

Beyond The Pitch: Exploring The Impact Of Coaching Leadership And Competency On Athlete Satisfaction In Ethiopian Super League Football Teams

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Abstract:

Background: Coaching leadership and coaching competency are essential in molding athletes' experiences and satisfaction levels, which are key to their performance and general well-being. Transformational leadership, which involves inspiring and encouraging athletes, has been demonstrated to increase satisfaction by creating a supportive environment that motivates athletes to exceed their own expectations. The present research was undertaken to understand the effect of coaching leadership behavior and coaching competence influence athlete satisfaction among Ethiopian Super League football players.:

Materials and Methods The researcher selected a cross-sectional survey approach for this study to analyze the objectives set forth. A sample of 410 players was drawn from three zones, playing at different positions. The study validated scales by Chelladurai & Saleh (1980), Myers et al. (2006), and Chelladurai & Riemer (1997) to assess Coaching Leadership Behavior, Coaching Competency, and Athlete Satisfaction, respectively.

Results: Strong leadership behaviors, such as providing clear direction, motivation, and unwavering support, significantly influence athlete satisfaction. Coaching competence, while positively affecting athlete satisfaction, is less pronounced than leadership behaviors. The study suggests that creating a supportive and nurturing leadership environment is more important than possessing the necessary skills, as it enhances the relationship and satisfaction of athletes.

Conclusion: The study's results clearly show that coaching leadership style and coaching competency have a substantial impact on athlete satisfaction among Ethiopian Super League football players. By explaining the pivotal role of coaching leadership behavior and coaching competence, the research provides valuable insights for coaches, sports administrators, and stakeholders alike, emphasizing the critical need to prioritize leadership development and foster supportive coaching environments to enhance athlete satisfaction and overall performance.

Keyword: Coaching Leadership Behaviour, Coaching Compétence, Athlète Satisfaction, Ethiopia, Athlète

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I. Introduction

Coaches play an indispensable role within athletic organizations, as they facilitate an environment conducive to the maximization of each participant's capabilities. To bolster players' motivation and enhance their performance, instructors must attentively address not only their physical and tactical skills but also their psychosocial well-being. Achieving these multifaceted objectives necessitates coaches' understanding of the team's needs and the motivational dynamics among its members, enabling them to deploy appropriate coaching methodologies within a supportive, transparent, and collaborative setting. Consequently, coaches must exhibit apt leadership qualities tailored to the diverse circumstances of individuals and their environment. Outstanding

coaches demonstrate expertise in leadership principles by cultivating a fruitful coach-athlete relationship that inspires shared enthusiasm for collective goals and ultimate success (Weinberg & Gould, 2014).

The leadership behavior of the coach has a significant impact on athlete satisfaction and their ability to achieve and sustain peak athletic performance (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1997). Research consistently supports the idea that coach behavior plays a crucial role in various aspects of athletes' psychosocial responses, underscoring the importance of coaching style in influencing athlete performance (Enoksen & Christensen, 2014). The coach is responsible for guiding, teaching, and advising athletes on improving their physical, technical, tactical, and psychological skills in their sports. However, the specific way they do this is what defines their coaching style (Marcone, 2017). Coaches are recognized as significant motivators and wield considerable influence over the athletic aspirations of young athletes (Bateman et al., 2020). The experiences of young athletes are profoundly shaped by their interactions with sports coaches, which in turn impact the coach-athlete relationship and the outcomes of athletes' efforts (Sterling & Tafvelin, 2016).

Coaches play multifaceted roles as leaders, mentors, and motivators, significantly influencing their athletes' performance and overall satisfaction (Kim & Cruz, 2016). This influence is particularly pronounced in football, a sport of significant cultural and social importance in Ethiopia, where the dynamic between coaches and players is pivotal to team success and satisfaction (Mussema et al., 2021). This study delves into the intricate relationship between coaching leadership behavior, coaching competence, and athlete satisfaction within Ethiopian Super League football. While coaching effectiveness and athlete outcomes have been extensively studied across various sports contexts, there is a notable absence of research focusing on these dynamics within Ethiopian unique cultural and athletic milieu. We aim to offer valuable insights into the factors contributing to athlete contentment and success within Ethiopian Super League football teams, thereby enriching an understanding of this specific context.

