ABSTRACT: The present study aims to investigate the relationship between coach leadership styles and competitiveness, win orientation and goal orientation in Iranian elite judo players. The method of the study was descriptive-correlational, and it was conducted as a field study. The population of the study consisted of all judo players participating in Iranian judo super league (N=162). A sample of 125 judo players was selected as the participants. A demographic data sheet, Leadership Scale for Sport (α=0.95) and Sport Orientation Questionnaire (α=0.90) were used to collect the data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics including multiple regressions were used to analyze the data. The results showed a significant correlation between coach leadership styles and competitiveness, win orientation and goal orientation in the Iranian elite judo players (P<0.01). The results also revealed a significant positive correlation between positive feedback and social support with competitiveness, win orientation and goal orientation in the participants (P<0.01). Overall, coach leadership styles were found to be a good predictor of competitiveness, win orientation and goal orientation the Iranian elite judo players.

Keywords: competitiveness, goal orientation, judo, leadership style, win orientation

Introduction

Many a scientific study has yet investigated the factors that may contribute to the success of sports teams. Gillbertson (2000) introduced seven major factors, which may play the main role in athletic success. These include coach or leader, motivation, financial resources, goals, creativity, structure and skills. Thus, the coach may play a crucial role in a sports team accomplishments. Case (1984) contends that coaches are the vital components of human resources in sports organizations. According to Case (1984), even if the coaches do not refer to themselves as leaders, they have to apply leadership skills in managing their teams like other advanced, organized activities. McNeillis (1993) contends that leading elite teams may parallel leading advanced organizations entailing similar responsibilities.

Several studies have investigated leadership style as part of coach behavior based on leadership theories in organizational domains. Chelladurai (1984; Kuklinski, 1990; Brunel, 1999). Based on leadership theories in organizational domains, theorists have proposed leadership models in sports organizations. In this regard, Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) proposed multidimensional model of leadership, and in the late 1980s, Small and Smith (1989) introduced another model. Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) developed the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) to investigate leadership in sport environments. This scale examines five aspects of a leader’s behavior including training and instruction, social support, positive feedback, autocratic style and democratic style. Training and instruction involve the behaviors that a coach displays to help improve athletes’ performance. Social support refers to a set of behaviors conducted by a coach to build positive relations with athletes, attend to their welfare issues and develop a positive group atmosphere. Positive feedback involves
the behaviors set to identify and pay tribute to good performance. The last two aspects deal with the way a coach makes their decisions. Democratic behavior refers to a set of behaviors that allow the athlete to participate in decision making on group issues. On the other hand, autocratic behavior refers to coaches’ independent decision making based on their personal authority (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980).

Some sport psychologists believe that elite athletes strongly aspire to win the competitions. They relish victory and despise failure. Besides, elite athletes enjoy competing opponents and usually do more than one sport (Horton et al., 2005). This implies that it is possible to predict athletic success for the athletes who inherently like competitiveness and winning and who are highly motivated to train hard to achieve high levels of athletic performance. Research has shown that belief in one’s success depends on one’s endeavor and perseverance (Allison, 2000). Moreover, previous finings have shown that elite athletes aspire to improve their performance and muster dignity (Gill, 1999). Competitiveness and challenge-seeking behavior are highly associated with the motivation for progress, winning and improved athletic performance (Halvari & Kjormo, 1999; Duda & White, 1992). Research has shown that high levels of competitiveness may reduce competition anxiety and improve self-confidence, and motivation for improved athletic performance is associated with physical and cognitive anxieties as well as self-confidence (Kang & Gill, 1990; Walling & Duda, 1995). Papaioannou et al. (2009) reported that what the students perceive of their coaches or teachers’ behavior may affect their goal orientation. These perceived behaviors may affect such variables as external and internal motivation, self-esteem, self-regulation and life satisfaction. In a study on professional dancers, Kamaroa (2010) found no significant relationship between the perception of coach leadership behavior and different forms of motivation. Lauer et al. (2010) reported that what young athletes perceive of parents and coaches’ behavior may influence their features of progress including motivation, goal orientation and win orientation. Gearity and Murray (2011) showed that coaches may affect psychological factors including efficiency and motivation for progress in the athletes. Erickson et al. (2011) reported that coach-athlete interactions may affect athletic success. Moreover, the coach’s behavioral pattern can affect competitiveness and contribute to goal and win orientations in young athletes. André and Metzler (2011) reported that the behaviors of influential people such as parents and coaches may influence goal orientation in the athletes. Majzub and Muhammad (2011) contend that training policies and coaches may significantly affect goal orientation in the athletes. They also reported that coach behavior may influence the level of competitiveness and win orientation in Malaysian golf players. In a meta-analysis, Braithwaite et al. (2011) reported that motivation is generally influenced by personal variables such as demographic and environmental characteristics including coach behavior and team management. André et al. (2011) showed that coach behavior may predict progress behaviors such as goal orientation, win orientation and competitiveness. Spray and Warburton (2010) reported that coach leadership behavior may direct perceived motivation for progress and a sense of competence. In similar studies, Gershgoren et al. (2011) and Hur et al. (2011) reported that what athletes perceive of coach leadership behaviors may influence their motivation, goal orientation and performance. Therefore, both leadership style and different aspects of sport orientation (competitiveness, win orientation and goal orientation) are the vital factors influencing athletic success. Inappropriate leadership style and disregard for athletic motivation may result in poor team performance and failure. Thus, it is important to identify the styles that can help improve motivation for progress. The present study aims to investigate the relationship between coach leadership styles and competitiveness, win orientation and goal orientation in Iranian elite judo players.

