Preferred Leadership Styles in Former Male and Female Athletes

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the leadership style preferences of former male and female athletes among a select few sports (gymnastics, tennis, soccer, basketball, and football). In doing so, the researcher was able to better understand what leadership styles male and female athletes lean more towards when being coached. The PI conducted a demographic questionnaire for former athletes to better understand their age, sport played, preferred leadership style, and more. However, the Leadership Scale for Sports was used to measure athletes' preferences for the five leadership styles. Previous studies involving the LSS have determined a statistically significant difference among leadership style preferences between male and female athletes. The current study indicated that, mainly due to the small sample size, there was no statistically significant difference among former male and female leadership style preferences.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a social phenomenon that has been studied extensively in the 20th and 21st centuries (Rost, 1993). Over the last several decades, leadership has taken on multiple meanings. Rost (1993) notes that there are many definitions in the field of leadership and leadership studies, and arguably that leadership studies is not even an academic discipline. However, one of the most recent definitions of leadership is someone who influences others to reach a common goal, which they have set for themselves (Northouse, 2016). Leadership today appears in different contexts compared to the way it looked centuries ago, but ultimately it is arguable that leadership has the same goal, which is to influence others to achieve a common purpose. Leaders affect others in their relationships by the way they lead, provide clear, concise directions, and steer their team in how to obtain their overall goal (Weinberg & Gould, 2015).

Leadership has been extensively studied in the sport world, to the extent that there are several textbooks used in university-level courses that have leadership as their focus (Northouse, 2016; Weinberg & Gould, 2015). These texts are used in sport education programs in an effort to improve the leadership skills of coaches (Scott, 2014). Often these texts will break down the styles of leadership that a coach might employ. As a coach, it is generally understood that leadership styles play an important role in athlete performance. It stands to reason that understanding how different styles of leadership affect athletes could be a helpful tool for coaches to possess.

There are three main tools coaches use to increase sports performance from their athletes: teaching, training, and instructing (Hundito, 2015). All three of these tools are

affected by one's leadership style. Coaches need to be able to teach their players the rules of the sport, instruct them in the nuances of playing the sport, and train them so that they can endure the rigors of the sport. Therefore, coaches who possess a variety of leadership styles are in a better position to provide their athletes with the necessary skills, expertise, and leadership to succeed. How coaches lead and communicate with their players can have a significant and positive impact on the players individually and on the team as a whole, leading to a greater likelihood of achieving the goals set by the coach and the team.

Leadership is often described as an interaction or process between the leader and the led. Consequently, in addition to setting goals for their teams, effective coaches attempt to learn what their athletes want to achieve throughout the season to enhance their overall athletic performance (Misasi et al., 2016). There is not one set way to lead, and what may work for some coaches and athletes might not necessarily work for all (Misasi et al., 2016; West, 2016). Coaches who listen to the needs of their athletes not only have excellent communication skills, but they also have an impact on their athletes' athletic abilities (Johnson et al., 2011).

One key to being an effective coach/leader is to ensure that operative communication is in place. Effective communication includes coaches being able to express themselves so that their athletes understand their message clearly, while also utilizing active listening skills so that the coach has a good understanding of what the athletes want to achieve in their sport (West, 2016).

As Rost (1993) noted, there are many definitions of leadership, and therefore there are many leadership styles that can be employed that fit each definition of leadership. Coaches can best understand how to lead their athletes if they can identify common leadership styles and understand how the style, they prefer has an impact on their athletes. According to Chelladurai and Saleh (1978), five leadership styles that coaches typically utilize are autocratic, democratic, social support, positive feedback, and training and instruction (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978). Each of these leadership styles represents different aspects of coaching behavior, and which correspond to specific definitions of what leadership is (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978, 1980; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Heil, 2018; Thelwell & Dicks, 2018). Coaches need to understand that within each leadership style that there are many considerations, but to be successful with a given style they should consider the psychosocial well-being of each player to increase their athletes' performance (Kim & Cruz, 2016).

Often coaches lead as they were led, but this experiential approach is often too narrow to achieve the desired results in environments different than the one in which the coach performed as an athlete. However, there are ways that coaches can understand what style(s) they use, and with which she or he is most comfortable. Coaches can develop an understanding of their leadership style, and of the preferences of their athletes for what style of leadership is most effective for them, through the use of the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS). This scale was developed by Chelladurai & Saleh (1978) to develop an evidence-based assessment of leadership behaviors. The LSS is a 40-item questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert-scale that assesses the five main leadership styles

described above. The LSS is a well-used instrument and has been shown to be both valid and reliable in each of the five leadership styles (internal consistency .45 to .93; test-retest reliability .71 to .82; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978). The five dimensions of the LSS are the autocratic, democratic, social support, positive feedback, and training and instruction leadership styles.

The first two leadership styles, autocratic and democratic, represent that of the decision-making style of the coach (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017). Autocratic leadership style is also known as being an authoritarian leader. Coaches that utilize this style of leadership, in contrast to other forms, make decisions with little or no consultation with the athletes. On the other hand, the democratic leadership style is known as "self-coaching." The self-coaching tactic allows the athlete to take on the responsibility and freedom to train themselves to a certain degree (West, 2016).

While some leadership styles are defined by who is involved in the decision making, both social support and positive feedback leadership styles are involved in the motivational style of the coach (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017). Social support leadership style assists athletes by allowing them to achieve their goals, as well as understanding the needs of the athletes and assisting with their personal problems (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; West, 2016). In contrast, positive feedback leadership style helps promote the overall performance of the athlete through motivation.

The last style of leadership is training and instruction, which is seen as aiming to improve athlete performance (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017), furthering one's knowledge and skill in the sport (West, 2016), and assisting in shaping one's

athletic ability and career. Through the teaching and training of coaches, athletes are able

to take what they learn and apply it by performing these skills. Training and instruction

leadership style allows the athletes to see what they are capable of and continue to grow

their athletic talent.

The LSS has been utilized in many studies to help determine athlete preferences

for coaching leadership style. Table 1 depicts the findings from previous studies

regarding the athlete preferences for coaching leadership styles:

Table 1. Findings of previous studies

Author(s) & Year	Type of Athletes	Autocratic	Democratic	Social Support	Positive Feedback	Training & Instruction
Chee et. al. (2017)	Multiple Sports	M>F	M<F	M<F	M<F	M<F
Chelladurai & Saleh (1978)	Physical Education Students	M>F	M<F	M>F	M=F	Int.dep>Ind C. Sport> O. Sport
Cruz & Kim (2017)	Badminton	M>F	M>F	M>F	M<F	M<F
Pitts et. al. (2018)	NAIA Conference	M>F	M>F	M=F	M<F	M<F
Walach-Bista (2019)	Basketball & Volleyball	M>F	M<F	M<F	M<F	M<F
Witte (2011)	D3 NCAA	M>F	M=F	M>F	M<F	M=F

*M:Males; F:Females; Int. dep: Interdependent sport; Ind.: Independent sport; C. sport: Closed sport; O. sport: Open sport; M>F:Males are greater than female's; M<F:Males are less than females; M=F: Males and females are equal; Int. dep>Ind: Interdependent sport is greater than those of independent sport; C.Sport>O. Sport: Closed sport is greater than those of open sport.

In addition to different leadership styles being more effective with different

individuals, it has been found that different populations interact differently with the

various leadership styles. Walach-Bista (2019) found that a higher percentage of males prefer coaches who utilize the autocratic leadership style compared to their female counterparts. This finding is confirmed by additional studies (Chee et al., 2017; Chelladurai & Saleh,1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al. 2018; Witte, 2011). Males indicated that they favored an autocratic leadership style because they prefer a coach who provides discipline and direction. In contrast, females preferred a coach who allowed them to be a part of the decision-making process (Walach-Bista, 2019). A study conducted by Walach-Bista (2019) confirms that females prefer more democratic leadership than their male counterparts. Two other studies show similar results with females preferring democratic leadership more than males (Chee et al., 2017; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978).