Coaching leadership behavior is defined as how coaches engage with their players, including their communication style, motivational tactics, and ability to foster a positive team environment (Kim & Cruz, 2016). Previous research across different sports has identified a connection between effective coaching leadership and improved athlete performance, satisfaction, and overall team unity. However, the specific hints of coaching leadership behavior and its impact on athletes have yet to be thoroughly examined (Kim & Cruz, 2016). Moreover, coaching competence encompasses the cognitive, practical, and organizational skills demonstrated by coaches to effectively facilitate the development of athletes and promote team success (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). Competent coaches display expertise not only in the technical and strategic aspects of the sport but also in interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and the ability to adjust to athletes' diverse requirements. Understanding the influence of coaching competence on athlete satisfaction is essential for recognizing areas of strength and areas needing improvement within coaching methodologies in Ethiopian football (Yemiru, 2020).

Thus, this study aims to explore various aspects within the context of Ethiopian Super League football to investigate several important research questions. Specifically, it examines how coaching leadership behavior and coaching competence influence athlete satisfaction among Ethiopian Super League football players. Additionally, it seeks to identify the potential implications of these findings for the improvement of coaching methodologies and support systems for athletes within Ethiopian football teams.

II. Literature Review

Coaching Leadership Behaviour and Athlete Satisfaction

While alternative methodologies for examining leadership exist (Avolio & Gibbons, 1988; Barrow, 1977; Vroom & Jago, 2007), Chelladurai's (1990) Multidimensional Model of Sports Leadership emerges as a seminal framework for comprehending leadership dynamics within the domain of athletics. This conceptualization, rooted in a situational perspective, posits that the effectiveness of a leader in sports hinges upon the harmonious interaction between the leader and situational characteristics of group members. According to this model, performance and satisfaction are contingent upon the congruence among three facets of leadership: the behaviors demonstrated by the leader, behaviors preferred by members, and the behaviors expected from the leader. Leader behaviors can be influenced by various factors, including leader characteristics, member characteristics, and situational variables such as age, maturity of participants, organizational objectives, and nature of the task (Chelladurai et al., 1988). Positive sports performance and satisfaction are more likely to occur when a coach's leadership behaviors align with athletes' perceptions of their coach, encompassing their preferences, needs, and actual experiences.

According to research findings, a coach's leadership style has a substantial influence on athlete satisfaction. There exists a robust association between leadership behaviors and athletes' level of satisfaction with their sporting experience. The Multidimensional Model of Leadership in Sport (MML), as outlined by Chelladurai & Saleh in 1980, offers a framework to comprehend this relationship. Within the MML, three primary leadership behaviors are identified: task-oriented, supportive, and democratic. While each behavior holds significance, an

excessive focus on task-oriented conduct, characterized by strict directives and inflexible training methods, can prove detrimental, as highlighted by Jowett & Chaundy (2004).

Conversely, studies suggest that coaches adopting a balanced approach, often termed transformational leadership, tend to elicit higher satisfaction levels among athletes, as noted by Bass & Riggio (2006). Transformational leadership integrates elements from all three MML behaviors, providing clear guidance (task-oriented), nurturing a positive and supportive atmosphere (supportive), and potentially involving athletes in decision-making processes to some extent (democratic). Khan et al. (2024) support this assertion, demonstrating a positive correlation between transformational leadership and athlete satisfaction. Conversely, autocratic coaching styles, characterized by sole decision-making and a lack of support, are associated with diminished athlete satisfaction and even burnout, as evidenced by Jin et al. (2022).

In addition to the overarching concept of transformational leadership, the scholarly inquiry has delved into the ramifications of distinct leadership styles. Servant leadership, characterized by a focus on the growth and welfare of athletes, has demonstrated promise in this regard. Welty Peachey & Burton (2017) observed a favorable association between servant leadership and athlete satisfaction within team sports. Similarly, democratic leadership, which affords athletes a voice in decision-making processes, has been correlated with heightened satisfaction, particularly among younger athletes (Kim & Cruz, 2016). Nonetheless, the efficacy of a given leadership style may not be universally applicable. Coaches may find it necessary to tailor their approach according to variables such as athletes' age, level of experience, and the unique demands inherent to the sport in question.

