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The Relationship between Coaches' Leadership Style and Athletes' Satisfaction Toward Coach and Sports Performance Satisfaction at National and Provincial Levels

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Abstract. This study aims to determine the relationship between coaches' leadership style and athletes' satisfaction toward their coach and sports performance satisfaction among junior athletes at the national and provincial levels in West Java. The research employed a quantitative descriptive approach with an associative survey design. The sample consisted of 47 athletes enrolled in the *Sentra Pembinaan Olahragawan Berbakat Nasional (SPOBNas)* and *Satuan Pendidikan Olahragawan Daerah (SPOBDA)* of West Java, selected through purposive sampling. Research instruments included the *Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS)*, *Satisfaction Scale for Athletes (SSA)*, and *Athlete's Subjective Performance Scale (ASPS)*. Data were analyzed using Spearman's Rank correlation test with a significance level of 0.05. The results revealed a strong and significant positive relationship between the coach's leadership style and athletes' satisfaction toward the coach ($r_s = 0.684$; $p < 0.01$), but no significant relationship between leadership style and satisfaction toward sports performance ($r_s = 0.151$; $p > 0.05$). These findings indicate that coaches' leadership plays a crucial role in shaping athletes' interpersonal satisfaction, whereas performance satisfaction is more influenced by internal factors such as motivation and personal experience. The study highlights the importance of adopting adaptive, participative, and humanistic leadership styles in the coaching of young athletes.

Keywords: coaching leadership style; athlete satisfaction; performance satisfaction; SPOBNas, SPOBDA

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INTRODUCTION

Sports play a vital role in national development, serving not only as a platform for competitive achievement but also as a means of character building, mental strengthening, and improving the overall quality of life in society (Shrinivasa 2018). Developed nations have demonstrated that a strong commitment to establishing systematic sports development programs significantly contributes to athletes' success and reinforces national identity (Ferguson 2022). In other words, sports can be regarded as a strategic pillar of national development because they encompass multiple dimensions ranging from improving public health (Ouyang, Lee, and Ko 2023). and shaping national identity to achieving accomplishments that elevate a country's reputation on the international stage (Rahadian and Ma 2021). Therefore, structured and professional sports development has become an essential component of Indonesia's human development strategy.

In the context of sports development, a coach's leadership plays a crucial role in determining the success of training processes and athletic performance. Coaches are not only responsible for teaching technical skills but also act as motivators, mentors, and leaders who influence athletes' mental readiness, psychological resilience, and competitive performance (Wijayanti et al. 2024). A coach's effectiveness in managing athletes largely depends on their ability to apply leadership styles that are both adaptive and aligned with athletes' individual needs (Soto Garcia et al. 2021).

Coaching leadership style refers to the approach used by coaches to influence, guide, and motivate athletes in achieving training and competition goals. Based on the Leadership Scale for Sports (Chelladurai and Saleh 1980), coaching leadership comprises several key dimensions: training and instruction, democratic behavior, autocratic behavior, social support, and positive feedback. Each dimension contributes uniquely to the dynamics of the coach–athlete relationship. Coaches who can balance technical demands with emotional support and open communication tend to create a more positive training environment, thereby enhancing athletes' motivation and satisfaction.

Athlete satisfaction with the coach reflects the athlete's subjective evaluation of the coach's attitudes, behaviors, and decisions during the training process (Caliskan and Ozge Baydar 2016). This includes the extent to which athletes feel appreciated,

supported, and involved in their development. Satisfaction toward the coach is an important indicator of the quality of the interpersonal relationship between coach and athlete, as it directly affects athletes' motivation and commitment to training. Meanwhile, satisfaction with sports performance refers to athletes' subjective perception of the quality and outcomes of their performance during training and competition (Nahum 2016). This aspect is not only related to objective achievements such as medals or rankings but also to psychological experiences, confidence, and perceptions of the training process itself.

In practice, many coaches still adopt leadership approaches that do not align with athletes' characteristics or needs (Ntomali et al. 2017). Such mismatches may result in lower athlete satisfaction toward the coach and may even influence how athletes evaluate their own performance (Jowett and Cockerill 2003). When coaches fail to foster open communication or provide adequate support, athletes often experience a decline in motivation, confidence, and training commitment. Previous studies have shown that coaching leadership style is significantly associated with the level of athlete satisfaction (Jin et al. 2022). Coaches who foster a positive training atmosphere, offer individual attention, and demonstrate empathy toward athletes tend to enhance both satisfaction with the coach and satisfaction with sports performance.

