

The Role Of Transformational Leadership Style Of Coaches On Talent Identification In Youth Soccer In The Public Football Academies In Ethiopia

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to examine the transformational leadership style of coaches which plays a key-role on talent identification in youth soccer in the public football academies in Ethiopia. Leadership is a critical component to enhance and sustain optimal sports performance (Chelladurai, Riemer, Gould, Hodge, Peterson, Petlichoff, 1987; Vealey, 2005) and athlete satisfaction (Riemer, Chelladurai, 1995). Coaches are considered as the most influential motivational factors for young athletes and they play a central role for shaping their sporting environment (Côté et al., 2010; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Ntoumanis, 2012; Reimer, 2007, as cited in Stenling, 2016). A leader is any person, who influences individuals and groups within the association, helps them in the setting up of goals, leading them toward the accomplishment of those goals. Talent identification and development is currently a prominent concern in sports especially in youth soccer (Hoare & Warr, 2000; Wolstencroft, 2002; Reilly & Gilbourne, 2003; Abbott et al., 2005; Martindale et al., 2005, 2007; Tranckle & Cushion, 2006). Talent identification can be defined as the process of recognizing current participants with the potential to become elite players (Williams & Reilly, 2000). A transformational leader (TL) is described as charismatic, inspirational, and passionate, takes interest in each follower individually, spends the time to get to know them, motivates the subordinates to work hard and stimulates them to think more deeply about their work (Bass, 1990). Talent identification is an evolutionary process and practice that greatly contributes to the identification, selection, and development of talented individuals for the purpose of intended goals. Soccer Talent identification is intended to identify talented athletes in time and to realize their potential at the world class level. The coach/leader to become highly successful, he or she should inspire, motivate and encourage his athletes to designate great in their respective sport. In the sports academies, the coaches have to be enthusiastic regarding the way how to motivate, inspire, guide and develop the future elites that the gifted young athletes.

Keywords: Transformational leadership style, Leadership, Coach, Talent Identification

Introduction

The contemporary leadership style of coaches studied by the sports leadership researchers taken the initiatives in sports organizations today. However, transformational and transactional leadership behaviors are still young enough in terms of a sports organization. Transformational leadership model has practiced in the sports sector nearby being recent. According to Bass (1985), the fashionable concept of the “transformational leadership,” and the Full Range of Leadership Model has only recently spread to the sports domain (e.g., Charbonneau, Barling, & Kelloway, 2001; Kent & Chelladurai, 2001; Rowold, 2006). The transformational leader motivates and empowers the followers to perform beyond expectations through charisma (idealized influence), individual consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. Therefore, transformational leadership approach makes followers to be motivated and inspired in the course of charismatic characteristics towards an established shared vision. In this innovative leadership paradigm, the coaches exercise the transactional or transformational behavior of leadership for youth athletes in sports to nurture and foster future stars. Yammarino, Dubinsky, Comer, & Jolson, (1997) contended that the transformational leadership concerns that leaders’ ability to maintain unique relationships with their followers that result in extraordinary individual and group performance. In this regard, the transformational domains are the coaches’ ability to present an enthusiastic and optimistic vision for the

future athletes, the coaches' positive expectations and behaviors directed towards the athlete, the coaches' actions focused on the teaching of technical sports skills or the technical instruction the coaches' tendency to treat athletes as persons (individual consideration), and the personal concern of coaches to support the athletes' wellbeing (Gomes & Resende, 2014).

The coach makes an effort to achieve an impressive outcome in the sport from the grass root level to elite athletes with the aim of leading to sports development and performance. The coach should be dedicated in order to achieve the future success of individual and team of shared objectives. Therefore, athletes are dependent on coaches as someone who will help them to achieve their aspirations regards with their development and performance. Coaches are considered as the most influential motivational factors for young athletes and they play a central role for shaping their sporting environment (Côté et al., 2010; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Ntoumanis, 2012; Reimer, 2007, as cited in Stenling, 2016). In this logic, Role is defined as a specific function, the usual or expected function of somebody or something, or the part somebody or something plays in an action or event (see Encarta dictionaries). However, what is the role in the context of a leader/coach? It implies that the range of actions exhibited by a coach continuing a positive coaching environment to facilitate the athletes' development. Due to this reason, the roles of a coach as the functions carried out in relation to the implementation of the coaching tasks in the coaching environment. In general, to some extent to mention that the role of a coach acts as the friend, motivator, demonstrator, instructor, assessor, mentor, role model, organizer, as far as a leader so on and so forth. Their decisions and actions play a key role to influence at the individual level as far as internal dynamics in the teams (Brandão & Carchan, 2010; Buceta, 2009) as cited in (Kleinert et al., 2012). The coaches are also responsible for all outcomes of the sports team including the athletes' performance and their holistic development.