Although extant research underscores the significance of coaching leadership styles in shaping athlete satisfaction, a pressing necessity exists for additional inquiry into how contextual factors, including cultural disparities, affect the efficacy of distinct leadership approaches. Appreciating these contextual intricacies can enable coaches to tailor their leadership styles adeptly, enhancing athlete satisfaction across diverse environments. Motivated by this imperative, the researchers conducted this study to ascertain how much coaching leadership styles impact athletes' satisfaction with their football clubs in Ethiopia. Consequently, the investigation aims to fill existing gaps in the literature and contribute valuable insights to the field. Thus,

Hypothesis 1: Coaching Leadership Styles significantly impact Athletes' Satisfaction levels among Ethiopian football players.

Coaching Competency and Athlete Satisfaction

In addition to leadership styles, the Competency of a coach significantly influences athlete satisfaction. This review examines current research regarding the impact of coaching competency on athlete satisfaction. Coaching competency encompasses a multifaceted skill set crucial for athlete development and satisfaction. Athletes who perceive their coach's technical proficiency are more inclined to feel confident and trust their training regimen. The capacity to motivate athletes, establish clear objectives, and deliver constructive Feedback is vital for cultivating a positive training environment and fostering athlete progress (Rozaidi et al., 2023). Competent coaches possess the ability to inspire athletes, thereby enhancing their satisfaction and enjoyment of the sport. Effective communication facilitates coaches in conveying instructions, providing Feedback, and establishing rapport with athletes (Coté & Fraser-Thomas, 2007). When athletes comprehend expectations and feel their voices are heard, it engenders a sense of trust and satisfaction with the coaching relationship.

Empirical evidence underscores a robust positive correlation between coaching competency and athlete satisfaction. Athletes who perceive their coaches as competent reap numerous advantages that bolster their satisfaction levels. Competent coaches adeptly design and implement effective training programs, fostering skill development and enhancing overall performance (Abraham & Collins, 2011). This tangible progress serves as a potent motivator for athletes, consequently amplifying their satisfaction with the coaching experience. Moreover, clear technical guidance and proficient communication from competent coaches instil a sense of confidence in athletes. Such trust in their coach's expertise cultivates greater self-assurance in their abilities, thereby augmenting satisfaction levels. Furthermore, the creation of a positive and supportive training environment by competent coaches renders the overall experience more enjoyable for athletes. This heightened enjoyment factor translates into elevated levels of athlete satisfaction and a heightened propensity for sustained participation.

The extant literature recognizes the considerable influence of coaching competency on athlete satisfaction; however, a discernible gap persists in comprehending the precise mechanisms through which coaching Competency shapes athlete satisfaction across varied contexts and demographic groups. Despite empirical indications of a positive correlation between coaching competency and athlete satisfaction, scholarly investigations into the intricate interplay between coaching competency and athlete satisfaction in diverse sporting settings are scarce. Furthermore, there is a lack of research examining potential moderating factors, including cultural disparities, that may affect the association between coaching competency and athlete satisfaction. To bridge these research gaps, researchers propose:

Hypothesis 2: Coaching Competency has a significant impact on Athlete Satisfaction levels among Ethiopian football players.

The primary focus of the present study was to ascertain the extent to which Ethiopian football teams employed Coaching Leadership behavior and Competency and its impact on athlete satisfaction within their respective clubs. Consequently, by addressing the pivotal variables concerning satisfaction linked with leadership behaviors and Competency, this investigation aimed to contribute towards bridging the existing gap within the literature.

III. Material And Methods

This survey was conducted on Ethiopian super league male football clubs from November 2022 to October 2023. The researcher reached all 41 Super League clubs in the chosen location where the competition took place. This facilitated the easy acquisition of information about teams and players in the selected cities for data collection. The study comprised 410 male sample football players who competed during the 2022/23 season.

Study Design: The researcher selected a cross-sectional survey approach for this study to analyze the objectives set forth.

Study Location: Ethiopia is a landlocked country in the Horn of Africa, the continent's eastern section. It is surrounded by Eritrea to the north, Djibouti and Somalia to the east, Kenya to the south, South Sudan to the west, and Sudan to the northwest. The 2022-23 Ethiopian Premier League season featured 41 teams from five regions (Adis Ababa City Administration, Southwest Region, Amhara Region, South Region, and Oromia Region). The competition is predominantly based in several cities throughout Ethiopia, with matches held at the following stadiums: Hawassa, Jima, and Hosana.

Study Duration: November 2022 to October 2023.