Given these considerations, this study aims to examine the relationship between coaching leadership style and two forms of athlete satisfaction satisfaction toward the coach and satisfaction with sports performance among junior athletes at the national and provincial levels in West Java. This approach seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the coach's leadership role, not only in shaping athletes' affective satisfaction but also in influencing their subjective perceptions of performance quality. The findings are expected to offer empirical insights into how coaching leadership contributes to improving athlete satisfaction and the quality of sports development, while also serving as input for developing effective leadership strategies in regional and national sports programs.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach with an associative research design. The descriptive quantitative method was used to present data as they are, while the associative approach aimed to describe the existing phenomena and examine

the relationships between variables. The survey method was chosen as it was considered appropriate for gathering data on athletes' perceptions and assessments of their coaches' leadership styles as well as their level of satisfaction in the sports development process effectively and efficiently (Sugiyono 2020).

The population of this study comprised all junior athletes at the national and provincial levels who participated in the training programs at the National Center for Talented Athletes Development (SPOBNas) and the Regional Center for Talented Athletes Development (SPOBDA) in West Java. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. These criteria included athletes who were actively involved in the development program, had at least one year of training experience, and were categorized as junior athletes at either the national or provincial level. The total number of samples was determined based on the availability and conformity of athletes who met these criteria, ensuring proportional representation of the population.

The research instruments consisted of three main components corresponding to the variables of the study. The coaching leadership style variable was measured using the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) developed by (Chelladurai and Saleh 1980). which assesses five dimensions of coaching behavior: training and instruction, democratic behavior, autocratic behavior, social support, and positive feedback. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The LSS has been widely used and proven to have high validity and reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.70 to 0.85. The athlete satisfaction with coach variable was measured using the first factor of the Satisfaction Scale for Athletes (SSA) developed by (Caliskan and Ozge Baydar 2016), which evaluates athletes' perceptions of coaching strategies, tactics, attention, and treatment during training sessions. This instrument demonstrated high internal consistency with a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = 0.89$. Meanwhile, the satisfaction with sports performance variable was assessed using the Athlete's Subjective Performance Scale (ASPS) developed by (Nahum 2016). This scale consists of six items that measure athletes' subjective satisfaction with their own sports performance during their most recent training or competition period. Each item was rated on a scale from 1 ("very dissatisfied") to 10 ("very satisfied"), and

the ASPS has shown satisfactory reliability with a reported Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.80.

The data collection process was carried out after obtaining official permission from the management of SPOBNas and SPOBDA in West Java. The researcher first explained the purpose and procedures of the study to both coaches and athletes. Questionnaires were then distributed directly to athletes who met the inclusion criteria, and the data collection was conducted under the supervision of the researcher to ensure that each item was well understood by the respondents. Once all questionnaires had been completed, the responses were carefully checked for completeness and consistency before being processed for analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and non-parametric correlation analysis. Descriptive statistics were employed to provide an overview of each variable coaching leadership style, athlete satisfaction with the coach, and satisfaction with sports performance. To examine the relationships between variables, the Spearman's rank correlation test was applied at a significance level of 0.05. The results of this analysis were used to determine the extent to which the coaches' leadership styles were associated with athletes' satisfaction toward their coaches and their satisfaction with sports performance at both the national and provincial levels.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Before presenting the results, this section outlines the findings derived from the data analysis related to the relationship between coaches' leadership style, athletes' satisfaction toward the coach, and satisfaction toward performance. The data analysis process began with a normality test to determine whether the variables followed a normal distribution, followed by descriptive statistical analysis to describe the characteristics and tendencies of each variable. Based on the normality test results, non-parametric statistical analysis using the Spearman Rank correlation was employed because several variables did not meet the assumption of normality. The following tables present the detailed outcomes of the normality test and descriptive analysis for each variable in this study.