The coach leadership approach provides the direction, instruction, and training through the procedures for a sports team or an individual athlete. The coach act as the role of a leader with many specific roles and parts to play (Jones, Wells, Peters, & Johnson, 1993) and (Baker, Yardley, and Cote, 2003) regardless of what level or grade of sport an athlete is involved in, the coach can have a profound impact on the life of the athlete (McCormack, 2007). Kenow and Williams (1999) noted that the quality and success of an athlete's sports experience are determined by the important role the coach plays. The academy coach's aspiration in youth soccer is to identify talented players at early age level and help players in the development process on the technical skills, enjoyment and fair play of the game ahead of physical or tactical development. Because of the future youth elites needs to be enjoyed with technical skills rather than complex and boring work at their age level.

A leadership style of a coach influences the development of motivational climate, i.e. the coach-created motivational climate correlates highly with the perception of the coach's communication style (Barić & Bucik, 2009). Chelladurai (2007), states that regarding leadership, research in sport has typically focused on the leadership of the coach (Fransen, 2014). Chelladurai focuses on leadership that is vital in sports because of coach acts as a leader who engaged into the sports environment to accomplish the challenges, today the sports industry particularly soccer sport is the big business all over the world. Therefore, a coach/leader has been given the attention to managing for youth soccer athlete's talent identification, nurturing and the development stage with appropriate leadership approach. Coaches become role models in their leadership style as Wooden and Jamison (2007), as states that they are not only making basic strategies and special skills taught, but important life lessons can also be taught such as communication, hard work, respect, courage, authority, friendship, loyalty, honesty, and accountability as cited in (Allen, 2014). The coach/leader to become highly successful, he or she should inspire, motivate and encourage his athletes to designate great in their respective sport. In the sports academies, the coaches have to be enthusiastic regarding the way how to motivate, inspire, guide and develop the future elites that the gifted young athletes. John Wooden also stated that "Good coaching is based purely on leadership." Leaders play a decisive role in the sports industry by instructing, organizing and guiding an individual or the groups towards common set goals.

Transformational leadership

A transformational leader (TL) is described as charismatic, inspirational, and passionate, takes interest in each follower individually, spends the time to get to know them, motivates the subordinates to work hard and stimulates them to think more deeply about their work (Bass, 1990). Bass & Bass, 2008; Murray & Mann, (2001) states that transformational leader (TL) promotes acceptance of a shared mission, encourages followers to prioritize the group goal ahead of individual goals, and inspires them to reach beyond expectations (Krukowska, Poczwardowski, & Parzelski, 2015). Therefore, the transformational leadership behavior of coaches is essential for talent identification because of their insightful approach to look upon the future influential athletes. Transformational leadership strives to inspire and transform their employees in order to improve their performance. Avolio & Bass, 2002; Hopton, Phelan, & Barling, (2007), stated that the transformational leadership occurs when a coach demonstrates an interest in their athletes, acts morally, motivates their athletes beyond self-interested goals, and engages athletes individually. The recent research result indicates that when athletes report their coaches as exhibiting transformational leadership behaviors, they experience greater levels of intrinsic motivation, group cohesion, sport related well-being, and team success (Callow, Smith, Hardy, Arthur, and Hardy, 2009; Charbonneau, Barling, & Kelloway, 2001; Stenling & Tafvelin, 2014). This is worth noting as transformational leadership is defined as “the process of influencing major changes in attitudes and assumptions of organizational members and building commitment for the organizations’ mission and objectives” (Yukl, 1989, p. 204). Thus, followers are expected to perform beyond expectations and maximize their performance for the development of the organization (Bass, 1985).

