

## **ORIGINAL ARTICLES / ARTICOLE DE CERCETARE**

### **LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS OF FOOTBALL COACHES**

**Mehmet ACET<sup>1</sup>, Osman GUMUSGUL<sup>2</sup>, Utku ISIK<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> *Associated Prof. Dr. Dumlupinar University School of Physical Education and Sports - Germiyan Kampusu/ Kutahya, Tel: +902742270458/123 E-mail: acetmehmet44@gmail.com,*

<sup>2</sup> *Research Assistant Dr., Dumlupinar University School of Physical Education and Sports - Germiyan Kampusu / Kutahya, Tel: +902742270458/152 E-mail: [osman.gumusgul@dpu.edu.tr](mailto:osman.gumusgul@dpu.edu.tr)*

<sup>3</sup> *Research Assistant, Dumlupinar University School of Physical Education and Sports - Germiyan Kampusu / Kutahya, Tel: +902742270458/119 E-mail: [utku.isik@dpu.edu.tr](mailto:utku.isik@dpu.edu.tr)*

**Abstract.** In this study, the aim was to investigate leadership characteristics of football coaches who was member of Turkish Football Coach Association according to some variables. With this aim, Leadership Scale for Sport was applied to 144 football coaches in coach development seminar which was organized by Turkish Football Coach Association. Leadership Scale for Sport developed by Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) to evaluate athletes' perception of coaches' behaviors, their leadership style or how athletes perceive their behaviors in 5 subscales. According to the data collected from research group, there were not significant differences on age and coaching certificate variables ( $p>0,05$ ); but there were significant differences on coaches' education situation and their experiences. With reference to this, in educational and teaching subscale coaches graduated from high school had significantly higher scores than bachelor graduated coaches ( $p<0,05$ ;  $t=1,852$ ). Additionally, it was observed that less experienced coaches had significantly higher scores in autocratic behavior than more experienced coaches ( $p<0,05$ ;  $F=2,305$ ). As a result, it is necessary that coaches giving direction to country football, should have leadership characteristics. There were not significant differences on age and coaching certificate variables on leadership subscales, but it could be observed high school graduated coaches could have more educational and teaching behaviors. The reason could be high school graduated coaches was feeling more need to improve themselves. Also, it was expected result that younger coaches have been more autocratic than more experienced coaches, because they have been into effort to prove themselves.

**Keywords:** *Football, leadership, coach*

#### **Introduction**

Human beings who are limited today in meeting all their needs like they were limited in the past have to cooperate with others to overcome this constraint. Therefore it has become an essential requirement for individuals with different goals to act in cooperation and hierarchy of responsibility for tasks and division of labor [1]. Leadership which is the sum of skills and knowledge that allows one "to gather a group of people around specific goals and to activate them for identified purposes" directly affects group productivity and achievement. In this respect, leaders should be able to analyze appropriate behaviors necessary for organizational success and productivity and present these behaviors [2].

Leadership is the procedure of influencing an organization toward achieving its goals [11]. Transformational leaders possess excellent visioning, rhetorical, and emotion management skills which are used to build close emotional bonds with subordinates, and they tend to be more successful in handling organizational change due to subordinates' improved emotional levels and their efforts to achieve the leader's vision [4].

Coach is an educated leader who directs people that works for a goal (sportsmen) to this aim intelligently [12]. Coaches' leadership skills are crucial to obtain successful results. Successful coaches bring the potential of footballers into open, allow them to realize themselves and enjoy what they do [3]. Coaching is an executive action creates the suitable conditions and environment that empowers, develops and encourages footballers and teams to good results. The task of side management in football is organizing in-field activities and ensuring cooperation among footballers. Coaches handle that organization and cooperation [7]. Elements that are important in leadership in sports are not different from the roles in leadership in general. Sports leaders are also expected to have group members experience pleasure of being a member, helping them get satisfaction from membership, directing members to specific activities, guiding and influencing them [9]. Ensuring

effective and productive sports management and achieving the expected results from sports organizations are possible with sports managers that know tendencies, carry leadership qualities and have sports education.

