

The Relationship between Coaching Behaviors and Competitive Motivation in Pro- League Handball Players of Iran

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between coaching behavior and competitive motivation from the perspective of Pro-league Handball players of Iran to review. The research method in this study was Descriptive and correlation method. Pro- league Handball players of Iran have established Statistical population of research that they all participated in the study. For this purpose, Martin and Barnez's (1999) Coaching Behavior questionnaire And Willis's Competitive Motivation questionnaire (1982) was used. Reliability of questionnaires after a pilot study using Cronbach's alpha test, respectively ($\alpha=0/75$) and ($\alpha=0/74$) were obtained. Descriptive and inferential statistics methods for data analysis were used. The findings showed that between coaching behavior and competitive motivation in Pro-league Handball players of Iran, there is significant positive correlation ($r=0/312$, $p<0/01$). The research findings on the importance of coaching behavior and its levels as one of the factors affecting competitive motivation in Pro-league Handball players underlined. Thus, it is recommended that coaches employ adequate leadership styles to improve athletic performance in their athletes.

Keywords: Coaching Behaviors, Competitive Motivation, Handball Players

INTRODUCTION

Successful accomplishment requires adequate management so that the influential contribution of effective management may not be simply overlooked in organizations [1]. When a group attempts to achieve a goal, a person usually undertakes the responsibility to lead the group as the first success factor. A leader should have the required leadership skills to lead the group towards its promised goal. In sports, a coach takes on this responsibility. Thus, coaching behavior and leadership style significantly affects the performance and achievement in the group [2]. In contemporary sports, coaching is an essential factor so that it has developed as a popular but difficult profession in a dynamic challenge over the last decades. The coaching primarily aims at developing athletic skills in the athletes. In this regard, one of the main coaching responsibilities is to nurture athletic skills in the sportspeople to achieve success [3]. To be effective, the coaches need to be familiar with various leadership styles. Successful coaches are those who know the leadership styles and decide how to use them. Normally, comparing with the coaches who do not know leadership styles or know the leadership styles but cannot use them, such coaches are more effective so that the athletes would perform better under their leadership [4].

Effective coaches significantly affect the performance, behavior and motivational characteristics of athletes. Sullivan and Kent (2003) refer to coaching effectiveness as the ability of a coach to influence athletic performance [5] (5). Athletes, coaches, team managers and fans relate team or athletic performance to their variable motivational characteristics. Different factors may influence motivation in the athletes. Leadership behavior and style is one of the main factors to which the researchers refer as the source of motivation [6-7]. Considering the role of coaching in

generating motivation in the athletes, it would be fruitful to know the effective behaviors that help coaches reinforce motivation in the athletes using different approaches. It is essential to have a competitive mindset to achieve success in sports competitions [8-9]. As a leader, a coach influences athletes' attitudes that generate behavioral motivations. Thus, it is essential to identify behaviors that significantly influence competitive motivation and achievements in the athletes [5].

A scrutiny of different levels of athletic competitions shows that the majority of athletes cannot perform to their potential due to their deficient competitive motivations though they have high levels of athletic skills, resulting in the reduced efficiency of athletic performance. Competitive motivation is a source that induces higher endeavor, competitiveness, responsibility and desire to enter a sports arena and fight the opponents. An athlete with high competitive motivation enjoys this considerable capital to continue training and endeavor [2-10-11]. Therefore, understanding this motivation can be considered not only as an important factor to select the qualified athletes but also as an influential factor to develop specific intervention methods to achieve the optimal values of motivational characteristics and maximize athletic attempts to achieve success [12].

Over the last years, many sports researchers have paid attention to leadership styles and its consequences in both individual and team sports. Most researchers believe that leadership styles would only be effective when coaches can clearly understand and attribute it to athletic motivational factors [13]. In this regard, Amorose and Horn (2000) reported that coaching behaviors directly influence motivation, self-perception, success, motivation and progress behaviors in the athletes so that they attributed athletic motivation to coaching behavior [14]. Amorose and Butcher (2006) contend that coaching behavior and style influences athletic motivation [15]. Willis and Lyane (1989) investigated three competition-related motivational scales including motive to achieve success, motive to avoid failure and power motive in college football players. The results showed that sports stars obtained higher scores in motive to achieve success and motive to avoid failure in comparison with non-stars. However, the difference was not significant between them in power motive. The researchers considered the high level of motive to avoid failure in the stars as unexpected and attributed it to a relatively poor record of failure in elite teams [16].