Population of The Study: The Ethiopian Super League had 41 clubs separated into three zones for the 2022-2023 season. Zones one and two have a total of 14 clubs, while zone three has 13. In total, there are 41 clubs. Furthermore, according to the Ethiopian Football Federation's standards, each Super League team can register up to 30 players who have been accepted by the federation for a single year of participation. The study included 1230 players from the Ethiopian Super League.

Sample size: The study had a sample size of 410 male football player.

Sample size calculation: The total sample size was determined as 410 by using Daniel Soper's sample determination formula for structural equation modelling (Soper, 2023), with an expected effect size of 0.28, a desired statistical power level of 0.95, and a probability level of 0.05. According to this formula, the recommended sample size is set at 384. Thus, to ensure equitable representation, 410 players were sampled. A total of 410 players comprised 140 in Zone One, 140 in Zone Two, and 130 in Zone Three, with each being involved in a competitive sports league. The division on Zones One and Two had 42 defenders, 42 midfielders, 42 attackers, and 14 goalkeepers. Conversely, there were 39 defenders, 39 midfielders, 39 attackers, and 13 goalkeepers within Zone Three.

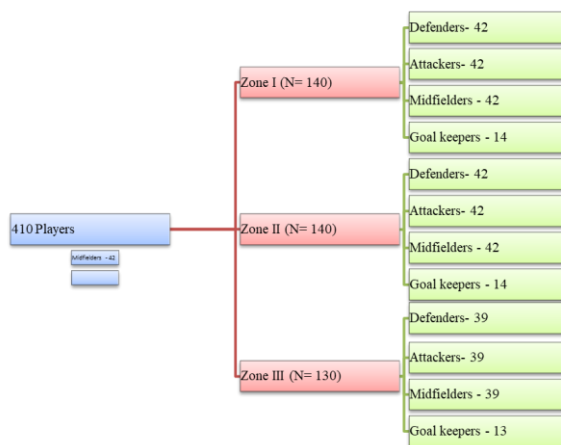


Diagram 1: Sample Size Distribution
Source: Authors sample size calculation

Inclusion Criteria:

1. The research was covered all the male players who compete in the Ethiopian super league Football in the year 2022-2023.
2. These players' training experiences at the club lasted for a total of six months was included.
3. The player did not sustain any injuries during competition season.

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Players who have been enrolled for less than three months were excluded from this research.
2. Players with previous injuries up to three months were not taken into account.

Procedure Methodology

The study comprised two distinct phases. In the first phase, the researcher met with each team's head coach in person to seek consent and assistance. During the second phase, the questionnaires were delivered to players and gathered before or after sessions to ensure the absence of coaches during the postseason of training. This approach was implemented to afford players sufficient opportunities to share their insights, taking into account their interactions with coaches throughout the regular season. To evaluate Coaching Leadership Behavior, a scale consisting of 40 items ranging from 1-never to 5-always was developed by Chelladurai & Saleh (1980) and was validated for use in the current study. Additionally, to assess Coaching Competency, the study validated a scale comprising 24 items ranging from 1-extremely dissatisfied to 5-extremely satisfied developed by Myers et al. (2006). Furthermore, to gauge Athlete Satisfaction levels, a scale derived from Chelladurai & Riemer's (1997) classification of facets of Athlete satisfaction, consisting of 56 items, ranging from 1 – 5, representing strongly disagree to agree strongly, was also validated for inclusion in the present study.

Statistical Analysis

The final analysis utilized Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through Smart PLS Software version 4.0, incorporating 395 accurate responses. PLS-SEM was chosen due to its suitability for assessing the second-order constructs of Coaching Leadership Behavior and Coaching Competency within the conceptual model using reflective modeling. Smart PLS is widely acknowledged for its flexibility in handling intricate models, as evidenced by various studies (Hair et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2014). This study aimed to investigate the impact of coaching leadership behavior and coaching competency on the satisfaction levels of Ethiopian football players, employing the PLS-SEM technique.