Transformational leadership comprises four dimensions (Bass, 1985): Charisma (idealized influence) (the leader acts as a role model who earns the admiration of followers and articulates high expectations about the group’s goals and mission), inspirational motivation (the leader provides meaning and a clear and attractive vision while demonstrating confidence that goals can be achieved), intellectual stimulation (the leader encourages followers to make their own decisions, both creative and innovative), and individualized consideration (the leader acts as a coach and mentor, considering followers’ individual needs, strengths, and aspirations). Transformational leadership is part of the full-range model of leadership, which also encompasses several components of transactional leadership behavior and laissez-faire leadership behavior (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, (2005), contended that coaches who form individualized, supportive relationships with their athletes can increase the development of personal and social skills. This implies that in light of the value of these relationships, increasing evidence timely the application of leadership theories, that is transformational Leadership (TFL), in youth sport (Vella et al., 2013) (McGuckin, 2016).

Talent identification and development

The reviewed literature refers that talent identification and development is currently a prominent concern in sports especially in youth soccer (Hoare & Warr, 2000; Wolstencroft, 2002; Reilly & Gilbourne, 2003; Abbott *et al.*, 2005; Martindale *et al.*, 2005, 2007; Tranckle & Cushion, 2006). According to Vaeyens et al., (2009) the primary objective of talent identification and development (TID) is to discover exceptional young athletes and initiate them into a specialized program capable of developing their gift as cited in (Paul, 2016). Talent identification can be defined as the process of recognizing current participants with the potential to become elite players (Williams & Reilly, 2000), whereas talent development aims at providing the most appropriate learning environment to realize this potential (Reilly, Bangsbo, & Franks, 2000a) as cited in (Unnithan, White, Georgiou, Iga, & Drust, 2012). The importance and purpose of talent identification is to find those individuals who have the most promise to succeed in the future, with a further consideration being the subsequent development of these promising youngsters so that they can reach their full potential along time (Williams & Reilly, 2000b; Abbott & Collins, 2002; Pearson *et al.*, 2006; Tranckle & Cushion, 2006; Button & Abbott, 2007).

Unnithan et al., (2012) contended that the process of identifying young talent has become a significant issue in soccer (Carling, Le Gall, Reilly, & Williams, 2009; Reilly, Williams, Nevill, & Franks, 2000b). According to the (Le Gall, Carling, Williams, & Reilly, 2010; Meylan, Cronin, Oliver, & Hughes, 2010) contended that the recent research findings of the early

recruitment of youth soccer players into a professional soccer academy are important for the long-term development of football future elites. Unnithan, also notes that the competitive (Vaeyens, Lenoir, Williams, & Philippaerts, 2008) and financial gains (Reilly et al., 2000a) associated with the early identification of gifted youngsters increase the numbers of “centers of excellence” throughout the world (Reilly et al., 2000a). The identification of talent in soccer is followed by selection along with a systematic program for developing playing abilities and nurturing the individual towards realizing the predicted potential (Reilly, Williams, Nevill, & Franks, 2000).

Talent Identification in soccer

Talent identification is an evolutionary process and practice that greatly contributes to the identification, selection, and development of talented individuals for the purpose of assisting these individuals in reaching their potential and to furthermore assist sporting organizations to effectively allocate their limited resources in the most productive and beneficial way. It involves predicting performance over time by measuring physical, physiological, psychological and social attributes as well as technical abilities, either in isolation or in combination (Williams & Reilly, 2000) as cited in (Williams, 2000). Early identification of future elite performers would give a competitive edge to any sports organization that could identify the best prospects. If such talented youngsters are provided with the best coaching and training from an early age, the likelihood that they will become elite players increases. Reliable identification of future elite performers at an early age would also permit clubs to focus their expenditure on the development of a small number of young players, representing an effective financial investment. Many people associated with youth development in sport, including soccer, thus seek any insights into talent identification that science can offer (Unnithan et al., 2012).

Williams & Reilly (2000), states that the talent identification of promising individuals into youth soccer academies has been related to a coach or talent scouts' subjective, preconceived image of the ideal player. However, it is now accepted, that when used in isolation, this approach can result in repetitive misjudgments in talent identification processes (Meylan et al., 2010; Williams & Reilly, 2000) and can lack consistency (Unnithan et al., 2012). As such, over recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis in the use of science-based support systems offering a more holistic approach to talent identification in soccer (Reilly et al., 2000b; Waldron & Worsfold, 2010). Outcome measures stemming from physiological (Le Gall et al., 2010), anthropometrical (Gil, Ruiz, Irazusta, Gil, & Irazusta, 2007), psychological (Williams, 2000), sociological (Meylan et al., 2010) and technical skills (Figueiredo, Goncalves, Silva, & Malina, 2009) have all been used, in either isolation or combination as predictors of expertise and talent development as cited in (Unnithan et al., 2012) (see Figure 1).