Hollemberk and Amorose (2005) reported that, among a variety of factors, coaching style and behavior had the most significant effect on athletic motivation. They found that autocratic behavior prevented the satisfaction of attributive characteristics in the athletes and reduced intrinsic motivation. Coaches that were much too directive tended to decrease the sense of independence in the athletes. Decision-making style, autocratic behaviors and democratic coaches indirectly influenced intrinsic motivation in the athletes [17]. Banak (2009) found a significant relationship between coaches' supportive behavior and athletes' independence on the one hand and a significant relationship between independence and athletic motivation on the other hand, which suggest the significant effect of coaching behavior on competitive motivation in the athletes [18].

The present study aims at investigating coaching behaviors and athletic motivation in Pro- league handball players in Iran. The study may help illuminate the current situation and inform the coaches and officials, who are mostly focused on physiological needs, to induce appropriate levels of motivation in the athletes through adopting adequate behavior. Evaluation of coaching behaviors can also help obtain precise information and employ the coaches who may effectively motivate the athletes. Besides, developing coach-training programs, drawing on research findings and access to objective results may help the coaches in this regard, which further justifies the present study. The study aims to provide applicable results so that the findings is hoped to inform the coaches to employ coaching styles and improve the motivational characteristics in athletes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of the research is descriptive and theoretical, which is conducted as a field study. The population of the study consisted of all Super League Handball Players of Iran. The sample size was considered equal to the population (N=168). The data was collected using Coaching Behavior Questionnaire developed by Martin and Barnez (1999) and Competitive motivation Questionnaire developed by Willis (1982). The content validity of the questionnaires was approved by ten professors of sports management. To calculate the reliability of the questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted. The results showed a reliability coefficient of $\alpha=0.75$ for Coaching Behavior Questionnaire and $\alpha=0.74$ for Competitive motivation Questionnaire, which indicated the consistency of measurement. A demographic data sheet was used to collect the data on personal information including age, level of education and work experience. SPSS software was used to analyze the data. As to the statistical measures, descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and tabulations were used to describe the data. Inferential statistics including Pearson correlation formula was used to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS

The results showed that over half of the participants (57%) had less than 25 years of age. 52.8 percent of the subjects had diploma or lower degrees and 42.9 percent had over eleven years of work experience.

As shown in Table 1, the mean positive reactive behavior was 3.61, the mean negative reactive behavior was 3.35 and the mean normal behavior was 3.43. As the maximum coaching behaviors score was found to be 3.52 out of the total 5, the players were found to evaluate the coaching behaviors as above average.

Table 1. Description of coaches' coaching behavior based on players' opinions

Statistic Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum	Minimum
Positive Reaction Behavior	3/61	2/59	4/72	2/56
Negative Reaction Behavior	3/35	3/05	4/66	2/62
Natural Behavior	3/43	3/37	4/50	2/51
Leadership Behavior of Coaches	3/52	3/03	4/74	2/45

As shown in Table 2, the mean success motivation, the mean motive to avoid failure and the mean power motivation scores were 3.73, 3.86 and 3.39, respectively. As the maximum competitive motivation score was 3.74 out of the total score 5, the athletes were found to have an above-average competitive motivation.

Table 2. Description of competition motivation based on players' opinions

Statistic Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum	Minimum
Motive to achieve success	3/73	2/86	4/18	1/35
Motivation to avoid failure	3/86	3/36	4/64	1/45
Power Motivation	3/39	5/15	4/83	1/17
Positive Reaction Behavior	3/74	3/42	4/66	1/52

Pearson correlation formula was used to examine the relationship between coaching behaviors and its subscales with competitive motivation and its subscales in the athletes playing in Pro-league handball teams (see Table 3).