While some athletes prefer their coaches use an autocratic or democratic type of leadership style, others prefer a social support leadership style. Three studies found that males articulate a preference for social support leadership style over their female colleagues (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Witte, 2011). Regarding positive feedback, several studies provide evidence that female athletes prefer positive feedback more than male athletes (Chee et al., 2017; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019; Witte, 2011). Finally, female athletes have a slightly higher preference for the training and instruction style of leadership than male athletes, according to some studies (Chee et al., 2017; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019).The findings of this study are in an attempt to address the missing piece(s) in previous literature regarding athlete preferences for the five preferred

leadership styles. All studies indicated that males prefer autocratic leadership more than females (Chee et al., 2017; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019; Witte, 2011). In contrast, there was some discord in the findings for democratic leadership. This discord could potentially be due to gender preferences in sport as females tended to lean more towards a democratic leadership style in multiple sports, including physical education, basketball, volleyball, and D3 NCAA sports. Two studies showed that males prefer democratic leadership more than females (Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al. 2018), 1 study showed no significant difference when it comes to democratic leadership style preference (Witte, 2011), and 3 studies found that females prefer it more than their male colleagues (Chee et al., 2017; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Walach-Bista, 2019).

The social support leadership style is not definitive with respect to preferred leadership styles. In two studies, females prefer more social support from their coaches than male athletes (Chee et al., 2017; Walach-Bista, 2019). Three studies show males display a higher preference for social support than females (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Witte, 2011). However, Pitts et al. (2018), show no significant difference in gender when it comes to social support. Most studies indicate that females have a higher preference for positive feedback than males (Chee et al., 2017; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019; Witte, 2011), while Chelladurai & Saleh (1978) note that there are no significant differences between male and female athletes. A potential reason for these differences in outcomes could be the time between

the data collection. Chelladurai and Saleh's (1978) study and the other five studies noted occurred 33 years apart.

Finally, for training and instruction, there are several noteworthy studies. Witte (2011) finds no significant difference in athlete preference between males and females; Chelladurai & Saleh's (1978), study was inconclusive in regards to training and instruction, seeing as its basis is on open-closed sports and interdependent-independent sports. Conversely, four studies indicate that females favor training and instruction from their coaches more than males (Chee et al., 2017; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019).

This study will go in depth on the five preferred leadership styles by focusing on former male and female athletes. This study will examine preferred leadership styles to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the preferred leadership styles of former male and female athletes. The hypotheses include H[1]: Former male athletes will prefer autocratic leadership style more than former female athletes, H[2]: Former female athletes will prefer democratic leadership style more than former male athletes, H[3]: Former female athletes will have a significant preference among leadership styles, H[4]: Former male athletes will have a significant preference among leadership styles.

Similar to previous research, this study is to determine whether or not males have a different viewpoint on preferred leadership styles in a coach versus what females prefer in their coaches. This study will assess former male and female athletes to determine which leadership style they prefer from their previous coach. Throughout this study, the

PI will utilize the LSS to determine athlete preferences for coach leadership styles. The leadership styles assessed will include autocratic, democratic, social support, positive feedback, and training and instruction. The purpose of this study is to discern what leadership style preferences former male and female athletes had preferred their head coaches to utilize.

Research Question

Do former male and female athletes have different leadership style preferences?

Hypotheses

H^1: Former male athletes will prefer autocratic leadership style more than former female athletes.

H^2: Former female athletes will prefer democratic leadership style more than former male athletes.

H^3: Former female athletes will have a significant preference among leadership styles.

H^4: Former male athletes will have a significant preference among leadership styles.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is to determine which leadership style preferences former male and female athletes preferred their coaches utilize. The findings of this study will allow coaches to have a better understanding of which leadership style may work best for their athletes and which leadership style the coaches can utilize for future teams base on former athlete results. If more coaches recognize what leadership style their athletes most prefer, then they can adjust how to best lead their team, and meet their athletes' needs at the same time.

Limitations

This study is limited by:

1. Only former athletes.

2. Self-reported data.

3. Small sample size

4. Age range

Definition of Terms

1. Coach: A coach directs and leads his or her athletes in three ways: teaching, training, and instructing.

2. Leadership: This leadership is someone who can influence others to reach the goals in which they have set for themselves.

3. Autocratic Behavior: This coaching behavior is seen as being controlling and the coach is the only one who makes decisions regarding the team.

4. Democratic Behavior: This coaching style allows athletes to have input and do things on their own, but the coach has the final call.

5. Social Support Behavior: This coaching style assists by allowing athletes to achieve the goals in which they have set and is viewed as being a support system for athletes.

6. Positive Feedback: This coaching style assists in developing and promoting positive feedback along with an overall performance in the sport.

7. Training and Instruction: This coaching style aims towards improving one's overall knowledge and skill within the sport.

8. Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS): The LSS is used to determine athlete preferences on the leadership style in which he or she would like to see from his or her coach.

9. Preferred Behavior: Refers to the leadership style in which athletes would like to see from their coaches.

Significance of Study

Previous research shows that athletes have different preferences when it comes to the leadership styles of their coach. Just as every coach leads their team diversely, each athlete also interprets and responds to individual leadership styles differently. As such, Misasi et al. (2016) maintain that coaches are encouraged to get to know their athletes to develop an understanding of the most effective leadership style(s). This study's findings will benefit many coaches in knowing which leadership style former athletes lean towards when it comes to leadership style preference. The results of this study could also inform the coaches' decisions on leadership styles for future teams.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review includes several sections: Leadership Assessments, Overview of Leadership Styles, Leadership Scale for Sports, Athlete Preferences, Sports Culture, and Conclusion. This study seeks to discern coach leadership style preferences of former male and female athletes. Understanding past research and identifying the gaps in literature reveals the need to investigate the preferred leadership styles among former male and female athletes. Research shows that leadership styles in coaching are not all the same and some athletes may prefer different leadership styles than their teammates (Chee et al., 2017; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019; Witte, 2011).

Coaches play an important role in sports. Particularly, their leadership style can impact the performance of their athletes. Misasi et al. (2016) established that effective leadership happens through the way an athlete performs and how it aligns with the coach's intentions. For a coach to be an effective leader, she needs to employ practical communication skills. Two studies (West, 2016; Witte; 2011) indicated that an athlete's performance might vary based on the coach's communicational leadership style. The different types of communication coaches have with their athletes may also play a role in athlete satisfaction.

Sports Culture

In every organization, culture establishes the groundwork for almost all operations within the establishment. It is no different when it comes to the sporting environment. Sports culture includes the beliefs, attitudes, norms, assumptions, and values of the team, individual players, and coaches while also attempting to outline

expectations for conduct and develop the team's future success (Balogh, 2015). Relevant to this study, culture is argued to be at least partially determinative, and perhaps wholly, of preferred leadership style. Haslam et al argue that leaders perform at least four specific functions: serve as in-group prototypes, serve as in-group champions, are entrepreneurs of identity, and are embedders of identity. To the extent that the leader fulfills these roles then she is seen as representative of that culture and is more likely to be successful in the mission articulated as the team's goal. (Haslam et al, 2020)

Sports culture can vary among teams depending on how athletes perceive their coach's leadership style and team cohesion. According to a study by Wagstaff and Burton-Wylie (2018), athletes and coaches report that a negative culture is one of the unhealthy communication styles and a lack of trust between team members, causing poor performance. However, a positive culture is where the coach and team are all on the same page, have the same goal to win, have clear and concise procedures, and work together, which typically leads to high performance (Wagstaff & Burton-Wylie, 2018).

