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The Relationship between Leadership Styles and Burnout of Aquatics Coaches in Tehran, Iran

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Abstract

This study aimed to consider the relationship between Leadership Styles and Burnout of Aquatics Coaches in Tehran. This was applied correlation field study. The population consisted of all male and female coaches of different aqua sports (rowing, swimming, lifeguards, diving, water polo) in Tehran (N=830, Women= 610 (73%), men= 220 (27%)). Using Morgan table, the sample size was estimated to be 265 participants; the sample was selected using stratified random sampling method. The library and field study was conducted for collecting the data. First, the library resources (books, articles in Persian and Latin, internet websites, etc.) were used for literature review. Based on the literature study, then, the questionnaires were prepared for evaluating the performance of coaches. The face and content validity of questionnaire was reviewed and approved by 12 professors and PhD candidates in sport management. The, they were distributed among the participants. The reliability of leadership style,and burnout questionnaires was determined to be 0.78 and 0.73, respectively. The collected data were summarized using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, percentage, etc.) in the form of charts and tables. Also, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to evaluate the normality of data distribution and Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test hypotheses.

Keywords: Burnout, Acquatics, Coaches, Iran

Introduction:

Today, the sport is considered in various ways in the world. Many people deal with it in different ways as professional athletes, amateur athletes, fans who are interested in sports and sports programs, and those who meet their affairs through sports. Given the significant role of sports in economic, social, cultural, and even political development of countries, the progress of sports has become one of the strategic priorities of planners (Dehghan, 2010).

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The dynamic and efficient management and leadership is an important feature of successful sports teams which distinguishes them from unsuccessful teams (Leith, 2001). The coaching is some kind of leadership which brings people with different experiences, talents, and interests together and encourages them to take responsibility, continue progress, and behave perfectly with their partners and coworkers. The coaching is not just memorizing techniques and thinking about best programs; however, it is paying real attention to athletes, believing them, and involving them. Today, the coaching is considered to be one of the most difficult jobs. The coach should have necessary skills and knowledge to train skilled athletes. In professional coaching, the working condition is very hard. The coaches' performance is monitored strictly by spectators, players, sports managers, journalists, mass media, and critics (Goudarzi & Ahmadi, 2002). Among the factors affecting the success of a sports team, the leadership style has particular importance. If other factors which affect the success of team will be desirable but the leadership style does not satisfy the athletes, it cannot be expected that the team will achieve its goals (Zardoshtian, 2009). The coaches will be effective managers if they have necessary skills for leading the athletes. The leadership is one of the most important and necessary skills for coaches. Some important tasks of leaders include motivating, effective communication with athletes, and creation of cohesion and harmony (Sadegh, 2008).

The coaches' concerns about work, family, and social problems affect their performance. This makes them stressful and anxious; finally, this causes burnout. The sports coaches face many stressful situations in communicating with managers, providing required facilities to support individual programs, and meeting different needs of athletes; all these also lead to burnout (Ramezaninejad, 2001).

The research has shown that people who suffer from burnout have less productivity, effectiveness, and participation; these directly affect work environment (Altehanieh, 2003). The employment of effective and efficient coaches to teach employees and achieve the objectives has attracted the attentions.

The people who are goal-oriented and responsible in their life and have good nutrition and adequate rest endure better the hardships, benefit from mature defense mechanisms such as dedication, flexibility, and social support, and are less vulnerable. In contrast, the people with mental and physical diseases, low self-esteem, and limited social relations are vulnerable to stress and get sick (Milanifar, 1996).

When a group of people try to reach a goal, someone takes the responsibility of group as manager and leader. This person should have the necessary skills and qualities of a leader to be able to guide members towards the goal. In sports situations, the coach leads the team.

The effective leadership of coach has an important impact on athletic performance. The leadership style reflects the mindset, worldview, and personality of leaders. The attitude of leader toward his/her role is the factor which affects leadership style. Most of leaders have a style which matches their features or is easier for them. Limited number of leaders may adapt their style with different situations and people. Undoubtedly, having leadership skills is a salient feature of an effective coach. If the leadership style adopted by coach will be consistent with different functions, it will certainly lead to athletes' success. In many cases, the coaches start their work with high motivation, but for various reasons they get demotivated and face with helplessness feeling and lack of self-satisfaction; these are often due to low self-efficacy in workplace. It the self-efficacy will be at a higher level, the motivation and enthusiasm will increase.

The stress and burnout are common and serious problems which arises among people who serve the people. The teaching and training are among the stressful jobs (Zareian, 2007).