Table 1. Normality Test (Shapiro–Wilk)

Variables	N	Sig. (Shapiro–Wilk)	Description
Coaching Leadership Style (LSS)	47	0.086	Normal
Athlete Satisfaction toward Coach (SSA)	47	0.005	Non-normal
Athlete Satisfaction toward Performance (ASPS)	47	0.000	Non-normal

The results of the normality test in Table 1 show that the Leadership Style (LSS) variable has a significance value of 0.086 (> 0.05), meaning that the data are normally distributed. However, the Athlete Satisfaction toward Coach (SSA) and Athlete Satisfaction toward Performance (ASPS) variables show p-values below 0.05, which indicates that both are not normally distributed. Therefore, the data analysis for the relationship among these variables used the Spearman Rank correlation test, which is more suitable for non-parametric data.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variables / Dimensions	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Coaching Leadership Style (LSS)					
– Training & Instruction	47	39	65	55.43	6.26
– Democratic Behaviour	47	17	45	32.32	6.06
– Autocratic Behaviour	47	5	25	12.60	5.14
– Social Support	47	17	40	30.49	5.38
– Positive Feedback	47	13	25	20.02	3.42
Athlete Satisfaction toward Coach (SSA)	47	22	56	44.72	8.94
Athlete Satisfaction toward Performance (ASPS)	47	26	60	51.91	8.48

Describes the distribution of each variable. The Training and Instruction dimension has the highest mean score (M = 55.43), indicating that most coaches at SPOBNas and SPOBDA tend to emphasize technical guidance, structured training, and instruction clarity. The Democratic Behaviour dimension (M = 32.32) also shows a high average, reflecting that coaches frequently involve athletes in decision-making and team

discussions. Conversely, the Autocratic Behaviour dimension has the lowest mean (M = 12.60), suggesting that authoritarian tendencies are minimal in the coaching context.

The dimensions of Social Support (M = 30.49) and Positive Feedback (M = 20.02) show that coaches provide adequate emotional support and encouragement during practice. For the dependent variables, Athlete Satisfaction toward Coach (SSA) averages 44.72, showing that athletes are generally satisfied with their coach's leadership style. Meanwhile, Athlete Satisfaction toward Performance (ASPS) averages 51.91, suggesting that athletes feel fairly satisfied with their personal performance and development outcomes.

Table 3. Spearman's Rank Correlation among Main Variables

Relationship between Variables	r_s	Sig. (p)	Interpretation
LSS ↔ SSA			
Training and Instruction ↔ SSA	0.740**	0.000	significant
Democratic Behaviour ↔ SSA	0.684**	0.000	significant
Autocratic Behaviour ↔ SSA	-0.030**	0.842	non-significant
Social Support ↔ SSA	0.703**	0.000	significant
Positive Feedback ↔ SSA	0.696**	0.000	significant
LSS ↔ ASPS			
Training and Instruction ↔ ASPS	0.115**	0.443	non-significant
Democratic Behaviour ↔ ASPS	0.116**	0.438	non-significant
Autocratic Behaviour ↔ ASPS	0.120**	0.422	non-significant
Social Support ↔ ASPS	0.047**	0.754	non-significant
Positive Feedback ↔ ASPS	0.107**	0.475	non-significant

The correlation analysis in Table 3 shows that Training and Instruction, Democratic Behaviour, Social Support, and Positive Feedback each have a strong and significant positive correlation with Athlete Satisfaction toward Coach (SSA) ($p < 0.01$). This means that when coaches provide structured training, maintain open communication, give emotional support, and provide constructive feedback, athletes tend to feel more satisfied with their coaches. Meanwhile, Autocratic Behaviour shows no significant correlation ($r_s = -0.030$, $p = 0.842$), meaning that a rigid or authoritarian leadership approach is not positively perceived by athletes. In contrast, all dimensions of the Leadership Style (LSS) variable show non-significant relationships with Athlete Satisfaction toward Performance (ASPS) ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that while leadership

behaviors influence satisfaction toward the coach, they do not directly affect athletes' satisfaction with their individual performance.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the coach's leadership style has a strong and significant positive relationship with athletes' satisfaction toward their coach, with a correlation coefficient of $r_s = 0.684$ ($p < 0.01$). This finding illustrates that the more effective the leadership style applied by the coach, the higher the level of satisfaction athletes feel toward their coach. It reinforces the notion that coaching leadership plays a pivotal role in creating a positive, harmonious, and athlete-centered training environment. These results are consistent with the Multidimensional Model of Leadership developed by (Chelladurai and Saleh 1980), which posits that the effectiveness of leadership in sports depends on the congruence between the coach's behavior, athlete characteristics, and situational demands. When coaches are able to adapt their leadership style to the needs and preferences of their athletes, stronger interpersonal relationships are formed, leading to greater athlete satisfaction. In this context, coaching behaviors that balance instructional guidance, social support, and open two-way communication are highly influential in shaping athletes' satisfaction levels.