The coach plays a significant role in the overall culture of the team. In some ways, athlete preferences in coach leadership styles correlate to the team's culture. Within the team, the coach distributes different tasks and positions among the athletes, which contributes to the team's culture, and in turn, promotes competition (Kim & Cruz, 2017). Yet, if the coach-athlete relationship weakens, the team's leadership will suffer (Haslam et al. 2011). Coaches need to attempt to maintain a healthy relationship within the culture of the group. According to Haslam et al. (2020), leaders who choose to block themselves from the team may see a cease from the group first. Therefore, to be an

effective leader, coaches need to be familiar with the team's culture and skills (Haslam et al., 2020).

Overview of the Five Leadership Styles of the LSS

There are a variety of leadership styles that coaches implement in every aspect of sports. Typically, a leader is someone who leads their followers in a given direction. With that in mind, to be an effective leader and for the team to work cohesively, leaders and followers must view each other as team members (Haslam et al., 2020). Therefore, when coaching or leading a team, it is essential to know what each leadership style entails and how athletes may respond to them (Heil, 2018). The leadership styles coaches use can ultimately be the key to a team's success (Farneti & Turner, 2013). Thus, what leadership style athletes prefer in their coaches can have a significant impact on athlete performance (Heil, 2018). While there may be a plethora of leadership styles one could examine, this study will explore these leadership styles autocratic, democratic, social support, positive feedback, and training and instruction (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; 1980). These five leadership styles are the best fit for this study as they are a part of the LSS. The primary investigator chose to utilize this instrument when examining athlete preference of coach leadership style. More will be said about this later in the chapter when various leader assessment instruments are discussed.

Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic behavior is an authoritarian style of leadership, where the coach is in absolute control over his or her athletes (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Farneti & Turner, 2013). This specific style allows the coach to be in full control while boosting discipline

and organizational skills within the athletes (West, 2016). By enhancing organizational capabilities and creating self-control within the team, the autocratic style creates a structured environment that helps to obtain the overall goals of the group. Some athletes may view coaches who use the autocratic leadership style as influential individuals who can help them reach their ultimate goals (Cruz & Kim, 2017). However, autocratic coaches tend to be more focused on task accomplishment and winning games than on teaching, training, or motivating their athletes (Bennett & Nelson, 2015). The downside of this leadership style is that the coach's tone may sound belligerent and demanding to some athletes (West, 2016). Heil (2018), also notes that the autocratic leadership style increases anxiety while decreasing performance in some athletes.

Autocratic leaders are seen as leaders who take charge. Some individuals who are followers of an autocratic leader have a view in their mind that allows them to feel good about this style of leadership as they sense their leader is being effective (Haslam et al., 2020; Rost, 1993). While this may be true for some followers, not all feel the same way about the autocratic leadership style. The downside of this leadership style is that it causes some athletes to feel they have lost ownership of the decision-making process (Haslam et al., 2020).

Democratic Leadership

While some athletes may prefer an authoritarian style coach who is in full control, other athletes may desire a coach who allows the athletes increased levels of control. Democratic coaching also refers to "self-coaching." This leadership style allows athletes to take on the responsibility and freedom to train themselves to some extent, but the

coach still makes the final decisions (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; West, 2016). According to Bennett and Nelson (2015), democratic coaches focus on the needs of their athletes and make sure that they are well-rounded individuals. West (2016) finds that democratic coaches do not yell, tell, or scream at their athletes like that of an autocratic coach. Instead, democratic coaches allow the athletes to give suggestions, and by doing so, it helps the athletes learn what it takes to make the right decisions. Coaches who allow athletes to be part of the decision-making process show greater participation among athletes in group goals (Farneti & Turner, 2013). Haslam et al. (2011) state that to achieve this type of effective leadership, one should influence their athletes to encourage them toward achieving team goals.

Leaders are only as effective as their followers when they have the same mindset and view each other as equals. Without followership, there are no successful leaders (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016). Leadership and followership are seen as intertwined when the leader and the follower have similar goals in mind (Haslam et al., 2020). Democratic coaches use this type of leadership style, which allows the coaches and athletes to develop relationships vital for team success (Farneti & Turner, 2013).

Social Support

The third leadership style defined is social support, where the coach assists their athletes with personal problems while making the sport pleasurable in the lives of their athletes (Tucker, 2017). According to Moen et al. (2014), the social support leadership style emphasizes relationship building within the team while also creating an uplifting group environment. With this leadership style, athletes feel that they can turn to their

coach outside of practice for guidance (Kim & Cruz 2016). Another reason this

leadership style is influential in the lives of athletes is that coaches are educated in the

needs and goals of their athletes, both within and outside of the sport (West, 2016). When

athletes feel they have the support of their coach, they turn to them more often for

encouragement.

The perception of followers is sometimes more important than the style of

leadership. Followers will only tend to follow leaders that appear to be trustworthy

(Haslam et al., 2020). Coaches who utilize the social support leadership style seem to

build a circle of trust among their athletes. Through this connection, leaders can draw

interest in the welfare of their athletes and support an uplifting team atmosphere (Farneti

& Turner, 2013).

Positive Feedback

Similar to the social support leadership style, positive feedback is also one of

motivation, but it also has some differences. Positive feedback coaching leadership style

aims to promote and encourage athletes (West, 2016). According to Moen et al. (2014),

coaches who employ the positive feedback leadership style are cognizant of their

athletes' development and accomplishments. West (2016) mentions Marten's table

(1987) of the description of positive feedback in coaching, which includes: criticism,

information, and neutral feedback. Coaches are there to help and encourage their athletes

via these three methods. Criticism allows the coach to provide the athlete positive

feedback, as well as potential ways in which the athlete could improve. When giving

information, the coach lets the athlete know specifically what they did that was good

(e.g., fast feet, being ready). The final method of positive feedback is neutral feedback. West (2016) mentions Marten's table (1987), which shows coaches who provide neutral feedback to their athletes, state what the athletes perform well on. The difference between positive feedback through information and positive feedback through neutral feedback is that with neutral feedback, the coach is only providing feedback without elaborating on specific details. One negative of this leadership style includes the use of criticism, which is a negative type of feedback instead of a positive feedback. Unfortunately, some athletes do not respond well to the use of negative feedback (Metrifit, 2019).

Positive feedback leadership style can be beneficial for both leaders and followers. Leaders have the ability not only to recognize their followers' achievements, but also to reward them. Through positive feedback, leaders now have the power to get their followers to accomplish such tasks through recognition and reward (Haslam et al., 2020). Coaches who recognize their athletes' overall achievement motivate them towards a higher athletic performance (Farneti & Turner, 2013).

Training and Instruction

Coaches who utilize the training and instructional leadership style teach and instruct athletes with the goal of improving athletic performance (Cruz & Kim, 2017; Heil, 2018; West, 2016). For improving performance, coaches should teach their players the fundamentals of the sport, instruct them in the nuances of the sport, and train them so they can undergo the rigors of the sport. The training and instruction leadership style is set to increase the athletes' abilities through instructing, organizing, and managing athletic events (Moen et al., 2014). Coaches who use this leadership style prepare their

athletes through improving their skills, techniques, and tactics in the sport (Farneti & Turner, 2013; Kim & Cruz, 2016). Training and instruction is a coach's most fundamental job, and therefore coaches can assist athletes to achieve their goals (Heil, 2018).

Many aspects fall under the leadership style of training and instruction when it comes to coaching athletes. Leaders not only train their followers but instruct them as well. Haslam et al. (2011) mention that followers will only react to their superior's directions when they feel that both their mindsets are the same. That said, coaches need to pay close attention to what their athletes want to achieve so that they can obtain higher athletic performance. As Haslam et al. (2011) note, followers will often go along with leaders' demands because they view it as beneficial to them. In training and instruction, coaches give their athletes what they need, and in return, athletes follow their coaches' lead because they view the relationship as a mutualistic connection.