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Obviously, the responsibility of individuals to achieve specific objectives have problems and ups and downs which cause fatigue and stress. In addition, researchers have found that the burnout is associated with physical and mental exhaustion, mood changes, increased anxiety, weak performance, and lack of interest to participate in sports programs (Godger et al., 2007).

The leader should select his/her strategies to cope with burnout and will not be harmed in long term. The leadership styles may increase or decrease burnout of coaches. As a factor, the personality characteristics may also help people to adapt properly with stressful situations and experience fewer mental and physical damages. Also, people's beliefs about their capabilities may impact on their psychological pressure level which is created in pressing and threatening situations. Also, those with high self-esteem have skills which help them in dealing with stressful situations.

Due to limited research in this area in Iran, it seems that the leadership styles, self-efficacy, and burnout should be studied further.

This study aims to answer these questions: Whether there is a relationship between leadership style and burnout of coaches? .

Today, the role of coaches as leaders is very important. Continuous efforts are conducted in all areas to find people who have the ability to lead teams and enormous funds are spent in this way. According to researchers, the coaching in sports requires leadership. In the process of influence on players and teams to achieve the goals, the coach interacts with players in leader role. Some introduce coach as leader (Chelladurai, 1984).

Stein Dabir states that the coaching is deep thinking on leadership styles and believing them. The leadership is a mental attitude, philosophy, or approach. The successful leaders touch the lives of members of their groups. They are familiar with the people who lead them. The coaching is one of the leadership styles and may be combined with other leadership styles to increase its applications and popularity and achieve success.

The adoption of improper leadership style by coaches may lead to reduced performance and burnout (Alavi & Kazemzadeh, 2008).

In everyday life and professions, all of us experience stresses and pressures.

Maslach (2001) defined the burnout as long-term response to interpersonal and emotional stressors which can be seen in most jobs.

Bohorquez (2002) defined burnout as depletion of spirit due to physical or mental exhaustion. He stated that this is the result of enormous efforts to achieve some unrealistic expectations which are imposed by individual himself/herself or society.

Maslach and Jakson (1989) stated that the burnout in job is due to following three factors:

1. Emotional and physical exhaustion
2. Reduced success in personal performance
3. Severe depletion of personal characteristics

Given the important role of coaches in mental and physical training of athletes and considering their need to space and facilities to play their roles, it seems that the situation is not proper in many sports facilities, including aqua sports facilities in Iran. Therefore, most coaches have concerns and cannot conduct properly their job. These conditions cause the sports coaches have stress in providing favorable conditions for athletes.

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On the one hand, they should meet the psychological, physical, emotional, and social needs of athletes and on the other hand, they are under pressure to provide proper sports facilities.
The literature review indicates that despite the important role of coaches in training of athletes, there is no research on relationship between self-efficacy leadership styles and burnout of aqua sports coaches. However, this study aims to investigate the relationship between leadership stylesand job burnout. It is hoped that the results of this study help to recognize the relationship between leadership styles and burnout of coaches.

Methodology:

This was applied correlation field study. The population consisted of all male and female coaches of different aqua sports (rowing, swimming, lifeguards, diving, water polo) in Tehran (N=830, Women= 610 (73%), men= 220 (27%)). Using Morgan table, the sample size was estimated to be 265 participants; the sample was selected using stratified random sampling method. The library and field study was conducted for collecting the data. First, the library resources (books, articles in Persian and Latin, internet websites, etc.) were used for literature review. Based on the literature study, then, the questionnaires were prepared for evaluating the performance of coaches. The face and content validity of questionnaire was reviewed and approved by 12 professors and PhD candidates in sport management. The, they were distributed among the participants. The reliability of leadership style and burnout questionnaires was determined to be 0.78 and 0.73, respectively. The collected data were summarized using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, percentage, etc.) in the form of charts and tables. Also, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to evaluate the normality of data distribution and Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test hypotheses.

Findings:

Descriptive findings:

1. The findings showed that the age of participates was 20 to 60 years old. The majority of coaches were in age group 30 to 39 years old (35%). The least number of coaches were in age group 50 years and above (13%).
2. In terms of gender, 72% of aqua sports coaches were women and 28 % were men.
3. In terms of work experience, the majority of coaches (44%) had between 1 and 5 years of coaching history. About 32% had between 6 and 10 years of coaching history. In fact, majority of them (76%) had less than ten years of coaching history.
4. In terms of education, most of the participants (46%) had a bachelor's degree. Also, about 25% had associate degree.
5. The scores of leadership styles (scale from 1 to 5) showed that the mean of educational, democratic, authoritarian, supportive, and positive feedback leadership styles was 2.66, 3.35, 2.83, 3.28, and 3.19, respectively. On the other hand, the mean of all empowerment (except trust) components was higher than 4; this is a high level.
6. The mean of aqua sports coaches self-efficacy (scale of 1 to 5) was 4.14; this is a high level. Also, the mean of self-efficacy components was higher than 4.

