



The relationship between coaching behavior style, exercise pleasure and athletes' moral health

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Original Article</p> <p>Article history:</p> <p>Received: 19 July 2020</p> <p>Revised: 10 August 2020</p> <p>Accepted: 25 August 2020</p> <p>Published online: 1 January 2021</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>athlete, coaching, health, moral.</p>	<p>Background: The coaching styles are a powerful force that can affect the health of athletes and their view of sports.</p> <p>Aim: The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between Coaches' Behavioral Style (CBS) and Exercise Pleasure (EP) and Athletes' Moral Health (AMH).</p> <p>Materials and Methods: This research is descriptive-correlational. The statistical population of this study included all athletes in Neyriz city. Three questionnaires were used for data collection: CBS questionnaire of Chelladurai and Saleh (1980), EP questionnaire of Scanlan et al. (1993), and AMH questionnaire of Vallerand et al. (1996). Descriptive statistics and the Spearman correlation coefficient were used for data analysis.</p> <p>Results: The results showed that although some of the components of AMH and CBS, such as negativism, were inverse, overall, there was a positive and significant relationship between CBS and AMH. Also, there was a positive and significant relationship between AMH and EP.</p> <p>Conclusion: According to the results, CBS can affect AMH and EP. Therefore, sports coaches should choose their behavior style according to athletes' needs, however, based on their willingness in supportive and participatory styles.</p>

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1. Introduction

All modern concepts of health go beyond the absence of diseases and imply the maximum capacity of an individual for self-realization and self-fulfillment. This should balance the human inner forces and capacities with the feeling of pleasure or dissatisfaction in their connection with the environment [1]. Moral health can be considered, as one of the dimensions of athletics health, which means observing ethical considerations in order to be safe from psychological, social and sometimes physical injuries [2]. The reason of this is that unhealthy behaviors and moral abnormalities can endanger the health of the athletes or the community around them by creating stress and psychological and social tensions [3]. Despite this, studies on moral health are not as broad as other dimensions of health, and the need for more extensive research in this area and the discovery of more knowledge on the subject is clearly necessary. In a few studies in this field, Rezaee et al. (2015) conducted a study on the moral health of middle-aged women and their results showed that the importance of women's moral health could play an important role in family health [3]. Kudryavtsev et al. (2016) believe scientists in public health research less consider social and moral aspects of health; The lack of such data seriously hinders the formation of a morally healthy personality pattern and reduces the social adjustment of individuals in modern society [4]. About Athletes' Moral Health (AMH), we can refer to the theory of Vallerand et al. (1996): AMH considers as moral principles in sports through five important dimensions: First is to respect the rules and the authorities, even if it is the disadvantage of the athlete; The second, respect and concern to the opponent, for example, helping the injured

or defeated opponent; The third, accepting some unwritten general agreements in sports, such as shaking hands with opponents regardless of defeat or victory in the match; The fourth, the quality of a person's commitment to sports, such as regular attendance at training sessions and hard training; and the fifth, not having a negative approach to sports, such as the "win at any cost" mentality that tempts the athlete to break the rules and use violent behavior [5].

It should not be forgotten that the great influence of coaches on athletes enables them to influence athletes' ethical decisions and undoubtedly, coaches play an important role in shaping psychological experiences and behaviors in athletes [6]. Despite the fact that coaching is a unique job and has a high psychological pressure, the expectation from the coach is to nurture healthy and virtuous of athletes [7]. Different behaviors of coaches can affect the positive or negative behavior of athletes [8]. For example, some behaviors can reduce anxiety, increase self-confidence, and the desire to continue participating in sports and developing skills [9]. In contrast, some another behavior cause anger, stress, and apathy in athletes [10].

In the Coaching Behavior Style (CBS), we can refer to the theory of Chelladurai & Saleh (1980). They consider five behavioral styles for sports coaches: First, training and instruction behavior, which provides the required training and technical support to help athletes to achieve their tremendous physical potential; The second is the authoritarian style, which shows the authority of the coach and his dictatorship in his decisions; The third, the democratic style, which represents the participatory decision-making process by the coach, where athletes are also considered a part;

The fourth, the social support behavior style in which the communication needs between the athlete and the coach are prioritized; Finally, positive feedback behavior, which includes verbal and visual feedback and motivational reinforcements of the coaches [11].

It seems that the Exercises Pleasure (EP) is also one of variables that can be influenced by the behavioral style of coaches [12]. Sports participation is an excellent situation for physical, mental, social development and learning life skills that can ultimately bring joy and happiness to the athlete. But, it is important to understand that positive outcomes are not only achieved through sports participation, but also through the creation of a favorable sports environment that can be shaped by the coach, as a key element of exercise [13]. Recognizing the factors affecting the moral status of athletes in coaching and training sports skills, especially in athletes, can play a decisive role in their success and the health of sports environments. A review of the research background showed that despite examining some health variables in athletes, no research has been done on coach behavior, exercise pleasure and moral health. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to investigate the relationship between the behavioral style of sports coaches and the enjoyment of sports and the moral health of athletes.