**Materials and Methods**

The method of the study was descriptive-correlational and it was conducted as a field study. The population of the study consisted of all judo players participating in super league competitions in 2010 (N=162). Based on Morgan table, a number of 125 judo players were selected as the participants. Three questionnaires were used to collect the data as follows:

1. A demographic data sheet, which examined age, marital status, level of education, sports history in the current club, championship history and type of participation, was used to collect the demographic information on the participants.
2. Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) was used to collect data about coach leadership styles. The scale, developed by Chelladurai and Saleh (1978), consists of five subscales including training and instruction,
social support, positive feedback, autocratic style and democratic style. The scale consists of 40 items on a 5-point Likert scale.

3. Sport Orientation Questionnaire (SOQ), developed by Gill (1988), was used to collect data on competitiveness, win orientation and goal orientation. The questionnaire comprises three subscales including competitiveness, win orientation and goal orientation. It consists of 25 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). There are 13 items to examine competitiveness, 6 items to investigate win orientation and 6 items to test goal orientation. The sum total of the scores of these three subscales is regarded as the score of motivation for progress in every individual.

In order to examine the reliability of the questionnaires, a number of 30 questionnaires were administered to the participants. The results of Cronbach alpha formula revealed the reliability coefficients of LSS and SOQ to be $\alpha=0.855$ and $\alpha=0.801$, respectively. Therefore, either questionnaire was shown to have acceptable reliability indices to be used in data collection in the present study.

A number of 125 questionnaires were randomly distributed among the participants. After the questionnaires were collected, a number of 7 questionnaires were found to be defective and consequently discarded from the process of data analysis. Accordingly, only 118 questionnaires underwent statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics including mean, percentage, frequency, standard deviation and tabulations were used to summarize and describe the data. Multiple regression analysis was run to examine the relationship between the variables. SPSS 16 was used to do the statistical analysis ($P<0.05$).

**Results**

As illustrated in Figure 1, the results of demographic analysis showed that 20.3% of the participants were either 20 years old or younger, 40.7% were within the age range of 21-24, 27.1% ranged in age from 25 to 28 and 11.9% were either 29 years old or older. In regard to marital status, 72.9% were bachelors while 27.1% were married. Considering the level of education, 32.2% of the participants had either high school diploma or lower degrees, 39% had associate degrees, 20.3% had B.S and 8.5% had M.S or higher degrees. With regard to history of sports activity in their current club, 25.4% of the participants had lower than two years, 5.1% had 2-4 years, 35.6% had 5-7 years and 33.9% had over 7 years of experience. In terms of championship history, 8.5% of the participants had won provincial, 1.7% won regional, 37.3% won national, 28.8% won Asian and 23.7% won international championships. Concerning the type of membership in their clubs, 86.4% of the participants were the main players and 13.6% of them were substitutes.

![Figure 1. Distribution of participants’ age in percentage](image)
Figure 2 illustrates the mean scores and standard deviation of coach leadership styles. As shown in the figure, training and instruction is the most prevalent (3.620±1.074) and social support is the least common (3.224±0.832) leadership style among the coaches.

Figure 3 illustrates the mean scores and standard deviation of the subscales of sport orientation. As shown in the figure, goal orientation obtained the highest mean score (4.585±1.902) followed by competitiveness (4.576±0.897) followed by win orientation (4.550±1.269).

