



LEADERSHIP DIMENSIONS PREFERRED AMONGST BRAZILIAN SOCCER COACHES

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to assess the leadership style of soccer coaches who work in youth development clubs in the city of Barueri- SP, Brazil, implementing descriptive research based on the application of the Scale ELRE version of self-perception. 25 male soccer coaches participated in the study, aged between 24 and 57 years (average 41.32±11.65 years) and the statistical treatment of data applied the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha for reliability, mean, standard deviation and median for the dimensions of the instrument. The results related to the Alpha showed stability of the instrument with a total value of 0.87. Regarding the mean, median and standard deviation for each dimension, it has been found that the situational dimension was of 4.21±0.84 (median=4), social behavior support was 3.71±1.31 (median=4), in behavior training-instruction was 4.46 ±0.74 (median=5), for the democratic dimension the average was 3.16 ±1.12 (median=3); autocratic was 3.06 ±1.48 (average=3) and finally concerning the dimension positive reinforcement was revealed at an average of 4.28 ±0.97 (median=5). Therefore, on the basis of the data analysis we can infer that in soccer the predominant behavior of coaches consists of the adoption of positive reinforcement and training-instruction.

Key words: Soccer; Leadership Style; Coaches.

Introduction

Soccer is a sport that arouses interest as it lends itself to a wide array of interventive practices. However, the leadership style and technique of management can influence and determine the way athletes' play.

Management comprises a cluster of a few factors: planning, organizing, leading, and controlling [8]. Within the subarea of management and leadership in sport are lines of research related to human resource management, leadership and effectiveness of sports teams, social responsibility, sports organizations, resources, organizations, sports and competitive advantage [12].

Therefore this study is focussed upon issues of leadership and effectiveness amongst sports teams, as coaches also resemble managers, bearing in mind that all those involved

in the game aim towards a single goal which requires both effort and time.

Leadership within sports groups presents a degree of complexity way due to the presence of both an external leader (coach) and an inner leader (captain). Recognition of this dual leadership can promote the success of the team, so leadership refers to the influence an individual has on his teammates around the same goal, represented in the sport by the coach/athlete relationship [13].

The leadership displayed by soccer coaches can be crucial and decisive in decision making within the context of a group of players. The longer the effective leadership of a coach over his team, the greater the cohesion and understanding of the distribution and specific roles of each team member [14].

Leadership is required and is present in all groups and types of human organization, especially in business between departments. In

sports the same process is applied, either in relation to coaches, managers or athletes in a team. On an individual basis it is important for all functions where the leader needs to understand people and know how to lead them [4].

Leaders are chosen by the group, or can emerge spontaneously in the group, and the latter are more effective because they have the respect and support of team members or the group as a whole. Usually, leaders that emerge spontaneously in the group have special skills or great leadership ability in the sport [1].

In fact it is extremely important to understand that the interactive and functional relationships established by coaches and athletes with teams, teammates, officials and spectators, offer a framework for inter-personal relationships. This has led to a psychosocial perspective in our research into the behavioural exchanges which occur between coaches and athletes within a football team [15].

Leaders have a variety of personality traits. There are specific features that make a successful leader. However, the most important characteristics can be listed as follows: integrity, flexibility, loyalty, trust, responsibility, honesty, preparation, resourcefulness, self-discipline and patience [16].

This present study uses the multidimensional model of leadership proposed by Chelladurai and Saleh [3], in which we want to analyse the soccer coach's behavior in relation to six dimensions.

Therefore a coach with democratic behavior promotes greater participation of athletes in decisions concerning the objectives of the group. Coaches who advocate social support are characterised by concern for the wellbeing of the individual players, a desire to create a positive atmosphere in the group, and the relationship with the athletes. If possible, the coach can even assist athletes with their social problems, and thus ends up being part of their personal life [5].

Coaches involved in the dimension of positive reinforcement aim to psychologically empower the athlete by encouraging them, particularly when they make mistakes [5]; thus it is possible that the coach creates opportunities for this athlete to achieve success, and possibly offers rewards.

Training from an educational dimension searches for the athlete's best and greatest performance and is therefore technically demanding and hard, so as to instruct athletes in technical and tactical competences. The autocratic coach is independent in decision making using their authority. Finally, a situational coach is one coach who takes into account momentary elements like the game, the crowd, the weather; they seek to establish individual goals and forms of reaching them, and this type of leadership seeks to identify qualities, taking into account the maturity and the technical level of athletes, so looking for ideal positioning on the pitch [5].