IV. Result

Descriptive Analysis

The study's descriptive statistics are thoroughly documented in Table 1, with all participants surveyed belonging to Super League clubs. The demographic analysis reveals that defenders comprised 30% of the sample, while midfielders and forwards constituted 30% each. Furthermore, goalkeepers accounted for 10% of the athletes in the sample

Measurement Model Assessments

The research explored the specifications of the outer model through the application of internal reliability and convergent validity assessments. Within the framework of partial least squares structural equation modeling, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed to examine Coaching leadership behavior using reflective-reflective measurement evaluations as suggested by Myers et al. (2006). Before initiating any statistical analysis, a sampling adequacy test (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test) and a data normality test (Bartlett's test of sphericity) were executed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy yielded a value of 0.936, indicating appropriateness for exploratory factor analysis. According to Kaiser's (1974) guidelines, a KMO value above 0.70 is considered adequate.

| Variable | Type of Scale | Source | Number of Dimensions | Number of Items | Measurement Model Estimations | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|----------|----------|-------|-----------|----------|-------|-------|
| | | | | | 1st Order | | | | 2nd Order | | | |
| | | | | | Reflective indicator Loadings | α | ρ_A | CR | AVE | α | CR | AVE |
| Coaching Leadership Behavior | 2 nd Order Reflective - Reflective Scale | Chelladurai & Saleh (1980) | 5 | 40 | 0.767-0.869 | 0.876 | 0.881 | 0.910 | 0.670 | 0.941 | 0.893 | 0.628 |
| Coaching Competence | 2 nd Order Reflective - | Myers et al. (2006) | 4 | 24 | 0.527 - 0.882 | 0.903 | 0.920 | 0.924 | 0.581 | 0.938 | 0.813 | 0.522 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---|----|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---|---|---|
| | Reflective Scale | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Athlete Satisfaction | Zero Order | Chelladurai & Riemer (1997) | - | 56 | 0.786 – 0.900 | 0.925 | 0.929 | 0.942 | 0.729 | - | - | - |

Notes: α , Cronbach's Alpha; ρ_A , Rho Alpha; CR, Composite Reliability; AVE, Average Variance Explained

Table 1: Summary of Measurement Model (1st and 2nd order) Estimations.

Source: Authors' Calculations; measurement model

According to Hair et al. (2018), to verify the validity of a reflective measurement model through PLS-SEM, the following assessment must be conducted: Reflective Indicator Loadings, Internal Consistency Reliability, Convergent Validity, and Discriminant Validity. Following Exploratory Factor Analysis, 40 items of the Coaching Leadership Behavior Scale underwent Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using SMART PLS 4 to assess the fit of the extracted factors to the sample. The CFA was conducted on a sample of 395 players, and all items were retained for analysis. Table B demonstrates that the Reflective indicator loadings for all items fell within the acceptable range of 0.40 to 0.70 (Hair et al., 2014).

The researchers delved deeper into the internal and outer model specifications, specifically emphasizing internal reliability and concurrent validity assessments. Within the framework of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was utilized, employing reflective-reflective measurement evaluations to assess Coaching Competency as recommended by Myers et al. (2006). Before statistical analysis, both Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's tests were conducted to ensure sampling adequacy and data normality. The results indicated high adequacy (KMO = 0.925) and significance ($p < .001$) for factor analysis. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation identified four factors, explaining 81.24% cumulative variance. Factor loadings exceeded 0.50, and communalities surpassed the 0.5 threshold, indicating factors including Game Strategy Competency, Technique Competency, Motivation Competency, and Character-Building Competency. Reflective indicator loadings of all items fell within acceptable ranges, and discriminant validity was evaluated using HTMT criteria, aligning with Hair et al.'s (2019) guidelines. Higher-order Coaching Competency construct reliability and validity were confirmed through CFA, Internal Consistency, and Convergent Validity assessments, meeting established criteria (Hair, Jr. et al., 2006). Table 1 highlights the estimates of 1st and 2nd order measurement models.