This finding is supported by (Jin et al. 2022), who found that democratic and participative leadership styles enhance athlete satisfaction and motivation during training. Coaches who encourage athletes' active involvement in decision-making, remain open to feedback, and build warm and supportive communication tend to create a healthier training climate and strengthen mutual trust. (Hani et al. 2022) emphasized that the dimensions of *training and instruction*, *social support*, and *positive feedback* are the primary determinants of athlete satisfaction with the coach, as they foster feelings of safety, appreciation, and motivation. Thus, the findings of the present study reinforce the understanding that athlete satisfaction with the coach is not solely determined by technical competence in delivering instruction, but also by the coach's ability to build positive social and emotional relationships with athletes.

In the context of athlete development at SPOBNas and SPOBDA West Java, the implementation of an adaptive and humanistic leadership style becomes particularly essential, considering that young athletes are still undergoing psychological and emotional development. Coaches who demonstrate empathy, provide consistent support,

and maintain open communication are more likely to foster satisfaction and loyalty among athletes toward the training process.

In contrast to the relationship described above, the results also show that the coach's leadership style does not have a significant relationship with satisfaction toward sports performance, with a correlation coefficient of $r_s = 0.151$ and a significance value of $p = 0.311$. Although a positive trend was observed, the correlation was weak and statistically insignificant. This suggests that athletes' perceptions of their own performance are not entirely determined by the coach's leadership style.

This phenomenon can be explained by the Self-Determination Theory proposed by (Mageau and Vallerand 2003), which emphasizes that individuals' perceptions of performance are more strongly influenced by internal factors such as intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and self-regulation. Athletes who possess high levels of self-regulation and feel a sense of control over their achievements tend to evaluate their performance more positively, regardless of the coach's leadership style. In other words, while coaches play a crucial role in fostering motivation and a supportive environment, internal psychological factors contribute more significantly to athletes' satisfaction with their own performance.

As said by other experts (Lochbaum et al. 2023), also reported similar findings, showing that self-efficacy has a moderate positive relationship with athletic performance ($r = 0.31$), indicating that a strong sense of self-belief enhances athletes' positive perceptions of their performance, consistent with the role of self-regulation in maintaining motivation and performance evaluation. Furthermore, (Zhang and Rhim 2024). found that the quality of the coach–athlete relationship significantly influences athletes' behavior and motivation, but this effect is mediated by the fulfillment of psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. (Castillo et al. 2014) discovered that a positive coach–athlete relationship plays an important role in improving athletes' psychological well-being and confidence through perceived and received coach support, although it does not always have a direct effect on performance perception. These findings indicate that while positive interactions with coaches can strengthen emotional well-being, athletes' performance satisfaction is more strongly shaped by internal factors such as motivation, self-efficacy, and competitive experience, as well as external factors like

competitive pressure and family support, which jointly influence how athletes evaluate their own performance.

Overall, the results of this study suggest that coaching leadership plays a major role in shaping interpersonal satisfaction between coaches and athletes, but does not necessarily have a direct impact on perceived sports performance. This provides an important implication for coaching practice in athlete development institutions such as SPOBNas and SPOBDA that the enhancement of coaching leadership should not only focus on technical and tactical competencies, but also on social and psychological aspects. Coaches must strive to balance instructional approaches with emotional support in order to create a training environment that is not only productive but also meaningful for athletes' personal growth and development.

In conclusion, the success of sports development is determined not only by the effectiveness of leadership style but also by the coach's ability to understand, adapt to, and fulfill athletes' psychological needs. Satisfaction toward the coach serves as a crucial foundation for building long-term commitment and competitive spirit, whereas satisfaction with sports performance is largely formed through self-reflection, internal motivation, and ongoing competitive experience.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study revealed that the coaching leadership style has a strong and significant positive relationship with athlete satisfaction toward the coach, but shows no significant relationship with athlete satisfaction toward sports performance. These results emphasize that the effectiveness of a coach's leadership is not solely determined by technical ability but also by interpersonal competence, including communication skills, emotional support, and the ability to motivate athletes. Athlete satisfaction toward the coach is shaped by mutual respect, trust, and open interaction between the coach and athlete, while satisfaction with performance is more closely related to internal psychological factors such as intrinsic motivation, personal experience, and self-confidence. Overall, this study underscores the importance of a balanced leadership approach that integrates both task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviors in coaching young athletes.

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