The objective of the study:

To examine the role of coaches transformational leadership style on talent identification in youth soccer in public football academies in Ethiopia

Study Hypothesis

H0: The transformational leadership style of coaches has no positive and significant role in the talent identification of youth soccer in the public football academies in Ethiopia.

Methodology and research design

Sample and Participants

The sampling technique used for this study was the stratified probability sampling method to select the samples. The sample of the study was 200 male and female youth academy soccer player chosen from the three academies. This study was

involved the male and female youth soccer players from the public football academies in Ethiopia. The delimitation of the study area was the public football academies in Ethiopia. The necessary data was collected from the football academies in Ethiopia. The academies are namely, Ambo FIFA Goal project football academy in Ambo Town, Ethiopian youth and sports academy in Addis Ababa, and Tirunesh Dibaba Sports academy at Assela Town in Arsi.

Procedure

The research followed ethical procedures as delineated about the study's goals and the Questionnaires collection procedures. After obtaining the written permission from administration body of academies, the researcher met each academy to collect the data. This data collection could occur on specific occasions (e.g., before or after a training session, when it was a suitable time that the coaches were not present while the athletes completed the assessment protocol), or on two distinct occasions (the Questionnaire was distributed to the athletes, who took it home to complete, and the Questionnaire was subsequently collected).

Instruments

Demographic questionnaire

The questionnaire assesses personal background, leadership and talent identification sports variables (e.g., sex, age, years of sports participation). The youth academy soccer players were classified as their age category those who were joined there for the duration of four years in the respective academies to train and playing football. They were Informed about the consent obtained before data collection. Of the 200 participants, 110 (55%) were male and 90 (45%) were female. The youth soccer academy players were studied under 15 years of age category 27(13.5%), under 17 years of age category 129 (64.5%) and under 19 years of age category 44(22.0%) respectively. The participation or playing experience of the players in the academy was analyzed under the category of 1 – 2 years of experience 51.3% (n=103), and 3 – 4 years of experience 47.5% (n= 95) and 3 – 4 years of experience 2% (n= 2) respectively.

Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and Talent Identification Questionnaire (TIQ)

The multi-factor leadership questionnaire instrument was to evaluate the coaches' leadership behaviors. To collect necessary data the instruments were used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by (Bass & Avolio, 2000), and Talent Identification Questionnaire (TIQ) which was developed by the researcher based on the key components of talent predictors. In this study, a Likert-type scale was used for each of the questionnaires and the scales contained 5 possible responses from 0 (not important at all) to 4 (frequently, if not always) for the Transformational leadership behaviors and from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) for the Talent identification.

RESULTS

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 20.0) was used to compute the collected data. The study was used in both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics concerns the development of certain indices or measures from the raw data. Under the descriptive statistics, the study encompasses that the Means, Standard deviation, and correlation were employed for this study. For the inferential statistics of a hypothesis test, the multiple regression models were used. The purpose of regression analysis is to improve our ability to predict the dependent variable. Regression assumes that variables have normal distributions. Such a regression equation provides the ability to predict one variable on the basis of the knowledge of the other variable. Regression analysis is a statistical technique used to relate variables (Bowerman and O'Connell, 1990).

The study result of descriptive analysis of dependent and independent variables means were as follows, the Talent identification weighted mean (M=3.08 SD= .62), and the charismatic influence of coaches leadership (M=2.9 SD=.66), Inspirational motivation (M= 2.94 SD= .78), Intellectual stimulation (M=2.87 SD=.828), Individual consideration (M=2.86 Sd=.736) respectively. The correlation between the transformational leadership style and talent identification were positively and significantly correlated. The association between transformational leadership style and talent identification described as

follows, the charismatic influence of coaches leadership(41.6%), Inspirational motivation(66.3%), Intellectual stimulation (73.7%), Individual consideration(67.2%) respectively were positively correlated.

Multiple regression model summaries

Model	R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.685	.34913	105.8	4	195	.000

The above multiple regression model summary result indicates that $F(4, 195) = 105.8, p < .001$, and $R^2 = .685$.