Structural Model Assessments

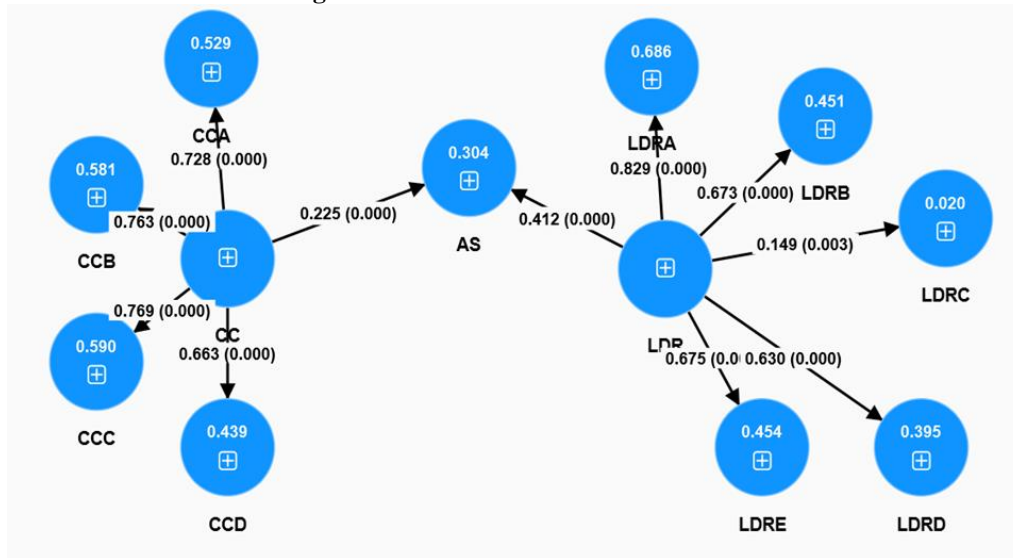
In the evaluation of structural models, researchers investigated the relationship between constructs (Hair et al., 2018). The study's hypotheses were tested using bootstrapping with 5000 iterations without sign change (Hair et al., 2014). Initially, the structural inner model assessed each set of predictor constructs individually using a formative measurement model (Cassel et al., 1999). Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were calculated for this purpose and found to be below 3.33 (Diamantopoulos et al., 2008). As reported by Hair et al. (2014), the VIFs for Coaching Leadership Behavior (1.287) and Coaching Competence (1.287) concerning Athlete Satisfaction were below the threshold, indicating no collinearity issues. After examining collinearity within the inner model, the researchers evaluated the significance and relevance of path coefficients using the PLS Algorithm bootstrapping method with 5000 subsamples. Coaching leadership behavior was conceptualized as a second-order composite, combining latent variable scores from five reflective constructs. At a significance level of 1%, the outer weights of each second-order composite were determined to be statistically significant and distinguishable from zero (Henseler et al., 2014).

Similarly, coaching competency was assessed as a reflective evaluation comprising latent variable scores from four reflective constructs (also a second-order composite). The outer weights of each second-order composite were found to be significant at the 1% level and different from zero. The evaluations of the structural model are presented in Figure 1.

The coefficient of determination (R²) for coaching leadership behavior demonstrated a notably moderate to high value, reaching 41.2 percent. In the domain of behavioral sciences, any R² value equal to or surpassing 0.20 is considered significant (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2017). Notably, in this study, the satisfaction levels of athletes were significantly influenced by coaching leadership behavior. Furthermore, the goodness of fit was evaluated utilizing the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) global fit indices. In contemporary research employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) models, crucial global model fit indices such as SRMR play a pivotal role in assessing the model's goodness of fit (Hair et al., 2019). The study unveiled an SRMR value of 0.012, well below the threshold of 0.08, indicative of the model's robust explanatory capacity (Henseler et al., 2014). The comprehensive elucidation of structural model assessment and hypothesis testing is presented in Table 2. The results from Table 2 unveiled that coaching leadership behavior emerged as the primary predictor, significantly positively impacting athlete satisfaction among Ethiopian football players ($\beta = 0.412, p < 0.001$), thus supporting H1. Furthermore, coaching competence was identified as the second

most influential factor in athlete satisfaction among Ethiopian football players ($\beta=0.225$, $p<0.001$), thereby supporting H2.

Figure 1: Structural Model Assessments



Source: Authors' Calculations of PLS- SEM

| Hypothesis | Path Relationships | Std. Beta | Sample Mean (M) | t-values | P values | CI 2.5% | CI 97.5% | Decisions |
|------------|--|-----------|-----------------|----------|----------|---------|----------|-----------|
| H1 | coaching leadership behavior ---> athlete satisfaction | 0.412 | 0.420 | 8.954 | 0.000 | 0.327 | 0.506 | Supported |
| H2 | coaching competence ---> athlete satisfaction | 0.225 | 0.229 | 4.115 | 0.000 | 0.118 | 0.331 | Supported |

Note: CI, Confidence Interval

Table 2: The Results of Structural Equation modelling.