Coaching is a type of leadership that is done face to face. It connects individuals with various past experiences, skills and experiences. As a leader, coaches help sportsmen take responsibility and experience success. Coaching is not having footballers memorize technical skills or finding the perfect game plans. Coaching involves caring for people, believing in them, getting close to them and valuing them for real.

Coaches with perfect leadership skills provide their teams with ideas and they have the know-how to transform these views into reality. As leaders, coaches have the planning and organization skills to maximize each player's skills and to combine players' collective skills to maximize the success of the team. Conscious of physical, psychological and social support environments, leaders are successful in using them.

Coaches who are successful leaders in sports accept that relationships between the environment and themselves positively affect the performance of sportsmen. Leadership in sports is a field that requires mastering many personal and technical skills. It is not an easy task to affect the actions and behaviors of different players in the team. Especially in the last years, due to changes in the nature of sports, coaches have started to interact with various people and groups.

Importance of leadership approaches in the fast growing football industry is an indicator that shows how harmony between coaches and football teams can be used effectively. Knowing the leadership qualities that effective coaches have will help us present the general profile of successful coaches. As a matter of fact, success comes with the communication between the coach and players, style of the coach and most importantly coach's skill in managing players. Which characteristics are used in management and whether this situation affects the general success of the team should be studied since these points are significant for the whole sports community.

In this context, this study aimed to present how leadership qualities of coaches differ based on some variables and understand coaches' leadership qualities based on the obtained results.

## **Material and Method**

The descriptive study was undertaken as a survey.

### **Study Group**

Universe of the study was composed of active coaches who are members of Association of Turkish Football Coaches (TÜFAD). The association has 55 branches throughout Turkey. Sample of the group was composed of 114 coaches that regularly attended the Annual Coach Development Seminars organized by the Association. Surveys were distributed during the seminar and after the necessary explanations; the surveys were filled with participants who volunteered to take part in the study. It took about 20 minutes to fill in the surveys. Researcher himself collected the completed survey forms.

### **Data Collection Tools**

Leadership for Sport Scale (LSS) (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980) developed by Chelladurai and Saleh in 1980 [6] was used in the study that aimed to identify the leadership qualities of coaches. Many researchers have investigated the reliability and validity of the Turkish version of the scale [13]. LSS is 5-point Likert type scale with 40 items and 5 sub scales (Training and Instruction Behavior, Democratic Behavior, Autocratic Behavior, Social Support Behavior, Positive Feedback Behavior (Rewarding) that aim to identify which leadership style the coaches follow. The options and numerical values change from 5 to 1 representing behavior types that the participants rate as "completely agree", "agree", "unsure", "disagree" and "completely disagree".

**Data Analysis**

SPSS statistical package program was used in data analysis. Arithmetic means, percentages (%) and frequencies (f) were used in analyzing the data. T-test for independent groups and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used for parametric values to determine the extent of influence on coach views by demographical variables. In the present study, internal consistency coefficient Cronbach Alpha value was found to be = 0.85 in the reliability test conducted on the study group whereas internal consistency coefficients for the sub scales were as follows: Training and Instruction Behavior= 0.79, Democratic Behavior= 0.80, Autocratic Behavior= 0.53, Social Support Behavior= 0.83, Positive Feedback Behavior (rewarding) = 0.63.

**Findings**

*Table 1. Distribution of Personal Information for the Study Group*

FACTOR	VARIABLE	F	%
Coaching Certificate	TFF C	92	63.9
	UEFA B	52	36.1
	<b>Total</b>	144	100.0
Age	18-24	6	4.2
	25-35	26	18.1
	36-45	62	43.1
	45 and higher	50	34.7
	<b>Total</b>	144	100.0
Seniority	1-5	74	51.4
	6-10	26	18.1
	11-15	18	12.5
	16 and higher	26	18.1
	<b>Total</b>	144	100.0
Level of Education	High School	82	56.9
	Undergraduate	62	43.1
	<b>Total</b>	144	100.0

Table 1 presents personal information about the coaches that took part in the study. Based on the data, 63.9% of the participants in the sample had “TFF C” coaching certificate while 36,1% had “UEFA B” certificate. Variable related to seniority in coaching shows that years spent in coaching mostly changed between 1 and 5 years (51.4%). Age range for the coaches shows that the coaches in the sample were mostly distributed between the age bracket of “36-45” (43.1%).

