The comparison of sports coaches' pre-season, in-season and post-season leadership behaviours in terms of sport psychology[1]

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Abstract

This research aimed to compare sports coaches' perceived leadership behaviours during a season (pre-season, in-season and post-season) in terms of sports psychology. A total of 232 permanent and contracted sports coaches who work for Provincial Directorates of Youth Services and Sports voluntarily participated to the research. Leadership for Sport Scale-LSS was used for data collection. The scale was applied to sports coaches three times (pre-season, in-season and post-season). Data was analysed by descriptive statistics and variance analysis. If the variance analysis is significant at 0.05 level, Benferonni analysis was used as a post-hoc test.

According to variance analysis there is a significant difference for democratic behaviour [$F_{(2.462)}=3.723$; $p<0.025$], training and instruction behaviour [$F_{(2,462)}=6.523$; $p<0.000$] and social support behaviour [$F_{(2.462)}=7.925$; $p<0.000$]. Moreover, there was not any significant difference for autocratic behaviour [$F_{(2.462)}=1.765$; $p>0.166$] and positive feedback behaviour [$F_{(2.462)}=2.671$; $p>0.086$].

To sum up, it could be said that sports coaches leadership behaviours could differ among seasons.

Keywords: Sports coach; leadership; leadership behaviour; during a season

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Introduction

Leadership behaviour of sports coaches' is one of the most important topics in sports psychology. Sports coaches' leadership behaviours have had the attention of researchers which resulted in new definitions for leadership. Besides, different approaches to leadership studies have been stated (Vazou et al., 2006).

There has not been a common view about increasing leaders' effectiveness in the leadership theories in the last century (Yukl, 1998). Therefore, definitions of effective leadership and researches on this topic have still been continuing. Leadership is defined as the necessary features to direct people towards desired goals, motivate and manage a group of people; the behavioural process which affect people and groups for determined goals (Barrow, 1997).

There have been three approaches in the literature in the last years. The first approach is leadership measurement in sports and researches based on multidimensional model of leadership, secondly, researches based on sports coach evaluation system. The third approaches present the normative model of decision style in sports coaching (Anshel, 2003).

Theoretical approaches are needed to research how sports coaches' behaviours are related to each other during a season and to define these formations. The most important theoretical approach is leadership perception approach which specifies sports coaches' leadership behaviours.

There are different approaches for leadership researches. There are trait approach, behavioural approach, role approach and situational approach. The basis of modern sports coaching theories is these four approaches (Chelladurai, 1990). The most intriguing approach is Multidimensional Model of Leadership introduced by Chelladurai.

Chelladurai, who was trying to design and reveal a study about effective leadership, proposed Multidimensional Model of Leadership which comprises the process of the relationship between effective sports coach and athletes' behaviours (Chelladurai, 1990). In this model, according to Chelladurai, leadership behaviours, which enhance sports teams' performance and athletes" satisfaction, occur as a result of the interaction of some factors which are; sports coaches' necessary behaviours, actual behaviours and sports coaches' behaviours preferred by athletes (Chelladurai and Riemer, 1998).

In this sense, Chelladurai proposes that when these three types of behaviours of sports coaches are consistent with each other, sports teams' performance gets higher and satisfaction of athletes increases. Therefore, sports coaches should try to exhibit behaviours which are suitable to sports environment and consistent with athletes' needs and demands in order to maximise athletes' performance and satisfaction. Moreover, Chelladurai also states that the relationship between sports coaches' behaviours and athletes' happiness and performance is bidirectional. Namely, athletes' happiness and performance affect sports coaches' behaviours. Therefore, there should be a good interaction among the three aspects of sports coaches' behaviours in order to obtain desired goals (Chelladurai, 1993a;1993b).

It is found as results of the studies in leadership and sports coaching that "effective sport coach" is the leader who obtain high performance. Effective sport coach should be able to response athletes' personal needs and expectations. An effective sport coach is also a person who makes a difference in team performance by developing his/her coaching skills (Anshel, 2003). As a result, functions of personal quality identify the behaviours of effective sports coaching.