Table 3. Relationship between coaches' coaching behavior with of competition motivation

Variables	Competition Motivation Levels			
	Success	avoid failure	Power	Total
Positive Reaction Behavior	0/128	0/219	0/185	0/212
Negative Reaction Behavior	0/305	0/347	0/310	0/318
Natural Behavior	0/196	0/278	0/249	0/264
Coaching Behavior of Coaches	0/332	0/322	0/308	0/312

Considering the level of significance and Pearson coefficient, a significant positive correlation was found among coaching behaviors in the coaches. The results also showed that coaching behaviors had the strongest correlation with success motivation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present findings showed that the subscales of competitive motivation, except for failure avoidance motivation, were above average in the Pro-league handball players. With higher power motivation and success motivation, athletes have better performance and influence on other team members providing that other performance factors such as psychological and physiological factors be controlled. On the other hand, with high level of motivation to avoid failure, athletes lose their creativity during competitions and fail to have their normal performance due to the apprehension of failure and its consequences. As will be discussed below, people who do not need considerable progress usually respond with avoidance emotions such as anxiety, defensiveness and failure apprehension. Therefore, since success motivation or progress is in a desirable state in the participants, they are expected to have low levels of failure avoidance motivation, which is inconsistent with the present findings. This finding corresponds to the findings of Willis and Lyane (1989) who reported that star athletes had higher scores of success motivation and motivation to avoid failure in comparison with non-stars [16]. They considered the higher levels of motivation to avoid failure in the star athletes as unexpected and attributed it to the poor failure record in elite teams. The inconsistency of the present findings may relate to the critical nature of competition between the handball teams at the top and bottom of the league table, which might have temporarily agitated the players due to failure apprehension. Considering the above discussion and the significance of concentration and creativity in handball, the

Pro-league handball coaches should understand the adverse consequences of motivation to avoid failure and take measures to reduce this type of motivation in the athletes. In this regard, the coaches may exhibit variable positive/negative reactive behaviors consistent with different conditions (contingency leadership principles).

The present findings showed a significant positive correlation between coaching positive reactive behaviors and competitive motivation in the athletes. This is consistent with the findings of Amorose and Horn (2001) and Banak (2009). As the motivational factors are critical to success in recreational and athletic activities and address the amount of effort athletes devote to achieve success, coaches should act as leaders to direct the athletes through effective, secure and certain routes and employ specific techniques to reinforce motivation in them [14-18].

The style or behavior that coaches exhibit is the main factor that influences athletic motivation and athletes' perception of coaches' leadership style. This finding suggests that the more coaches use positive reactive behaviors to give feedback to their athletes, the more athletes will be motivated to conform to the training principles in competitions as thought and required by the coaches, hence the improvement of athletic performance at the individual and team levels. Therefore, it is recommended that Pro-league handball coaches understand the outcomes of positive reactive behaviors and their effects on competitive motivation in the athletes and use them to give feedback and encourage their athletes. It is also recommended that coaches understand the factors affecting competitive motivation in the athletes in terms of individual characteristics and use them to improve success motivation in the athletes.

The present findings showed a relationship between negative reactive behaviors and competitive motivation. This is inconsistent with the findings of Banak (2009). This inconsistency may relate to the fact that many a factor influences athletic performance.

The current findings revealed a significant correlation between normal behaviors and competitive motivation in the athletes. As the normal behaviors are displayed in response to a particular activity so that they are not predictable, these behaviors may be thought of as contingency behaviors that coach's display consistent with the specific situation, and team and individual performance. An athlete expects a feedback that is consistent with his/her specific performance. In other words, athletes are mentally prepared to receive negative feedback with negative performance and positive feedback with positive performance. This is normal with an athlete who expects feedbacks consistent with his/her behavior. Therefore, it is unlikely that such coaching behaviors adversely influence success motivation in the athletes; rather athletes tend to use these behavioral feedbacks to improve their performance. In the end, considering the significant positive correlation between coaching behaviors and competitive motivation in the athletes, it is recommended that coaches employ adequate leadership styles to improve athletic performance in their athletes.

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