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7. The mean of aqua sports coaches burnout (scale from 1 to 7) was equal to 3.10; this is a moderate level. The emotional burnout and depersonalization had a low mean; the lack of success had high mean.

Inferential findings:
The First hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between educational leadership style and job burnout of aqua sports coaches in Tehran.
Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis. The results are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation between educational leadership style and job burnout of aqua sports coaches in Tehran

Statistical index / Variable	Number	Pearson's correlation coefficient	(P) Sig. level
Educational leadership style	210	-0/08	0/71
Job burnout			

*p< 0.05

According to Table 1, the Pearson's correlation coefficient is equal to r=0.08 and p=0.71. Therefore, it can be said that the null hypothesis is accepted; there is no significant relationship between educational leadership style and job burnout of coaches.
The seventh hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between democratic leadership style and job burnout of aqua sports coaches in Tehran.
Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis. The results are provided in Table 7.

Table 2: Correlation between democratic leadership style and job burnout of aqua sports coaches in Tehran

Statistical index / Variable	Number	Pearson's correlation coefficient	(P) Sig. level
Democratic leadership	210	-0/09	0/29
Job burnout			

*p< 0.05

According to Table 2, the Pearson's correlation coefficient is equal to r=0.09 and p=0.29. Therefore, it can be said that the null hypothesis is accepted; there is no significant relationship between democratic leadership style and job burnout of coaches.

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The second hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between authoritarian leadership style and job burnout of aqua sports coaches in Tehran.
Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis. The results are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation between authoritarian leadership style and job burnout of aqua sports coaches in Tehran

Statistical index / Variable	Number	Pearson's correlation coefficient	(P) Sig. level
authoritarian leadership style	210	-0/249	0/009*
Job burnout			

*p< 0.05

According to Table 3, the Pearson's correlation coefficient is equal to r=0.25 and p=0.009. With 99% confidence level, therefore, it can be said that the null hypothesis is rejected; there is a significant and inverse relationship between authoritarian leadership style and self-efficacy of coaches. This means that the job burnout of coaches will be reduced if they use authoritarian leadership style.
The third hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between supportive leadership style and job burnout of aqua sports coaches in Tehran.
Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis. The results are provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation between supportive leadership style and job burnout of aqua sports coaches in Tehran

Statistical index / Variable	Number	Pearson's correlation coefficient	(P) Sig. level
Supportive leadership	210	0/167	0/289
Job burnout			

*p< 0.05

According to Table 4, the Pearson's correlation coefficient is equal to r=0.16 and p=0.289. Therefore, it can be said that the null hypothesis is accepted; there is no significant relationship between supportive leadership style and job burnout of coaches.
The fourth hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between positive feedback leadership style and job burnout of aqua sports coaches in Tehran.
Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis. The results are provided in Table 5.

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Table 5: Correlation between positive feedback leadership style and job burnout of aqua sports coaches in Tehran

Statistical index / Variable	Number	Pearson's correlation coefficient	(P) Sig. level
Positive feedback leadership	210	0/13	0/481
Job burnout			

*p< 0.05

According to Table 5, the Pearson's correlation coefficient is equal to r=0.13 and p=0.481. Therefore, it can be said that the null hypothesis is accepted; there is no significant relationship between positive feedback leadership style and job burnout of coaches.

Discussion and conclusion:

This study aimed to determine the relationship between leadership stylesand burnout of aqua sports coaches in Tehran. The research hypotheses will be discussed separately in the following.

First hypothesis:

The findings showed that there is a non-significant negative relationship between educational behavior and burnout of coaches. This means that by increasing use of educational behavior, the burnout of coaches reduced very little. In contrast, Kelly and Gale (1993) and Anunimas (2005) argue that the educational behavior of sports coaches put them under stress and burnout. This difference may be explained by different population; these two studies investigated the professional players whose coaches experience a lot of stress. In fact, it can be argued that due to high workload and time limitations in professional sports, the coach faces with stress and finally, burnout. In this study, however, it can be said that due to low level of athletes, the use of educational style may be somewhat pleasant to coach. This feeling may be due to success and getting feedback. However, this finding may not be generalized, because the observed relationship is very insignificant. Altahanyh (2003) and Yasin (2013) argued that the selection of appropriate leadership style according to situation and circumstances that coaches face with may reduce the burnout. Accordingly, it can be said that the educational style is one of the neutral styles for aqua sports coaches who were studied in this research.