Leadership Style and Preferences of Male and Female Athletes

Research shows that a variety of contributing factors, such as gender, age, sport, personality, and level of competition, play a role in determining what leadership style preferences athletes want their coaches to utilize (Cruz & Kim, 2017). Individual athletes have different personality characteristics, reflecting their preference for leadership styles (Witte, 2011). Therefore, the coach must be aware of their athletes' needs and preferences so that athletic performance can continue to improve (Cruz & Kim, 2017).

When examining autocratic leadership style and gender of the athlete, research demonstrates that male athletes prefer the autocratic leadership style more often than

female athletes; thus, male athletes typically prefer their coaches to utilize this leadership style over the other four styles (Chee et al., 2017; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019; Witte, 2011). One reason in particular why male athletes may favor this leadership style could be due to the discipline and direction they receive from their coaches, which provides them with a more structured environment. Whereas female athletes do not prefer this particular style, instead preferring a less abrasive approach where they can be a part of the decision-making process (Chee et al., 2017; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019; Witte, 2011). However, research shows that the gender of the athlete does make a slight difference when looking at the democratic leadership style. Many studies (Chee et al., 2017; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Walach-Bista, 2019) find that female athletes prefer their coaches to utilize this leadership style more than males. Other studies have shown that male athletes have slightly higher preferences for democratic leadership style than their female cohorts (Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2019). However, Witte (2011) finds that there is no significant difference between the two genders for democratic leadership style preferences.

Research depicts that male athletes not only have a higher preference for autocratic leadership style, but the social support leadership style as well (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Witte, 2011). Females prefer this leadership style less often than their male counterparts (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Witte, 2011). However, two studies (Chee et al., 2017; Walach-Bista, 2019) maintain that females prefer more social support from their coaches than males. Further research shows

no significant differences in gender among athletes' preferences when it comes to this leadership style (Pitts et al., 2018). The findings may be inconsistent due to the type of sport as well as the gender of the coach that the athlete has. According to Cruz and Kim (2017), the athlete's coach's gender makes a significant difference in the preference of the social support leadership style.

There have been several studies regarding gender and the leadership style of positive feedback. These studies show that females tend to have a higher preference for their coaches to utilize this specific leadership style (Chee et al., 2017; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista; 2019; Witte, 2011). Males tend not to lean toward this type of leadership style. However, according to Chelladurai and Saleh (1978), there are no significant differences between either gender for the preference of the leadership style of positive feedback. There were possibly no significant differences due to its age compared to other, more recent studies. Athlete preferences based on gender for training and instruction illustrate that females prefer that their coaches utilize this specific leadership style more than their male counterparts (Chee et al., 2017; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019). In one study, Witte (2011) finds that there is no significant difference between male and female athletes when it comes to training and instruction leadership style preferences. Unlike studies that focused on gender differences, Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) did a study based on sport in the area of training and instruction. Their study reveals that athletes who participate in interdependent sports show a higher preference for training and instruction than those who participate in independent sports (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978). Chelladurai and Saleh

(1978) note under training and instruction that athletes who participate in closed sports have a greater preference for this leadership style than those who participate in open sports.

When examining numerous studies (Chee et al., 2017; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019; Witte, 2011) on gender preferences of coach leadership styles, the researcher revealed that athletes had either differing or the same perspectives on leadership style preferences. Looking back at prior inquiries, the researcher can note that there are a few inconsistencies when reviewing the five leadership styles. A few reasons as to why there may be some inconsistencies include the age gap in research and the type of sport played. Thus, when looking back at previous research, the researcher was able to examine what style of preferences male and female athletes tend to lean towards by comparing and contrasting the five styles of leadership.

Similar to preceding research, this study will examine the five preferred leadership styles, but will only be honing in on the men's and women's basketball team. This study will seek to assess former male and female preferred leadership styles in which they would have like to have seen in their coaches. Therefore, based on the information found in previous literature, the researcher can use what they know to help in guiding their study on leadership preferences. Thus, to better examine the preferred leadership styles among former male and female athletes, a thorough examination of the leadership scales is necessary.

Leadership Assessments

There are several types of leadership assessments one can use to measure the behavior of their coach. The five leadership assessments discussed in this paper include Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Coaching Behavior Assessment Systems (CBAS), Coaching Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ), Coaching Behavior Scale for Sports (CBS-S), and the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS). Each of these assessments provide insights into the style of leadership that is effective in specific environments, or is less effective, for various reasons.

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) involves motivation and how humans interrelate within the social environment and was first introduced by psychologists Deci and Ryan in 1985. This theory discusses two types of motivation that all individuals work towards: intrinsic and extrinsic. An example of intrinsic motivation is that athletes' behavior improves when they perceive they are competent in the sport, whereas extrinsic motivation pertains to an athlete receiving pay or a medal for their efforts (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Legault, 2017). When looking at motivation, there are three psychological needs that the SDT focuses on, which include autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). These three fundamental necessities are essential to the emotional growth, morals, and security of individuals (Trigueros et al., 2019). When looking at SDT, many different assessments can help determine human motivation. Still for this study, the primary investigator notes that SDT is not the best option because it does not hone in on athlete preferences whereas, it is mainly a framework when researching environmental conditions that influence motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The Coaching Behavior Assessment Systems (CBAS) was developed by Smith et al. (1977) by observing various youth sporting coaches, as well as focusing on social learning theories. The CBAS includes two critical classes of actions; these are reactive behaviors and spontaneous behaviors. Reactive behaviors are instant reactions to player or team actions, whereas spontaneous behaviors are demeanors that are originated by the coach and not that of the events (Vaughan, 2017). The sub-factors of reactive behaviors include desirable performance, mistake/errors, and misbehaviors, while the sub-factors for spontaneous behaviors include game-related and game irrelevant (Vaughan, 2017). Each of the following categories fall either under the class reactive behavior or spontaneous behavior, and both classes have multiple sub-factors. Within these two classes of actions falls twelve behavioral categories. These twelve categories that Smith et al. (1977) developed include positive reinforcement, nonreinforcement, mistake-contingent encouragement, mistake- contingent technical instruction, punishment, punitive technical instruction, ignoring mistakes, keeping control, general technical instruction, general encouragement, organization, general communication. The primary investigator did not choose the CBAS since it does not measure the exact variables that are relevant to this research.

The Coaching Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ) was developed by Williams et al. (2003) to determine athletes' insights on their coach's behavior and evaluate the coach's effectiveness in assisting athletes in optimal performance and upholding optimum mental state. The coach plays an essential role in determining athlete success. Williams et al. (2003) mention that coaches will strive to instill the set behaviors they feel are necessary

to ensure the success and personal growth of their athletes. To measure coaching behaviors, the CBQ is a 28-item questionnaire with 7 of the 28-items being fillers, with only 21 questions scored using a 4-point Likert scale (Kenow & Williams, 1992; Williams et al., 2003). The questionnaire measures five different coaching behaviors: cognitive/attentional effects of coach's behavior, supportiveness, emotional control and composure, communication, and somatic effects of coach's behavior (Kenow & Williams, 1992; Williams et al., 2003). The CBQ is not the best assessment for this research, as it does not measure the leadership style preferences athletes would like to see in their coaches. Instead the CBQ examines four things, including concerns regarding the communication of the coach by the athlete, confidence level the coach portrays, composure and emotional stability of the coach, and how the behavior and arousal level of the coach affects the team (Kenow & Williams, 1992).

Although some researchers utilize the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Coaching Behavior Assessment Systems (CBAS), and Coaching Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ), other researchers use the Coaching Behavior Scale for Sports (CBS-S). Cote et al. (1999) developed the CBS-S as a tool to aid in assessing the needs of coaching behavior through an athlete's point of view (Cote et al., 1999). The CBS-S assessment consists of a total of 37 items that fall under six subscale categories: technical skills, goal setting, mental preparation, personal rapport, physical training, and negative personal rapport (Cote et al., 1999). Given this assessment was developed and mainly used with adult Caucasian athletes (Koh et al., 2014), it may not be beneficial for this study. Another

reason as to why this study would not be valuable for the researcher could be because it assesses the performance of the coach and not the five preferred leadership styles.