152 wrestlers whose ages were over 15 years (mean age was 16.9 and mean sport experience was 3.1) participated a study conducted by Dwyer and Fischer (1990). As a result of the study, athletes were more satisfied with their coaches when they perceive high positive feedback, social support, democratic and training and instruction behaviours along with low autocratic behaviours of their coaches. Results shows that more satisfied athletes scored higher in the four types of leadership (positive feedback, social support, democratic and training and instruction behaviours) (Dwyer and Fischer, 1990).

Meece, conducted a similar study to examine university football players' satisfaction regarding their coaches. It was discovered according to the results that athletes' perception of their coaches' democratic and training and instruction behaviours determined athletes" satisfaction (Meece, 1991).

Amorose and Horn investigated collage athletes' self-motivation as a function of sports coaches' behaviours. 386 athletes aged 17-23 participated to the research. Results showed that athletes with high self-motivation perceived their coaches' democratic and training and instruction behaviour to be higher. In addition, athletes with high self-motivation perceived their coaches" autocratic behaviour to be lower (Amorose and Horn, 2000).

In another study by Amorose and Horn (2001), the relationship between self-motivation and sports coaches' behaviours were investigated in a sample of 72 athletes. It was found that low autocratic behaviours and high training and instruction behaviours were related to high self-motivation (Amorose and Horn, 2001).

This research aimed to compare sports coaches' perceived leadership behaviours during a season (pre-season, in-season and post-season) in terms of sports psychology. Results of this study will reveal a dimension of leadership behaviours of sports coaches which is thought to be important for team and individual sports. Also, determining the factors that affect leadership of sports coaches and knowing the relationship between these factors and success will enable coaches to easily manage sports teams and athletes.

Methodology

Participants

A total of 232 permanent and contracted sports coaches who work for Provincial Directorates of Youth Services and Sports voluntarily participated to the research. Mean age of participants was 33.09±10.90. Random sampling method was used in the selection process of the participants. Descriptive statistics of participants' age can be seen on table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the sports coaches' age

n=232	Sports Coaches' Age	
	$\overline{X}$	Sd
Pre-season		
In-season	33.09	10.90
Post-season		

Data collecting tool

Leadership for Sport Scale-LSS was used for data collection.

Leadership for Sport Scale-LSS

The scale has 3 versions. These are; (a) athletes preferences for their coaches' behaviours, (b) sports coaches own leadership behaviours or ideal leadership behaviours, (c) athletes' perceived behaviours of their coaches. Form b which is "sports coaches own leadership behaviours or ideal leadership behaviours was used for this research.

The scale has 5 subscales and a total of 40 items. The items are answered on a 5-point Likert scale. The original scale was developed in Canadian athletes and Cronbach's alpha values were 0.83 for training and instruction behaviour; 0.75 for democratic behaviour; 0.45 for autocratic behaviour; 0.70 for social support behaviour; 0.82 for positive feedback behaviour (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980).

The scale was used to determine sports coaches' perception of their own leadership styles and their own behaviours according to five subscales.

Language adaptation of the scale into Turkish

The version of the perception of sports coaches for their own leadership behaviours was translated into Turkish by Tiryaki and Toros (2001). Validity and reliability were reported by Tiryaki and Toros (2001). Cronbach's alpha values were 0.77 for training and instruction behaviour; 0.80 for democratic behaviour; 0.20 for autocratic behaviour; 0.64 for social support behaviour; 0.65 for positive feedback behaviour. Varimax vertical rotation of principal components analysis technique was used to test construct validity of the scale. Total variance explained by the five factors was 41%. The first factor explained 12.64%; the second factor explained 9.82%; the third factor explained 6.84%; the forth factor explained 6.38% and the fifth factor explained 4.82% of the total variance. The scale has 40 items with 5 subscales.