According to the above Table, the talent identification was explained by transformational leadership behaviors 68.5% of charismatic influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation, and Individual consideration.

ANOVA Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	51.595	4	12.899	105.82	.000 ^b
Residual	23.769	195	.122		
Total	75.365	199			

ANOVA Table (test using alpha = 0.05)

The overall regression model was significant, $F(4, 195) = 105.8, P < .001, R^2 = .685$

Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Charismatic influence	.121	.041	.129	2.970	.003
Inspirational motivation	.194	.042	.246	4.674	.000
Intellectual Stimulation	.296	.040	.398	7.317	.000
Individual consideration	.217	.044	.259	4.892	.000

Transformational leadership behavior had a statistically significant effect on talent identification. Specifically Charismatic influence ($\beta = .121$), Inspirational motivation ($\beta = .194$), Intellectual stimulation ($\beta = .296$), and individual consideration ($\beta = .217$) had a positive effect on talent identification, and 68.5% of the talent identification was explained by transformational leadership behaviors.

Discussion

The result of this study indicated that the transformational leadership style played a significant role in talent identification of youth soccer players in the public football academies in Ethiopia. The findings suggest a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership style of coaches and talent identification in youth soccer. The current study found that transformational leadership style of coaches earned toward the talent identification in youth soccer in the academies. Transformational leaders or coaches behaviour such as charisma (idealized influence) and inspirational motivation improve players' self-esteem; transfer decision making process to their followers and create friendly and respectful relations between coaches and the players in the academies. If there is a smooth and harmonious relationship between coaches and players they respect each other and they can easily achieve their intended goals. On another hand, the idealized influence (charismatic) and inspirational motivation of the two dimensions of transformational leaders usually leads to augmented motivation and satisfaction among soccer players during a talent identification procedure. Transformational leaders (idealized influence) of coaches' behavior encourage their followers to work hard in their respective sports and motivate them to show high performance and potential in their talent identification process. Intellectual stimulation another dimension of transformational leaders or coaches' behavior can motivate and encourage the players attempted to give them new

perspectives to the creativity of mental toughness in the youth soccer players. Another important component of transformational leaders or coaches behavior is individual consideration that identifies individual differences among players and focuses on their needs so that makes success and improve coaching and mentoring skills in football academies. Transformational coaches can predict the athlete future destiny and their potential because of their high attachment with the players that helps them to examine their potential and predict their future. In addition, the scholars Yusof and Shah contended that a positive significant relationship between transformational leadership behaviors of leaders or coaches and job satisfaction of subordinates(Saybani, Yusof, Soon, Hassan, & Zardoshtian, 2013). This implies that the transformational leaders or coaches satisfy their players by their all rounded approach and the player's interaction also based on positive attitudes towards their coaches. Bass suggests that the strongest effects of leaders on followers occur as a consequence of leadership that is transformational it makes that a style of leadership that is inspiring, developmental, values-based, and intellectually stimulating their followers (players)(Arthur, Bastardo, & Eklund, 2017). The result of this study has several important implications not only for academy other than it also can enhance the efficiency and performance of football clubs in Ethiopia. Practically, the findings of the current study suggest the need for more transformational leaders in soccer academies and other sports settings.

Conclusion

From a theoretical point of view, the result of this study has revealed the applicability of the transformational leadership theory in sports settings eminent factor. In addition, these findings provided evidence that leaders or coaches with transformational leadership styles would influence the talent identification of players. The result revealed that transformational behavior is able to predict future elite athlete. The prediction of long-term success in talented athletes at an early age requires a multi-factorial, longitudinal approach that combines both scientific observations and intuitive judgments in the identification process(Veale, 2011). The talent identification needs insightful observation and the leadership (coaches) sports knowledge and skill, as well as the implement of the transformational leader's behaviors. The coach or leader acts as the trainer, counselor, teacher, parent, and friend in their respective sports environment. Coaches are leaders as well as listeners for the athletes, and the coach remains as partners toward important function in sports settings. As Whitmore (2009) states that, the coach stimulates the players' potential to produce their performance and the coach promotes the perception and responsibility of the athlete in hopes of producing high performance. In addition to this, the main purpose of coaches is to lead athletes to achieve the jointly set goal. Therefore, the result of this study indicates that the transformational leadership style of coaches is prominent for talent identification to predict future influential players in the football academies.

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