The fifth leadership assessment is the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) developed by Chelladurai and Saleh (1978; 1980). This assessment is the one that the researcher is utilizing for this particular study. The LSS can provide more details determining what leadership styles athletes prefer their coaches to use. The features of the LSS lays out further information within the Leadership Scale for Sports section. Based on the missing pieces in the literature that include the age gap in research and the type of sport played, the researcher's purpose is to discern what leadership style preferences former male and female athletes would have liked their head coaches to utilize. Upon review of all assessments, the LSS seems to be the most appropriate assessment for this study.

Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS)

Athletes may prefer a particular leadership style based on their personal experience and goals; thus, it is important to have a means of assessing athlete leadership preferences. The LSS intends to measure the five previously described leadership styles. Chelladurai and Saleh (1978; 1980) developed the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) in two different stages. The LSS is a 40-item questionnaire designed to assess the leadership style preferences of the athletes, focusing on different aspects of coaching behavior. The five leadership styles measured by the LSS include autocratic, democratic, social support, positive feedback, and training and instruction (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978). Each of the

five leadership styles represents a different feature regarding coaching, whether it is improving athletes' performance, decision-making, or motivational style (Cruz & Kim, 2017). Each subscale has numerous items that relate to that of the leadership style (autocratic = 5 items; democratic = 9 items; social support = 8 items; positive feedback = 5 items; training and instruction = 13 items; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978).

The LSS is scored using a five-point Likert scale with a five-response category system with 5 = always, 4 = often, 3 = occasionally, 2 = seldom, and 1 = never (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). Each item on the LSS has a statement to answer based on the Likert scale. Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) established adequate test-retest reliability (Cronbach's alpha ranging from .71 to .82) and internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha ranging from .45 to .93) for each of the subscales of the LSS. To establish factorial validity, Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) used a five-factor solution based on the five leadership styles, which was more meaningful to the study. Each of the five factors divides the LSS into sections: Factor 1-Training and Instruction, Factor 2-Democratic Behavior, Factor 3-Autocratic Behavior, Factor 4-Social Support, and Factor 5-Positive Feedback (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). Athletes use this to indicate the preferred leadership style. Chelladurai and Saleh's (1980) study can be seen as content and factorial valid based on the five-factor solution being stable. The five-factor study was also reproducible, significant, and meaningful to the study (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; 1980).

Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) surveyed one hundred and sixty participants who participated in a sports program. The next step participants had to do was choose a

variability of sport preference and classification. The variability of sport preference included either open or closed, while the dependence consisted of independent or interdependent sports. Open sports include sports such as badminton, fencing, skiing, squash, tennis, and wrestling, while closed sports include sports such as dance, diving, golf, gymnastics, swimming, track and field, and weightlifting (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978). Independent sports include sports involving a single player, whereas interdependent sports include doubles or more (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978). The dimension of leadership behavior was assessed through the existing scales, which included five response categories. When determining preferred leadership behavior, higher scores showed a higher preference for behavior (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978). Findings from this study (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978) conclude that males have a higher preference for autocratic leadership style, while females prefer a democratic leadership style.

Conclusion

Leadership is something that is continuously evolving. The study of leadership and the leadership style of the coach is important to athletes so that they can be better informed of the five leadership styles, as well as understanding the importance of leadership and what makes a leader effective. The coach's behavior will have a significant impact on the team's culture (Haslam et al., 2020), and in turn, this impacts the leadership style of the coach through the team's performance (Ramzaninezhad & Keshtan, 2009). As with any organization, the culture of a team is vital when it comes to sports. Culture can impact a team and its players either positively or negatively. Coaches are significant in

team culture, and how the players respond to a particular coaching style can have a

significant impact on performance (Cruz & Kim, 2017). Athlete preferences for coach

leadership styles may improve a team's culture and, in turn, increase overall performance

since the athletes and coaches would all be working toward the same goal (Cruz & Kim,

2017; Haslam et al., 2020). However, the leadership styles of coaches vary, and with the

primary goal in sport is to perform well, it is important to understand the coach leadership

style preferences of athletes. As mentioned, there are five preferred leadership styles.

Autocratic leadership is someone who is controlling, wanting things done their way, and

makes all the decisions for the team. Democratic leadership allows input from the

athletes, but only to a certain extent, while the coach makes the final call. Social support

leadership assists athletes by enabling them to achieve the goals in which they have set

for themselves while providing them with a support system. Positive feedback aids in

providing athletes with feedback along with overall performance. Training and

instruction aims at improving athletes' knowledge and skill within the sport. For

example, various factors influence athlete preference of coach leadership styles such as

age, competition level, gender, and team culture. However, based on previous literature

and the gaps mentioned formerly in the literature review, the focus of this study is on

gender preferences of the athletes (Chee et al., 2017; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz &

Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019; Witte, 2011).Overall, males tend to

have a stronger desire for an autocratic leadership style more than their female

counterparts and more often than the other four leadership styles (Chee et al., 2017;

Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019;

Witte, 2011). Whereas females mostly prefer coaches who use the positive feedback

leadership style more than males (Chee et al., 2017; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018;

Walach-Bista, 2019; Witte, 2011).

     Therefore, athletes and coaches need to know what leadership style they prefer

their coaches to use when entering a sport. It is also essential for coaches to understand

athletes' preferred leadership styles, understand the needs of their athletes, and equip

themselves to coach their team. In conclusion, the LSS is an effective tool to determine

athletes' preferred leadership styles for what they want in their coaches.

In an effort to better understand the complexities of coach-athlete communication and preferred leadership styles, research will be conducted using the Background and Sport-Specific Questionnaire (BSS) and the Leadership Scale for Sports questionnaire (LSS) developed by Chelladurai and & Saleh (1978; 1980). Coach-athlete communication, the leadership style of the coach, and how the coach portrays their coaching style impact the athlete's performance on and off the court. When conducting this research, it will be vital to gain knowledge of former athletes and obtain their trust by ensuring that everything they discuss will be confidential. The researcher will be the only one to view personal information regarding the sport demographic background and what leadership style preferences are preferred by former male and female athletes. The primary item that the researcher will be reviewing is the leadership style former athletes prefer their coaches to have used. The researcher will also be determining if former male and female athletes have the same preferences or different preferences.

Design and Setting

Background and Sport Specific Questionnaire. All participants will be asked to complete a demographic/sport-specific questionnaire (see appendix A). This demographic survey will consist of 7 questions, including items such as age and gender-specific questions, socioeconomic background, sport(s) history, and coach preferences. These questions will be administered to both former male and female athletes. The BSS will be distributed to athletes via Qualtrics.

Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS)

Chelladurai and Saleh (1978; 1980) developed the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS), which assists in determining individual preferences of the five leadership styles. This scale can assist athletes in determining what coaching style preference they like the best and aid coaches as

well by informing them of the needs and preferences of their athletes. The LSS will be used to assess former athletes' preferences of leadership style. (see appendix C). The LSS is a 40-item, 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire that evaluates five different areas of leadership behaviors. These leadership areas include autocratic behavior, democratic behavior, social support, positive feedback, and training and instruction. For each dimension of the leadership scale, a score out of 5 will be established by obtaining the total score and dividing by the number of items in that dimension. Moderate test-retest reliability (.71 to .82) and factorial validity have been established for each factor on the scale. (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). The participants will complete the LSS by paper-pencil. The LSS will be completed either electronically or by paper-pencil.