1. Training and instruction behaviour subscale has 15 items. These items about the important functions of the sports coach to enhance athletes' performance.

2. Democratic behaviour subscale has 8 items. These items are about the extent to which sports coaches let athletes join decision making process.

3. Autocratic behaviour subscale has 3 items. These items refer to the extent to which sports coaches keep off the athletes and their authoritarian behaviours.

4. Social support behaviour subscale has 8 items. These items refer to the extent to which sports coaches meet athletes' needs.

5. Positive feedback behaviour subscale has 6 items. These items refer how sports coaches evaluate athletes' performance

Data collection

Leadership for Sport Scale-LSS was applied to the participants. There were three applications of the scales to the sample. The applications were made in pre-season, in-season and post-season. Before the data collection process, necessary explanation about the scales and the

study was made by the researchers. It was also stated that they can ask questions to the researchers if there is an unclear point. There was not a time limit when the participants were answering the questions. Sports coaches were also requested to frankly and truly answer.

Analysis of the data

Data was analysed by descriptive statistics and variance analysis. If the variance analysis is significant at 0.05 level, Benferonni analysis was used as a post-hoc test.

Results

Descriptive statistics for leadership behaviours of the sports coaches can be seen on table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the sports coaches' leadership behaviours in pre-season, in-season and post-season.

Sports Coaches' Leadership Behaviours	Training and Instruction		Democratic Behaviour		Autocratic Behaviour		Social Support Behaviour		Positive Feedback Behaviour	
	$\overline{X}$	Sd	$\overline{X}$	Sd	$\overline{X}$	Sd	$\overline{X}$	Sd	$\overline{X}$	Sd
Pre-season	3.23	1.65	2.60	1.50	3.30	1.75	2.21	1.53	3.38	1.60
In season	3.87	1.12	2.39	1.58	3.19	1.79	2.98	1.65	3.17	1.27
Post-season	3.29	1.34	2.74	1.59	3.46	1.70	2.81	1.67	3.26	1.08

Results of repeated measures analysis of variance for sports coaches' leadership behaviours during a season are given on table 3.

Table 3. Repeated measures analysis of variance for sports coaches leadership behaviours during a season (Pre-season, in-season, post-season)

Variables		Measurement Time	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd	Df	F	p
Perceived Sports Coaching Behaviour	**Autocratic**	Pre-Season	232	3.30	1.75	2 462	1.765	.166
		In-Season		3.19	1.79			
		Post-Season		3.46	1.70			
	Democratic	Pre-Season	232	2.60	1.50	2 462	3.723	.025
		In-Season		2.39	1.58			
		Post-Season		2.74	1.59			
	Training and Instruction	Pre-Season	232	3.23	1.65	2 462	6.523	.000
		In-Season		3.87	1.12			
		Post-Season		3.29	1.34			
	Social Support	Pre-Season	232	2.21	1.53	2 462	7.925	.000
		In-Season		2.98	1.65			
		Post-Season		2.81	1.67			

Positive Feedback	Pre-Season		3.38	1.60	2 462	2.671	.086
	In-Season	232	3.17	1.27			
	Post-Season		3.26	1.08			

According to repeated measures analysis of variance, there is a significant difference for; democratic behaviour [F $(2.462)=3.723; p<0.025$], training and instruction behaviour [F $(2.462)=6.523; p<0.000$] and social support behaviour [F $(2.462)=7.925; p<0.000$] of sports coaches during a season. However, there was not any significant difference for autocratic behaviour [F $(2.462)=1.765; p>0.166$] and positive feedback behaviour [F $(2.462)=2.671; p>0.086$] of sports coaches during a season.