According to the data presented in Table 1 ($R^2=0.368$, $F(5,112)=8.742, P<0.05$) and the results of simultaneous multiple regression, there was found to be a significant correlation between competitiveness and democratic style, social support and positive feedback ($P<0.05$).

Table 1. Multiple regression coefficients for determining the relationship between coach leadership styles and competitiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicting variables</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction and training</td>
<td>8.74</td>
<td>0.368</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic style</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.256</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic style</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive feedback</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Criterion variable: competitiveness
Based on the data presented in Table 2 (R^2=0.415, F(5,112)=7.365, P<0.05) and the results of simultaneous multiple regression, a significant correlation was found between win orientation and autocratic style, social support and positive feedback (P<0.05).

Table 2. Multiple regression coefficients for determining the relationship between coach leadership styles and win orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicting variables</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>R^2</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction and training</td>
<td>7.365</td>
<td>0.415</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic style</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.79</td>
<td>0.400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>-2.83</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive feedback</td>
<td>-0.41</td>
<td>-4.27</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*criterion variable: win orientation

According to the data presented in Table 3 (R^2=0.345, F(5,112)=8.391, P<0.05) and the results of simultaneous multiple regression, a significant correlation was found between goal orientation and democratic style, social support and positive feedback (P<0.05).

Table 3. Multiple regression coefficients for determining the relationship between coach leadership styles and goal orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicting variables</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>R^2</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction and training</td>
<td>8.391</td>
<td>0.345</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.80</td>
<td>0.421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic style</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>0.720</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic style</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
<td>-2.48</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>-2.52</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive feedback</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*criterion variable: goal orientation

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the correlation between coach leadership styles and competitiveness, win orientation and goal orientation in Iranian elite judo players. The results showed a significant correlation between coach leadership styles and competitiveness, win orientation and goal orientation in the participants (P<0.05). The results also revealed a significant relationship between competitiveness and democratic style, social support and positive feedback (P<0.05). The findings showed a significant linear correlation between win orientation and autocratic style, social support and positive feedback (P<0.05). There was also a significant linear correlation between goal orientation and democratic style, social support and positive feedback (P<0.05). These findings are consistent with the findings of Lauer et al. (2010), Erickson et al. (2011), André and Metzler (2011), Majzub and Muhammad (2011), André et al. (2011) and Gershgoren et al. (2011). A significant correlation was found between the two leadership styles of positive feedback and social support and competitiveness, win orientation and goal orientation. This may imply that these leadership styles can predict different aspects of sport orientation. Coaches may identify and reward good behaviors of athletes through these styles so that these behaviors may be reinforced. The supportive role of the coach may reinforce different aspects of sport orientation in the athletes. In professional domains, coaches can offer such rewards as temporary breaks following long-term training, friendliness outside the training environment, laudatory feedback to the successful athlete at the presence of other athletes and financial rewards in order to reinforce...
progress-oriented behaviors including competitiveness, win orientation and goal orientation. The present findings also showed that autocratic leadership style is an important variable in competitiveness aspect. Though this style hinges on the coach decision making and prescription, it may relate to win orientation in Iranian elite Judo players. In this regard, the coaches of super league clubs facilitate athletic success through setting goals and policies and pushing the athletes to fulfill these goals. This may be realized through autocratic behavior on the part of the coach so that the athlete should participate in competitions with a competitive spirit and intend to win the opponent in order to avoid the negative outcomes of failure. Since an autocratic style may exert adverse effects on the athlete, it should be approached with care while its adverse side effects are taken into account. Generally speaking, coach leadership styles are good predictors of judo players’ competitiveness, win orientation and goal orientation. Therefore, it may be concluded that lack of enough motivation and competitiveness in the athletes may result in poor athletic performance in competitions. A particular leadership style may not result in a favorable outcome so that the coach, team and club cannot achieve their goals and both time and cost may be wasted. Therefore, coaches are to draw upon appropriate leadership styles to help motivate the athletes. The present findings showed that judo coaches of super league clubs draw upon democratic style, social support and positive feedback to foster competitiveness, win orientation and goal orientation in Iranian elite judo players. Moreover, they try to infuse high levels of motivation in their athletes and improve their performance through these leadership styles. Therefore, it is recommended that coaches select appropriate leadership styles to help improve athletic performance in judo players.

References
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