Participants

The sample will consist of 20 former athletes (13 females and 7 males; age 18 ± 30 yrs). Participants' athletic experience levels will vary from 1 to 12+ years (___ $\pm$ ___ yrs). All participants involved in the study will be volunteers and will sign an informed consent document prior to participation before participating in the study, and no identifying information will be collected.

Procedures

First, if granted permission (from IRB), the primary investigator will gather a list of names from work and friends of who the PI would like to participate in the study. After IRB approval, the PI will send out a message to former athletes to recruit them to the study. The message will include what the PI is studying as well as mentioning that this study is voluntary.

Next, the PI will explain a description of the research topic and purpose, a description of the survey (number of questions and question type), a statement ensuring confidentiality, and the

measures that will take place to maintain their privacy. For those who wish to participate, the PI will distribute the links to Qualtrics surveys via electronically and collect informed consent forms from those who self-select to participate in the study through the Qualtrics surveys.

Once the PI discusses the study, the (PI) will then send out two anonymous links to participants, including one of the links being the BSS and the other as the LSS. After one week, the (PI) will send out another message to former athletes if no response is received.

The surveys will include the BSS questionnaire and the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) questionnaire. Each student-athlete from the teams will first fill out the background sport specific BSS questionnaire (see appendix A) before filling out the LSS questionnaire (see appendix C). Completion of both surveys should take approximately 30minutes. All data will then be organized and examined to determine if differences in leadership styles preferences exist between former male and female athletes.

Data Analysis

The research from this study will be testing the following hypotheses based on findings that Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) found when conducting their study of how to see if male athletes will prefer different or even the same style of leadership as female athletes according to many studies (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Witte, 2011; Pitts et a., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019, Cruz & Kim, 2017; Heil, 2018).

These hypotheses that are to be conducted throughout the research include:

H[1]: Former male athletes will prefer an autocratic leadership style relative to their female athlete counterparts.

H[2]: Former female athletes will prefer a democratic leadership style relative to their male athlete counterpart,

H^3: Former female athletes will have a significant preference among leadership styles,

H^4: Former male athletes will have a significant preference among leadership styles.

All statistical analyses will be completed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science software (SPSS) version ___. An Excel spreadsheet will be utilized to organize all data prior to uploading into the SPSS software. An a-priori alpha of .05 will be used to determined statistical significance. Data will be presented as mean ± standard deviation. Two, independent samples t-tests will be used to compare leadership style preferences of former male and female athletes.

This study focused on leadership style preference among former male and female athletes. The following results will help researchers further examine the five preferred leadership styles among former male and female athletes.

Response Rate

A combination of convenience and snowball sampling was utilized to recruit participants. The primary investigator recruited friends and work colleague, who then recruited others they knew who qualified. The response rate regarding former male and female athletes was 52.63%. The PI sent out surveys to 38 former male and female athletes, with only 20 complete responses identified by the PI.

Demographics

Of the 20 participants in this study, 65% (n=13) identified as females, whereas 35% (n=7) identified themselves as males and 30 years old. When comparing the type of sport in which former athletes played, the PI was able to determine the number and the percentage for each sport. The sport in which former male and female athletes played in include: 25% (n=5) gymnastics, 20% (n=3) tennis, 20% (n=4) soccer, 15% (n=3) basketball, and 20% (n=4) football. The following data can be located below (see Table 1). Leadership preferences of former athletes before taking the LSS can be located below (see Table 2).

Table 2. Demographic data

		Male	Female	Total
Age Range (years)	18	1	2	3
	19-20	1	2	3
	21-24	3	5	8
	25-30	2	4	6

| Sport	Basketball	2	1	3
	Football	4	0	4
	Gymnastics	0	5	5
	Soccer	0	4	4
	Tennis	1	3	4

Table 3. Leadership style preferences prior to taking LSS

Leadership Styles	N=Males	% of Males	N=Females	% of Females	Total %
Training & Instruction	6	30%	7	35%	65%
Democratic	0	0%	1	5%	5%
Social Support	0	0%	1	5%	5%
Positive Feedback	0	0%	4	20%	20%
Autocratic	1	5%	0	0%	5%

Leadership Style Preferences

Prior to completing the LSS, participants were asked to indicate which leadership style they would have liked to of seen their coaches utilize. The data for leadership style preferences according to LSS responses are presented in Figure 1. It was assumed that athletes knew what each of the five leadership styles entailed before filling out the surveys. The independent samples t-tests indicated there was not a significant difference between male and female preference for autocratic ($p = .621$), democratic ($p =.480$), positive feedback ($p =.522$), social support ($p =.332$), or training and instruction ($p =.311$) leadership styles.
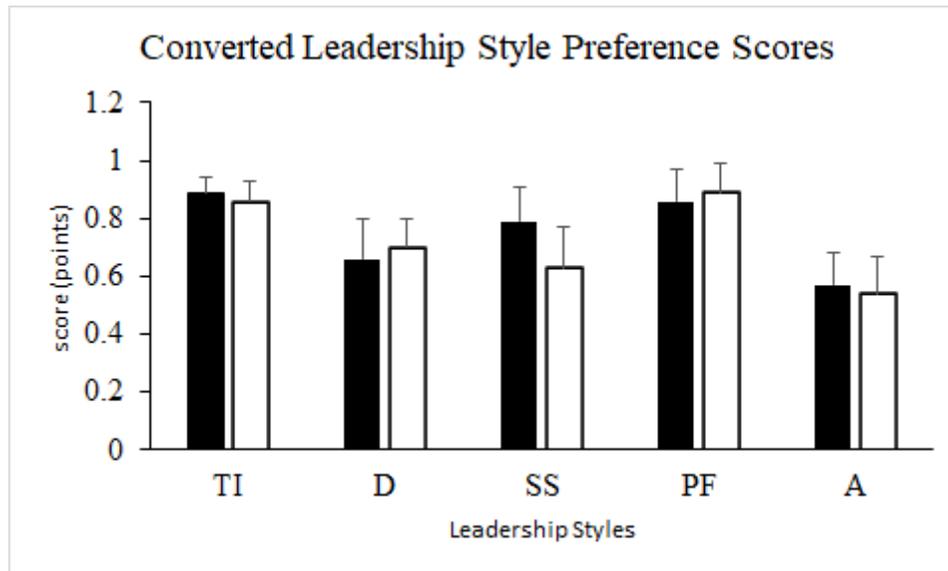
Figure 1. Raw scores
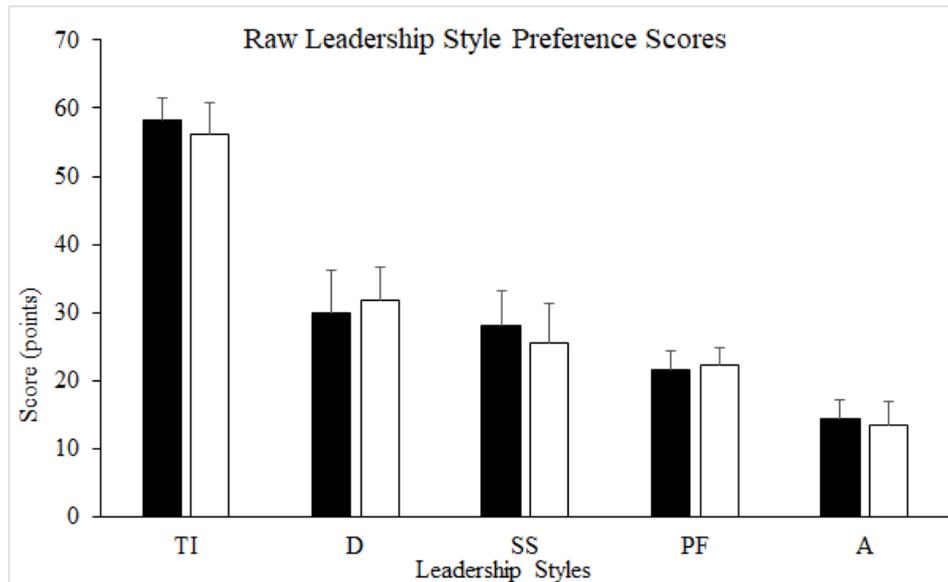
Note** Black columns denote males; white columns denote females; TI=Training and Instruction; D=Democratic; SS=Social Support; PF=Positive Feedback; A=Autocratic

For comparisons between leadership styles within male or female participant groups, scores for each leadership style were converted to represent proportions of total possible points for that leadership style (see Figure 2). For example, the total number of points on the questionnaire for social support was 40. If the LSS for a given athlete indicated a score of 30 out of 40 points total points, the scaled response was 0.75. The purpose of this conversion was to allow for comparison among each leadership style, since there are variations in total possible points for each style.