In this manner the present study aimed to verify which leadership style soccer coaches active in the city of Barueri – São Paulo, Brazil perceive themselves to apply, and therefore test the reproducibility of the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (named in Brazilian Portuguese as ELRE).

METHOD

This study consisted of descriptive research, since it observed, analyzed and correlated events or phenomena (variables) without manipulating them [2]. The subjects of the study were twenty-five soccer coaches (N:25) aged from 24 to 57 years (mean age 11.65 ±41.32 years, variation coefficient of 28.19%), determined by convenience sample, operating in men's teams in the city of Barueri, São Paulo, Brazil, who have been in their current position for about 6 years and 5 months, where 30% have a graduate degree in Physical Education and the remaining are registered at the Regional Council Physical Education - CREF /SP, and have been in soccer over a period of eight years on average, having developed different roles in the soccer context.

The instrument used was the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport – ELRE proposed by Costa [5] and Costa and Samulski [6]. Its first version was developed and validated by Zhang, Jensen & Mann [17].

This scale (ELRE) contains 60 issues distributed among the 6 dimensions: Behavior Democratic or BD (12 issues), Social Behavior Support or SBS (08 issues), Positive Behavior

Reinforcement or PBR (12 issues), Behavior Training-Instruction or BTI (10 issues), AUTB or Autocratic Behavior (08 issues) and Behavior Situational Consideration or BSIT (10 issues).

The instrument aims to assess the leadership style of the technicians using a Likert scale of five points and five answer options which are accompanied by the following expressions: always (100%), often (75%), occasionally (50%) rarely (25%) and never (0%).

The coaches completed the following documents:

- 1) Consent for a Term of Commitment, complying with the ethics of the research;
- 2) An identification Questionnaire: inserting data concerning professional experience of the coach in the sport;
- 3) ELRE Instrument aiming to identify, from the coach's point of view, certain factors regarding their real leadership profile.

From the results obtained by applying the questionnaires, analysis of the data with the calculation of *Cronbach's Alpha* was performed to verify the reliability of the instrument and the mean, median and standard deviation, followed by the *Mann-Whitney* test ($p \leq 0.01$ and $p \leq 0.05$) in order to highlight differences between the averages of the results of each dimension that the instrument proposed to evaluate. Internal consistencies were assessed by the following techniques: *Kuder-Richardson* and *Cronbach's Alpha* [11]. SPSS- DATA EDITOR, version 18.0 for Windows was used to perform all statistical analyses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results related to the *Alpha's* coefficients showed stability of the instrument with a value of 0.87; *Alpha* of 0.546 to behavior situational, social behavior support's *Alpha* was 0.564, the *Alpha* of training-instruction was 0.750; 0.810 for the *Alpha* of democratic behavior; the autocratic behavior *Alpha* was 0.502, the *Alpha* for positive behavior reinforcement was 0.685, note Table 1. According to the results, we can say that the proposed instrument presents stability and reliability with the results revealed and thus reliability in its reproduction, hence the results of the answers are reliable.

Table 1. Results of *Alpha's Coefficient* for each scale dimension (ELRE).

DIMENSIONS	ALPHA'S COEFFICIENT
Behavior Training-Instruction (BTI)	0.750
Social Behavior Support (SBS)	0.564
Behavior Situational Consideration (BSIT)	0.546
Behavior Democratic (BD)	0.810
Autocratic Behavior (AUTB)	0.502
Positive Behavior Reinforcement (PBR)	0.685
Total	0.876

**Alpha's* maximum value = 1.0

The first test showed Alpha 0.86 for total ELRE more equivalent to the current study; regarding BD 0.84, PBR of 0.85, 0.65 for BSIT, SBS was 0.71, 0.41 to AUTB, and 0.83 for BTI [6].

Compared with the results of Costa, Samulski and Costa [7] the results of all soccer coaches with Alpha was 0.86 for ELRE, followed by Alpha 0.84 BD, 0.46 for AUTB, Alpha of 0.80 for dimension to SBS; 0.83 for PBR; 0.62 Alpha's for BSIT and 0.52 for the dimension "behavior-training instruction."

Table 2: Average, standard deviation and median of each dimension of the scale.

