggestions are put forward:

- It is recommended that coaches should demonstrate greater transformational leadership. During daily management and training, coaches should model the behavior that athletes are eager to imitate through their words and deeds.
- It is recommended that educational leaders and coaches should pay close attention to the athletes' psychological and personal traits. To improve performance, athletes must be able to recognize their own personality qualities. The manner a player or athlete plays is greatly influenced by their personality. It varies from person to person and sport to sport. Additionally, one personality tendency may be more inactive in one sport than the other.
- Athletes should receive specialized attention from their coaches, who should also completely develop each one's talents and intellect. This will give them a sense of autonomy and make them feel like a vital member of the team.
- The self-efficacy of their athletes must be fostered by coaches in order to help them reach their maximum athletic potential.
- The proposed teamwork synergy program is recommended for use to boost trust, communication, collaboration, resolution and recognition among team members as they work together to accomplish a common goal.

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