Figure 2. Converted Scores

Note** Black columns denotes males; white columns denote females; TI=Training and Instruction; D=Democratic; SS=Social Support; PF=Positive Feedback; A=Autocratic

The repeated-measures ANOVA indicated there was a statistically significant difference in preference among the leadership styles for females, Greenhouse-Geisser = 1.17, $F(2.7, 32.7) = 27.01$, $p < .001$. Pairwise comparisons indicated that females most preferred positive feedback and training and instruction leaderships styles, while they least preferred social support and autocratic leadership styles (see Table 3). When comparing preference for each leadership style among male participants, the repeated-measures ANOVA indicated there was a statistically significant difference in preference among the leadership styles, Greenhouse-Geisser = .527, $F(2.21,13.27) = 10.96$, $p < .001$. Pairwise comparisons indicated a preference for training and instruction over social support and autocratic styles and a preference for positive feedback over

autocratic leadership styles. The remainder of comparisons indicated similar preference (see

Table 4).

Table 4. Female athletes' comparisons of leadership styles

(I) L. Style	(J) L. Style	Mean Diff. (I – J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	.161	.030	.002	.058	.264
	3	.227	.037	< .001	.102	.352
	4	-.030	.024	.920	-.111	.050
	5	.324	.036	< .001	.199	.448
2	3	.066	.039	.718	-.068	.200
	4	-.191	.042	.006	-.333	-.049
	5	.163	.044	.031	.011	.314
3	4	-.257	.039	< .001	-.391	-.123
	5	.097	.055	.655	-.089	.283
4	5	.354	.053	< .001	.172	-.172

Note. 1 = Training and instruction; 2 = democratic; 3 = social support; 4 = positive feedback; 5 = autocratic.

Table 5. Male athletes' Comparison of leadership styles

(I) L. Style	(J) L. Style	Mean Diff. (I – J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	0.233	0.058	0.065	-0.014	.480
	3	0.193	0.042	0.037	0.012	.375
	4	0.034	0.048	0.999	-0.174	.242
	5	0.325	0.046	0.004	0.127	.523
2	3	-0.04	0.05	0.998	-0.256	.176
	4	-0.199	0.051	0.079	-0.42	.021
	5	0.092	0.086	0.98	-0.276	.460
3	4	-0.159	0.072	0.517	-0.471	.152
	5	0.132	0.079	0.793	-0.208	.472
4	5	0.291	0.061	0.03	0.03	.553

Note. 1 = Training and instruction; 2 = democratic; 3 = social support; 4 = positive feedback; 5 = autocratic.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study examined five preferred leadership styles of former male and female athletes to determine if there is a difference between these two groups. The hypotheses were:

H^1: Former male athletes will prefer an autocratic leadership style relative to their female athlete counterparts,

H^2: Former female athletes will prefer a democratic leadership style relative to their male athlete counterpart,

H^3: Former female athletes will have a significant preference among leadership styles,

H^4: Former male athletes will have a significant preference among leadership styles.

This study assessed former male and female athletes to determine which leadership style they preferred in their previous coaches. The Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) was used to determine athlete preferences for coach leadership styles. The leadership styles that the LSS assessed are defined as autocratic, democratic, social support, positive feedback, and training and instruction.

The main finding of the study was that there was not a statistically significant difference between male and female preference of any leadership style based on LSS responses. In addition, when assessing preferred leadership styles among former male and female athletes, females preferred the leadership style of training and instruction, and these athletes preferred to receive positive feedback. Similarly, males indicated a preference for training and instruction and positive feedback leadership styles. Male preference scores for leadership styles were not as statistically significantly different as their female counterparts when it came to preferred leadership styles. These differences were not statistically significant, meaning leadership style preferences could not be established to a significant degree between the two groups.

These findings do not concur with the literature cited earlier, where the LSS established that there are statistically significant differences between these populations with respect to preferred leadership styles. There are several possible explanations for these results, including the small sample size of the study, male and female preferences for leadership styles, various sporting backgrounds, and age range.

Small Sample Size

The current study showed that differences in leadership style preferences were not statistically significant between former male and female athletes, and one reason in particular is due to having a small sample size. When comparing the results from this study to previous literature, it can be noted that in the current study only 20 former athletes participated. In contrast, in prior literature there were large sample sizes. Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) conducted their study with a sample size of 160 (80 males; 80 females) participants and Walach-Bista (2019) conducted two separate research stages: first stage had a sample size of 352 athletes (161 females; 191 males) and the second stage sample size included 204 athletes (106 females; 98 males). Therefore, the sample size of the current study differed with those of previous studies. This difference is sample size made it more possible to demonstrate a statistical difference that was significant among preferred leadership styles between male and female athletes.

With having such a small sample size within the current study, the PI then decided to utilize two tests to determine statistical significance among preferred leadership styles. An independent t-test and an analysis of variance (ANOVA) test were the two utilized to test statistical significance/difference among preferred leadership styles. In comparison Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) also conducted their study using an analysis of variance (ANOVA) test to determine leadership style preferences which the athlete prefers their coach to utilize. So

similarly, to the independent t-test, the small sample size of this study demonstrated that there is a difference between the two samples, but it fails to tell which style is preferred. In other words, this study cannot determine which of the five styles is preferred, and by which group.

Male and Female Athlete Leadership Style Preferences Between Current Study and Previous Literature

In contrast to the findings of the current study, previous studies indicated significant differences between males and females in leadership preference. Previous literature provided evidence that male athletes prefer an autocratic leadership style (Chee et al. 2017; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019; and Witte, 2011) and social support (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Witte, 2011) leadership style more than female athletes. In contrast, female athletes prefer their coaches to portray democratic (Chee et al. 2017; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Walach-Bista, 2019), positive feedback (Chee et al. 2017; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019; and Witte, 2011) and training and instruction (Chee et al. 2017; Cruz & Kim, 2017; Pitts et al., 2018; Walach-Bista, 2019) leadership styles more than males. Thus, the reason as to why the current study shows no significant difference among athletes in leadership style preferences could possibly be that this study's small sample size compared to prior studies (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Pitts et al., 2018; and Witte, 2011) which had larger sample sizes. That being said, the PI was on the right track to obtain significant results relating to athlete's preference of leadership style leadership style but should have sought to gain a larger sample size so that it would be more comparable to previous research. The PI recommends a higher sample size and having roughly around the same amount of male and female athletes as the previous studies when conducting the study to receive similar results.

Only a few studies exhibited similar findings to the current study, where there was no significant difference in the athlete's leadership style preferences. For example, some studies provided evidence that males and females similarly preferred democratic and training and instructional (Witte, 2011), social support (Pitts et al., 2018), and positive feedback (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1978) leadership styles. Reason for the similarity in the findings could possibly be that male and female athletes preferred these styles these leadership styles the most. Thus, the researcher can infer that leadership style preferences matter among athletes when it comes to their sporting careers.

The current study's data does not fully agree with other studies since male athletes seem to prefer the use of an autocratic leader; female athletes seem to prefer their coaches to utilize the democratic leadership style. Within this study, the researcher inferred that through the comparison of male and female athletes they found that training and instruction, and positive feedback were preferred by both groups.