*Table 2. Leadership Type Analysis Results Based On Level of Education*

Leadership type	Level of Education	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	t	p
Training and Instruction Behavior	High school	82	1,8954	,428	1,852	,040*
	Undergraduate	62	1,6078	,421		
Democratic Behavior	High school	82	1,9350	,554	,588	,652
	Undergraduate	62	1,8603	,503		
Autocratic Behavior	High school	82	2,6293	,720	,093	,773
	Undergraduate	62	2,6129	,755		
Social Support Behavior	High school	82	1,6463	,404	,050	,368
	Undergraduate	62	1,6411	,474		
Positive Feedback Behavior	High school	82	1,9268	,653	,865	,328
	Undergraduate	62	1,8000	,560		

\*p<0.05

Table 2 shows that in Training and Instruction Behavior subscale, coaches that graduated from high school obtained significantly higher means compared to coaches that had undergraduate degrees ( $p < 0,05; t = 1,852$ ). In other words, coaches that graduated from high school were found to present more training and instruction behaviors and related leadership behaviors than coaches that had undergraduate degrees.

*Table 3. Leadership Type Analysis Results Based On Coaching Certificate*

Leadership type	Certificate	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	t	p
Training and Instruction Behavior	TFF C	92	1,7457	,46316	,807	,370
	UEFA B	52	1,6598	,37570		
Democratic Behavior	TFF C	92	1,8575	,42724	-,964	,461
	UEFA B	52	1,9830	,67886		
Autocratic Behavior	TFF C	92	2,6565	,73595	,527	,861
	UEFA B	52	2,5615	,73107		
Social Support Behavior	TFF C	92	1,6603	,46148	,421	,330
	UEFA B	52	1,6154	,38393		
Positive Feedback Behavior	TFF C	92	1,8957	,65420	,428	,219
	UEFA B	52	1,8308	,54755		

Independent-t test was used to present the relationship between coaching certificates held by the coaches and their leadership behaviors. Analyses point to no statistically significant relationships between leadership approaches of coaches and their coaching certificates ( $p > 0,05$ ).

*Table 4. Leadership Type Analysis Based on Age*

	Age	n	X	F	p	Difference Tukey
Training and Instruction Behavior	18-24	6	1,8462	,819	<b>0,48</b>	
	25-35	26	1,8284			
	36-45	62	1,6301			
	45and higher	50	1,7446			
Democratic Behavior	18-24	6	1,8519	,719	<b>0,54</b>	
	25-35	26	2,0940			
	36-45	62	1,8388			
	45and higher	50	1,8889			
Autocratic Behavior	18-24	6	3,1333	2,727	<b>0,08</b>	
	25-35	26	2,8615			
	36-45	62	2,6903			
	45and higher	50	2,3520			
Social Support Behavior	18-24	6	1,7083	,158	<b>0,92</b>	
	25-35	26	1,7115			
	36-45	62	1,6250			
	45and higher	50	1,6250			
Positive Feedback Behavior	18-24	6	1,8000	,495	<b>0,68</b>	
	25-35	26	1,9846			
	36-45	62	1,9226			
	45and higher	50	1,7600			

\* $p < 0,05$

Table 4 compares leadership types based on age. According to analyses, there was no statistically significant relationship between age distribution and leadership types. ( $p>0,05$ ).