Second hypothesis:

The findings showed that there is no significant relationship between democratic leadership style and burnout of coaches. Zupitas and Constanti (2010) showed that there is strong and positive relationship between using transformational leadership style and personal success; it also reduces emotional exhaustion and depersonalization of coach. According to Yalsin (2013) and Harris and Russell (2013), the leader behavior may play an important role in increasing the satisfaction of athletes and helps to create more favorable exercise environment and having relationship with players. In fact, the democratic behavior like educational behavior may lead to a pleasant feeling of coach. However, the process of this pleasant feeling creation is likely to be different. In other words, in democratic style, the proper relationship and work environment reduce the burnout. In terms of existence of relationship, this finding is consistent with Zupitas and Constanti (2010), Yalsyn (2013), and Harris and Russell (2013); in terms of

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statistical significance, it is inconsistent with them. It may be said that among the aqua sports coaches in this study whose burnout is in average to low levels, other factors are involved in causing burnout. The lack of effective mechanisms to deal with stress may be one of these factors.

Third hypothesis:

The results showed that there is a significant and inverse relationship between autocratic leadership style and burnout of coaches. This means that autocratic leadership style is associated with reduced burnout. This is inconsistent with findings of Bagheri et al. (2005), Lyons and Schneider (2009), Zupiatis and Constanti (2010), and Risambsi et al (2012). In fact, these researchers believe that the authoritarian and task-oriented leadership styles are associated with increased burnout; inflexible behaviors of coaches, emphasis on winning as goal, limited communication channel, and emphasis on reaching goals in team cause stress and psychological pressure and burnout over time. Although this argument seems logical, it should be remembered that they studied the professional athletes and coaches and in this study, the low and medium-level athletes were studied. Analyzing the views of Altahanyh (2003), Yalsin (2013), and Harris and Russell (2013), in fact, it can be concluded that there is no continuously effective and fully qualified style; according to different situations, different styles may be effective. In present study, the autocratic leadership style is associated with reduced burnout. This finding may be due to reduced excess personal interactions, elimination of role conflict, substantially increased control over teams and athletes, and reduction of stressors. The last two factors may prevent emotional exhaustion, create a pleasant internal feeling, increase the success feeling of coach, and reduce burnout. On the other hand, it seems that the risks of aqua sports for low-level athletes put coaches under stress and automatically pushes them toward autocratic style. In general, based on this finding, it can be said that among the leadership styles, the autocratic style is the best style for aqua sports coaches. The authoritarian leadership is able to prevent burnout.

Fourth hypothesis:

The findings clearly indicated that there is no significant relationship between supportive leadership and burnout. This finding is inconsistent with findings of Dale and Weinberg (1989) and Risambsy et al (2012). Risambsy et al (2012) argued that the transformational leadership style has a direct and negative impact on burnout and increases the satisfaction of individuals. In other words, the transformational leadership which creates emotional relations between leader and subordinate (i.e., covers supportive leadership features) should logically reduce the burnout of athletes; this is inconsistent with recent findings. On the other hand, Noil (2007) stated that the supportive style may create a positive atmosphere in team and proper group relations. However, it seems that the positive atmosphere in team and proper group relations cannot significantly reduce the burnout of coaches. Based on previous research, although supportive leadership style creates appropriate climate for team, it cannot reduce job stressors and prevent from burnout of coaches. In fact, this style of leadership plays a neutral role in dealing with burnout. This finding may be due to nature of job responsibilities (Yalsin, 2013), different attitudes, and different expectations (Bvharkvz, 2002) of different groups.

Fifith hypothesis:

The findings of this study showed that there is no significant relationship between positive feedback leadership style and burnout of coach. The previous research have paid little attention to relationship between this leadership style and burnout of coaches. They only state that the positive feedback behavior of coach may avoid burnout of athletes (Zarei Matin, 2007). In other words, although the positive

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feedback behavior may be associated with increased optimal performance and encourage players to perform better and achieve desirable outcomes and results (Neville, 2007), it cannot be associated with burnout of coaches. It seems that the encouragement and rewarding players may not be associated with positive attachment, reduced stress of coaches, and reduced emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of success. It can be argued that the positive feedback behavior focuses more on players and may create pleasant feelings, human relations, and encourage success among them to prevent their burnout. However, this may not be true about the coaches.

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