Various Athletic Backgrounds May Differ from Previous Studies

In comparison with previous literature, it can be noted that the researcher(s) of both previous research and the current study included many sporting backgrounds to determine which leadership style athletes prefer. Chelladurai and Saleh (1978), Pitts et al. (2018), and Witte (2011) included more sports within their study than did the current study. It is quite possible that by having only a select few sports in the current study (gymnastics, tennis, soccer, basketball, and football) that it was difficult to determine differences between males and females. Three of these sports (gymnastics, tennis, and soccer) have roughly equal participation between males and females. It is possible that these athletes are somewhat androgenous in their leadership style preferences. They have been in environments where both male and female athletes train together,

and these athletes are used to being coached by both male and female coaches. Not having strong gender identification for coaching leadership style may be a result. This could have played a role in not obtaining significant results among former male and female athletes. In contrast, athletes with football and basketball backgrounds may have been in relatively homogenous gender dominated environments. These athletes may have been more likely to associate leadership styles with male or female coaches. These two sports are often limited to one gender in particular, and athletes in these sports segregate by gender.

Age Range

Another potential explanation as to why a significant difference was not established between the two groups could possibly be due to the age range of the participants when they played. Other literature reviews (Chelladurai and Saleh,1978; Pitts et al.,2018; and Witte, 2011) conducted their studies with college athletes who were current in the University. Whereas the current study focused on former athletes who played growing up. It is quite possible that previous literature demonstrated statistical differences in preferred leadership styles among athletes due to the athletes in the samples being more mature when they were athletes. In contrast, with the current study the athletes were remembering or recollecting their experiences from a later point in their lives. Therefore, for future research it would be interesting to see if the memories of former athletes and their preferences for leadership styles are similar or different from those who are athletes when they are of college age.

Conclusion

The main findings of this study emphasized that there was not a statistically significant difference among former male and female athlete's leadership style preferences. Some

explanations as to why this could be is due to small sample size, male and female leadership style preferences, various athletic backgrounds, and age range. For future research the PI recommends having a larger sample size, roughly the same number of participants for both male and female athletes, and current athletes. Future researchers should also continue to evaluate male and female athletes preferred leadership styles they would like to see in their coaches. Through doing this, this will have an impact on coaches in knowing what athletes prefer leadership style wise.

It is arguable that it is important that coaches have access to some sort of information regarding preferred leadership styles so that they too can see that not every athlete is the same and that some may prefer or lean more towards one style than the other. Coaches need to also note each athlete has a different mindset and wants to be treated in a way that will help push them to want to do better, teach them the tactics of the sport, encourage and support them, and allow them to give input on decisions when it comes to the sport. That said, you cannot judge which leadership style male or female athletes will prefer based on one's thoughts nor previous literature. Thus, coaches should utilize the LSS to assess which leadership style preference works best for the athletes.

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APPENDIX A: (Background Sport Specific questionnaire)

Background Sport Specific Questionnaire

This questionnaire is to be filled out by the athletes to get a feel for their demographic

background both personally and sport related.

Age___

Gender M/F

1. What sport did you play?
    a. Gymnastics
    b. Basketball
    c. Tennis
    d. Track and Field
    e. Football
    f. Soccer
2. How many years were you in sports?
    a. 1-4
    b. 5-9
    c. 10-12
    d. More than 12
3. What was the average time per week that you had practice?
    a. 1-3 hours
    b. 4-6 hours
    c. 6-15 hours
    d. 15 or more
4. Have you ever had an injury due to sports if so, how many?
    a. 1-3
    b. 4-6
    c. 10 or more
    d. none
5. Have you ever felt sick after practice or a game?
    a. Yes
    b. No

6. What leadership style would have had preferred your coach to utilize?
    a. Autocratic
    b. Democratic
    c. Social Support
    d. Positive Feedback
    e. Training and Instruction

(Created by Kaitlyn (Bennett) Elmlinger)

APPENDIX B: (Permission to utilize the Leadership Scale for Sports questionnaire)

Kaitlyn Bennett
Tue 7/21/2020 4:49 PM
To: chella@troy.edu

Dr. Chelladurai,

I am a Grad student at Middle Tennessee State University and am conducting my thesis over preferred leadership styles athletes would like to see in their coaches. I would like your permission as well as a copy of the LSS 40 item questionnaire to conduct my research. Looking forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you!

Thanks,

Kaitlyn Bennett
Grad Student at MTSU

Packianathan Chelladurai <chella@troy.edu>
Tue 7/21/2020 5:01 PM
To: Kaitlyn Bennett

> 📄 lssemail.doc
> 66 KB
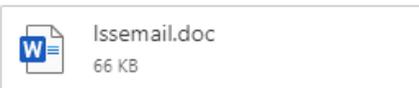
Hi, Kaitlyn:

Thanks for your interest in my work.

I have attached the Manual for the LSS which would give you all the information you have asked for.

I wish you the best in your research.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to ask.

Chella

. . .

APPENDIX C: (Leadership Scale for Sports questionnaire)

Leadership Scale For Sports (Developed by Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978)

(Preference Version)

Each of the following statements describe a specific behaviour that a coach may exhibit. For each statement there are five alternatives:

1. ALWAYS; 2. OFTEN (about 75% of the time); 3. **OCCASIONALLY** (50% of the time);

4. **SELDOM** (about 25% of the time); 5. **NEVER**

Please indicate your preference by placing an "X" in the appropriate space. Answer all items even if you are unsure of any. Please note that this is not an evaluation of your present coach or any other coach. It is your own personal preference that is required. There are no right or wrong answers. Your spontaneous and honest response is important for the success of the study.

	1	2	3	4	5

I prefer my coach to:

1. See to it that athletes work to capacity.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

2. Ask for the opinion of the athletes on strategies for specific competitions. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

3. Help athletes with their personal problems.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

4. Compliment an athlete for good performance in front of others.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

5. Explain to each athlete the techniques and tactics of the sport.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

6. Plan relatively independent of the athletes.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

7. Help members of the group settle their conflicts.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

8. Pay special attention to correcting athletes' mistakes. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

9. Get group approval on important matters before going ahead. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

10. Tell an athlete when the athlete does a particularly good job. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

11. Make sure that the coach's function in the team is understood by all athletes. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

12. Not explain his/her actions. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

13. Look out for the personal welfare of the athletes. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

14. Instruct every athlete individually in the skills of the sport. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

15. Let the athletes share in decision making. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

16. See that an athlete is rewarded for a good performance. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

17. Figure ahead on what should be done. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

		1	2	3	4	5

I prefer my coach to:

18. Encourage athletes to make suggestions for ways to conduct practices.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

19. Do personal favours for the athletes.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

20. Explain to every athlete what should be done and what should not be done.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

21. Let the athletes set their own goals.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

22. Express any affection felt for the athletes.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

23. Expect every athlete to carry out one's assignment to the last detail.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

24. Let the athletes try their own way even if they make mistakes.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

25. Encourage the athlete to confide in the coach.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

26. Point out each athlete's strengths and weaknesses.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

27. Refuse to compromise on a point.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

28. Express appreciation when an athlete performs well.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

29. Give specific instructions to each athlete on what should be done in
    every situation.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

30. Ask for the opinion of the athletes on important coaching matters.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

31. Encourage close and informal relations with athletes.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

32. See to it that the athletes' efforts are coordinated.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

33. Let the athletes work at their own speed.   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

34. Keep aloof from the athletes. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

35. Explain how each athlete's contribution fits into the total picture. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

36. Invite the athletes home. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

37. Give credit when it is due. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

38. Specify in detail what is expected of athletes. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

39. Let the athletes decide on plays to be used in a game. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

40. Speak in a manner which discourages questions. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___