Source: Authors' Calculations; Path Co-efficient

V. Conclusion Recommendation & Implication

Conclusion

This study delved into the intricate dynamics between coaching leadership behavior, coaching competence, and athlete satisfaction within the realm of Ethiopian football. The findings unearthed compelling insights, shedding light on the profound impact of coaching practices on athlete satisfaction. First and foremost, the research underscored the pivotal role of coaching leadership behavior in shaping athlete satisfaction. The results unequivocally demonstrated that coaches who exhibit strong leadership behaviors wield a significant and positive influence on athlete satisfaction. This influence manifests through various facets such as providing clear direction, fostering motivation, and offering unwavering support to athletes. Essentially, coaches who embody effective leadership qualities are instrumental in cultivating an environment conducive to athlete satisfaction. This validates Hypothesis 1 (H1), reinforcing the notion that effective coaching leadership behaviors results in athlete satisfaction. This study aligns with the research conducted by Pilus & Saadan (2009) which demonstrated a preference among university team players for training and instruction leadership styles over individual training. Coaches exhibit various coaching leadership styles, and dissatisfaction with these styles among players can lead to issues with team cohesion and potential player attrition (McLean et al., 2005). Consequently, the coaching style is crucial in maintaining harmony within the sports team.

Furthermore, the study also elucidated the impact of coaching competence on athlete satisfaction. While coaching competence exhibited a positive effect on athlete contentment, its influence appeared to be comparatively less pronounced than that of coaching leadership behavior. This suggests that while possessing the requisite coaching skills and expertise is undoubtedly crucial, the creation of a supportive and nurturing leadership environment takes precedence in fostering athlete satisfaction within the Ethiopian football context. This finding corroborates Hypothesis 2 (H2), highlighting the significance of coaching competence while also emphasizing the paramount importance of leadership behaviors in ensuring athlete well-being and satisfaction. The findings of the study are in sync with the research of Soto-García et al. (2023). They suggested that athletes give importance to the coach's competence, as it enhances their relationship and satisfaction with the coach, ultimately leading to

greater athlete satisfaction. Coach must adopt a motivating role in order to boost athlete satisfaction (Fransen et al., 2018).

This study emphasizes the intricate relationship between coaching practices and athlete satisfaction, especially within the unique context of Ethiopian football. It highlights the significant impact of coaching leadership behavior and coaching competence, providing important insights for coaches, sports administrators, and stakeholders. The research stresses the need to prioritize leadership development and create supportive coaching environments to boost athlete satisfaction and overall performance. By focusing on these key areas, the study offers guidance for improving outcomes in sports settings.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations emerge for coaches, athletic programs, and future research endeavors. For coaches, the study underscores the importance of developing and refining coaching leadership skills. This entails actively seeking opportunities for leadership development through workshops, mentorship, and online resources to enhance their ability to create a positive and supportive team environment. Additionally, coaches should prioritize athlete well-being by fostering open communication, providing constructive feedback, and celebrating team accomplishments, thereby contributing to overall athlete satisfaction and performance. Athletic programs can support coaches in this endeavor by integrating coaching leadership development into coach training programs and establishing clear expectations for coaching leadership behaviors. Regular gathering of athlete feedback can also aid in monitoring athlete satisfaction and identifying areas for improvement within the program structure. For future research, exploring additional factors beyond coaching leadership and competence that influence athlete satisfaction could provide a more comprehensive understanding of athlete well-being. Furthermore, investigating the effectiveness of different coaching leadership styles within the Ethiopian football context and examining the mediating or moderating effects of specific variables on the relationship between coaching leadership and athlete satisfaction can offer valuable insights for optimizing coaching practices and enhancing athlete outcomes.

Limitation & Future Research Suggestion

While this study highlights the importance of coaching leadership for Ethiopian Super League football players' satisfaction, limitations exist. The sample size and design restrict generalizability and establish causality. Additionally, self-reported data may introduce bias. Future research can address this by including more extensive, more diverse samples, employing longitudinal designs, and utilizing multiple data collection methods. Furthermore, exploring how cultural contexts influence these relationships is crucial.

Looking ahead, exciting research possibilities emerge. Investigating the mechanisms by which coaching behaviors lead to satisfaction, such as through athlete motivation or team cohesion, would provide valuable insights. Additionally, examining factors like athlete demographics that influence the effectiveness of coaching styles could inform tailored coaching interventions. Conducting comparative studies across different sports and cultures would broaden our understanding of these relationships. In contrast, intervention studies testing strategies for improving coaching practices and athlete satisfaction could lead to evidence-based coaching approaches. By addressing limitations and pursuing these future directions, researchers and coaches can work together to refine coaching practices that optimize athlete satisfaction and create a more positive sporting environment.

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