Post-hoc Bonferroni analysis showed that autocratic behaviours did not significantly differ between pre-season and in-season ($p>0.639$), pre-season and post-season ($p>0.448$), in-season and post-season ($p>0.105$). There was a significant difference for democratic behaviour between in-season and post-season ($p<0.010$). There was not a significant difference for democratic behaviour between pre-season and in-season ($p>0.315$), pre-season and post-season ($p>0.435$). There was a significant difference for training and instruction behaviour between pre-season and in-season ($p<0.003$), in-season and post-season ($p<0.000$). A significant difference was not obtained for training and instruction behaviour between pre-season and post-season ($p>0.057$). A significant difference appeared for social support behaviour between pre-season and in-season ($p<0.000$), pre-season and post-season ($p<0.000$). There was not a significant difference for social support behaviour between in-season and post-season ($p>0.957$).

Discussion and Conclusion

This research aimed to compare sports coaches' perceived leadership behaviours during a season (pre-season, in-season and post-season) in terms of sports psychology. According to the results, there is a significant difference for democratic behaviour, training and instruction behaviour and social support behaviour during a season. However, there was not a significant difference for autocratic behaviour and positive feedback behaviour.

There was a significant difference for democratic behaviour between in-season and post-season. There was a significant difference for training and instruction behaviour between pre-season and in-season, in-season and post-season. A significant difference was found for social support behaviour between pre-season and in-season, pre-season and post-season.

Results also revealed that autocratic behaviours did not significantly differ between pre-season and in-season, pre-season and post-season, in-season and post-season. There was not a significant difference for democratic behaviour between pre-season and in-season, pre-season and

post-season. A significant difference was not obtained for training and instruction behaviour between pre-season and post-season. There was not a significant difference for social support behaviour between in-season and post-season. A significant difference was not found for positive feedback behaviour between pre-season and in-season, pre-season and post-seasons, in-season and post-season.

When examining the results, it was seen that sports coaches' democratic behaviour, training and instruction behaviour, positive feedback behaviour and social support behaviour increased as the season progressed. It was stated that sports coaching behaviours are intended for creating a team climate which emphasises skill acquisition, reinforcement and goals (Kavussanu, 2007). It can be seen on the researches that every individual of sports teams can contribute to functioning sports teams and sports coaches ensure optimal development by sufficient effort (McArdle and Duda, 2002).

Moreover, it was seen that sports coaches' tendencies for autocratic behaviour which focuses on negative feedback based on punishment, not giving reinforcement and ignoring mistakes appeared to be significantly differing. In such environments, individuals focus on winning and obtaining positive feedback from the sports coach. Also, sports coaches do not give positive feedback and positive reinforcement in such negative environments and therefore, they become feeling anxious in order not to make mistakes although they actually should try to be better in coaching and become being anxious for this purpose. It is expected in sports environments that autocratic coaching behaviour and behaviours of feedback based on punishment, not giving reinforcement and omitting mistakes should not increase.

The results of this research are consistent with the results of Turman (2003) who examined the effect of sports coaches' behaviours on team cohesion. In this research, university athletes were contacted in order to determine different coaching behaviours, techniques and strategies. The results revealed two components of coaching behaviours which are injustice and humiliation. Injustice is defined as protecting only some athletes and humiliation refers to the act of humiliating or humbling someone and it is characterized by behaviours which focus on punishment (e.g. yelling at athletes, punishing them for their mistakes). Such behaviours create an environment where there is hostility and athletes get separated instead of getting cohesive. Turman's research (2003) indicates that coaching behaviours, which focus on punishment, could create a negative team environment where athletes are negatively affected.

Perception of sports coaches about their behaviours during a season gives a different sight to the relevant literature. Results could also provide some clues about how athletes' behaviours can be developed or made worse by coaching behaviour. Turkey has the features of collectivist

societies' culture (Kagıtcıbaşı, 1998). Therefore, team goals and team norms seem to be more important compared to individual features and divisions in sports.

Applications in different phases of sports matches or doing lengthwise studies with interviews in future researches on sports coaching and leadership will remove the limitations of this study which resulted from yearlong measurement.

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