DIMENSION	AVERAGE (ST. DEVIATION)	MEDIAN
Behavior Training-Instruction (BTI)	4.46 (± 0.74)	5
Social Behavior Support (SBS)	3.71 (± 1.31)	4
Behavior Situational Consideration (BSIT)	4.21 (± 0.84)	4
Behavior Democratic (BD)	3.16 (± 1.12)	3
Autocratic Behavior (AUTB)	3.06 (± 1.48)	3
Positive Behavior Reinforcement (PBR)	4.28 (± 0.97)	5

In a more recent study, evaluating twenty soccer coaches, the result of overall Alpha of the instrument was 0.86, confirming its reliability [9]. Counting the average results of each dimension, we can observe that the values presented are

the dimensions prevalence workout training-instruction (4.46), situational (4.21), and positive reinforcement (4.28), and compared with the study Hirota et al. (2011) situational dimension showed an average of 4.45, size workout instruction averaging 4.42 and positive reinforcement with an average of 4.12, so values close study. The result of training instruction was 4.64, with an average enhancement of 4.27; an average of 4.18 for situational, following the other dimensions with values below the average of three points [7].

The study involving the mode of volleyball performed, revealed that the profiles of ideological leadership behavior described by coaches facing their teams were significantly associated with high performances in social relations [10].

The behavior of the coach tends to influence the performance of athletes during matches directly. This influence does not always happen in a positive way, which means that many negative outcomes depend on the behavior of the team coach [1].

Another testing of the instrument that allows us to gauge the difference between means within each dimension, follows in Table 3.

Observing the results in comparison of the averages, we see that the relationship between the dimensions workout instruction is effectively distinguished between the results (average: 4.46) with positive reinforcement (average: 4.28), which showed no significant difference, in other words the technical soccer analyzed shows characteristics of both instruction and positive reinforcement training.

Another finding was evidenced between the democratic dimension (average: 3.16) and autocratic (average: 3.06), demonstrating that they are confounded, in other words, with no significant difference between the two.

Table 3. Results comparing the averages within each dimension of the scale.

DIMENSION (AVERAGE)	DIMENSION (AVERAGE)	MANN WHITNEY
Behavior Training-Instruction (4.46)	SBS (3.71)	0.000* ($p \leq 0.01$)
	BSIT (4.21)	0.000* ($p \leq 0.01$)
	BD (3.16)	0.000* ($p \leq 0.01$)
	AUTB (3.06)	0.000* ($p \leq 0.01$)
	PBR (4.28)	0.058 ($p \leq 0.05$)
Social Behavior Support (3.71)	BSIT (4.21)	0.001* ($p \leq 0.01$)
	BD (3.16)	0.000* ($p \leq 0.01$)
	AUTB (3.06)	0.000* ($p \leq 0.01$)
	PBR (4.28)	0.000* ($p \leq 0.01$)
Behavior Situational Consideration (4.21)	BD (3.16)	0.000* ($p \leq 0.01$)
	AUTB (3.06)	0.000* ($p \leq 0.01$)
	PBR (4.28)	0.050* ($p \leq 0.05$)
Behavior Democratic (3.16)	AUTB (3.06)	0.720 ($p \leq 0.05$)
	PBR (4.28)	0.000* ($p \leq 0.01$)
Autocratic Behavior (3.06)	PBR (4.28)	0.000* ($p \leq 0.01$)

*Significant differences

The results of mean and median values shown by the instrument revealed that the coaches' characteristics are evaluated predominantly relating to dimensions of training instruction of positive reinforcement and situational, and ends when the dimensions together, positive reinforcement training and education do not differ statistically. Therefore, these are coaches who desire to strengthen the psychological aspects of athletes, offering more autonomy and seeking to encourage them to overcome difficulties. With reference to workout instructions this is associated with the quest for best technical and tactical performance, demanding better performance. In relation to positive reinforcement and situational no differences were found, so the same technicians also take into account momentary situations arising from the acyclic aspect that football presents, watching the overall context of the game.

The features of democratic and autocratic dimension also confuse in this study, where no stands on the other ($p=0.720$). Among other assisted comparisons in Table 03 all results were

significant. Thus, the results of the dimensions are statistically different.

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the reproducibility of the instrument, it performed well in our sample, producing good

results in terms of stability, reproducibility, and reliability. Soccer coaches display features within the dimensions of workout training-instruction, positive reinforcement and situational, which are mixed in order to get better performance from their groups.

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