*Table 5. Leadership Type Analysis Based on Seniority*

	Years	N	X	F	p	Difference Tukey
Training and Instruction Behavior	1-5	74	1,7732	1,913	<b>0,13</b>	
	6-10	26	1,5383			
	11-15	18	1,5385			
	16and higher	26	1,8462			
Democratic Behavior	1-5	74	1,9550	,893	<b>0,45</b>	
	6-10	26	1,8806			
	11-15	18	1,6420			
	16and higher	26	1,9573			
Autocratic Behavior	1-5	74	2,7459	2,305	<b>0,049*</b>	<b>2-4</b>
	6-10	26	2,8462			
	11-15	18	2,4222			
	16and higher	26	2,1846			
Social Support Behavior	1-5	74	1,6554	,101	<b>0,96</b>	
	6-10	26	1,6731			
	11-15	18	1,6389			
	16and higher	26	1,5865			
Positive Feedback Behavior	1-5	74	1,9135	,362	<b>0,78</b>	
	6-10	26	1,8000			
	11-15	18	1,7111			
	16and higher	26	1,9385			

\* $p<0,05$

Table 5 presents the results of ANOVA conducted to determine the relationship between seniority and leadership types for coaches. It was found that young and therefore less experienced coaches had significantly higher means in Autocratic Behavior sub scale compared to more experienced coaches ( $p<0,05$ ;  $F=2,305$ ).

### **Discussion and Result**

This study aimed to present leadership qualities of the coaches that work in Turkey in terms of different variables.

Table 2 presents the results regarding the influence of coaches' educational levels on their leadership qualities. Results show that significant differences were only observed in Training and Instruction Behavior sub scale. Coaches that graduated from high school obtained higher means in this sub scale compared to coaches that had undergraduate degrees. In their study, Gökçe et. al. (2008) [8] found no statistically significant relationships between sports managers' level of education and relevant leadership dimensions. As it is known, in leadership trait theory, leaders are believed to have inborn characteristics and qualities and it is supposed that leaders are not trained but born. However, in the present study it was found that coaches with high school degrees obtained higher scores in Training and Instruction Behavior and according to this finding, it can be claimed that coaches with high school degrees have the tendency to develop themselves in the field of training and instruction. Coaches who did not have the opportunity to attend university may have

developed themselves with their own means and may have filled the gap by self development and providing leadership to their sportsmen in the field of training and instruction.

Table 3 presents leadership qualities base on coaching certificates held by the coaches. Based on analyses, it was found that coaching certificates did not influence leadership qualities. The study conducted by Canbaz et. al. (2016) examined coaches' conflict management based on their levels and found that conflict management skills improve by level [5]. Conflict management is a skill that can be obtained and developed with experience but leadership is an innate skill and does not have any relationship with self development and experience. It is known that, if need be, inexperienced coaches can display model behaviors in terms of leadership qualities.

Table 4 presents the results related to leadership qualities of coaches based on age. Analyses pointed to no significant relationships between leadership qualities of coaches and their ages. Konter's (2009) study, on the contrary, identified that some leadership qualities may change based on age [10]. Younger coaches obtained higher scores in some leadership qualities. Current finding that points to lack of influence of age on leadership qualities may be related to time spent on coaching. Leadership qualities of coaches may be related to time spent on coaching rather than the ages of coaches.

Table 5 presents the results related to leadership qualities of coaches based on seniority. Based on the analyses, significant differences were found in autocratic leadership based on seniority. Less experienced coaches have more autocratic leadership qualities compared to more experienced coaches. Study by Toros et.al. (2013) examined coaches' leadership styles based on seniority [14]. According to findings of the study, more experienced coaches obtained higher scores in Training and Instruction Behavior sub scale compared to less experienced coaches. Similar to the present study, it was also found that less experienced coaches obtained higher scores in autocratic leadership qualities compared to ore experienced coaches. As it is well known, autocratic leadership is a single sided communication model and based on following and carrying out orders. Therefore, less experienced coaches may believe that they will have higher power of sanction on sportsmen when they display autocratic leadership qualities. This finding may have been resulted from the need of less experienced coaches to prove themselves.

This study aimed to present how leadership qualities of coaches differ based on some variables and understand coaches' leadership qualities based on the obtained results. It is important to understand coaches' leadership qualities and grasp which variables change these qualities since they have significant impact on the performance of teams and sportsmen they coach. The results of the present study show that coaches' leadership qualities differ according to seniority and level of education whereas they do not change based on age or coaching certificate they held. Future studies can compare leadership qualities of coaches with different characteristics, examine coaches in different sports branches and study the direct influence of leadership types on sportsmen's performances.

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