2. Materials and Methods

The research method of the present study was descriptive-correlational and data were collected by the questionnaire and in the field. The statistical population of the present study included all athletes of Neyriz city in Fars province who were members of sports teams in this city in 2017 and were issued a game card by the Office of Sports and Youth. The statistical population was

about 540 people. According to Morgan table, 219 questionnaires were collected using random sampling method. In the present study, three questionnaires were used to measure research variables:

1. The CBS Questionnaire by Chelladurai & Saleh (1980) measuring five coaches' behavioral styles (training and instruction behavior, democratic behavior, autocratic behavior, social support behavior, and positive feedback behavior) [11].
2. Scanlan et al. (1993) questionnaire with seven questions to measure the EP [14].
3. The standard questionnaire of Vallerand et al. (1996) to collect information related to AMH. This questionnaire consists of 25 questions and measures five factors (commitment toward sport participation, respect to the rules and officials, social conventions, respect to the opponent, as well as a lack of negative approach toward sport participation [5].

The questionnaires were based on 5-point Likert scoring method. The validity of the questionnaire was determined by professors and experts. Also, to determine the reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used, which was 0.92 for the coaching behavior style questionnaire, 0.89 for the exercise pleasure questionnaire and 0.85 for the moral health questionnaire. All were acceptable. Descriptive statistics and Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical tests (to determine normality) and Spearman correlation coefficient (to examine the relationship between variables) were used to analyze the data.

3. Result

The demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

Variable	Categories	Measure
Age	Mean	30.47 years
	SD	10.21 years
Education	Diploma	8%
	Associate degree	39%
	bachelor	41%
	MA	12%
Sport background	< 5 y	23%
	5-10 y	31%
	10- 15 y	22%
	> 15 y	24%
Gender	Male	56%
	Female	44%

Table 2 shows the statistical indices of the research variables and the result of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed the data in the present study do not have a normal distribution, so the Spearman test was used to measure the relationship between variables.

The results of Spearman correlation coefficient in Table 3 show that there is a significant positive relationship between the components of CBS and EP ($P \leq 0.05$, Figure 3). There is also a significant positive relationship between CBS and

AMH ($P \leq 0.05$). These relationships are all in a positive direction which increase with the increase of one another, and vice versa. In some variables, we see a negative relationship indicating an inverse relationship between the variables. For example, negative approach toward sport participation has a negative relationship with dictatorial behavior style.

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between CBS and EP and AMH. The descriptive findings of the research showed that the coaches use more training and instructional style which is consistent with the research of Aghaei and Moradi (2016) [15] and Nazardin et al. (2009) [16].

Among the variables of AMH, the highest average is related to athletes' exercise commitment. Exercise commitment means that athletes are morally committed to their team and exercise and, while observing the basic principles of that sport, do not leave their sport suddenly.

Table 2. Descriptive indicators of research components and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

Research components	Mean and standard deviation	Z score	Significance level
CBS	0.43±3.65	1.11	0.16
Training and instructional style	0.55 ±4.17	2.13	0/001
Dictatorial style	0.57 ±2.99	2.01	0.001
Democracy style	0.68 ±3.25	2	0.001
Social support style	0.67 ± 3.74	1.5	0.020
Positive feedback style	0.72 ± 4.14	2.29	0.001
AMH	0.67 ± 3.74	1.57	0.010
Social conventions	0.70 ± 3.89	1.67	0.010
Respect to the rules	0.60 ± 4.02	2.12	0.001
Commitment toward sport	0.65 ± 4.26	2.87	0.001
Respect to the opponent	0.60 ± 3.71	2.13	0.001
Lack of negative approach	0.80 ±2.94	2.03	0.001
EP	0.67 ±4.22	2.67	0.001

Table 3. Results of Spearman correlation test on the relationship between CBS and EP and AMH

	EP	Training and Instructional style	Dictatorial style	Democracy style	Social support style	Positive Feedback style	CBS	Social conventions	Respect to the rules	Exercise commitment	Respect to the opponent	Lack of negative approach	AMH
EP	1												
Training & Instructional style	0.20*	1											
Dictatorial style	0.01	0.09	1										
Democracy style	0.09	0.41**	0.09	1									
Social support style	0.02	0.33**	0.18**	0.33**	1								
Positive Feedback style	0.27**	0.52**	-0.09	0.36**	0.46**	1							
CBS	0.16*	0.72**	0.32**	0.66**	0.59**	0.68**	1						
Social conventions	0.21*	0.35**	0.32**	0.24**	0.01	0.26**	0.39**	1					
Respect to the rules	0.19*	0.75**	0.16*	0.53**	0.27**	0.45**	0.68**	0.35**	1				
Exercise commitment	0.08	0.47**	0.08	0.16*	0.25**	0.42**	0.40**	0.45**	0.35**	1			
Respect to the opponent	0.24**	0.60**	0.38**	0.51**	0.26**	0.39**	0.66**	0.41**	0.52**	0.28**	1		
Negative approach	-0.07	-0.06	-0.46**	0.26**	0.19*	0.01	-0.19*	0.39**	-0.24*	-0.05	-0.20*	1	
AMH	0.18*	0.74**	-0.08	0.41**	0.35**	0.53**	0.64**	0.60**	0.64**	0.66**	0.67**	0.12	1

*Significance at the level of 0.05

**Significance at the level of 0.01

As an unwritten rule, athletes who do not fulfill their commitment to the team and sports, lose the trust of the sports community and no longer have the moral credibility to continue their sport. Weiss (2020) states that even in sports rehabilitation programs, this commitment to exercise can have a positive impact on the process of returning athletes' health [17]. Scanlan et al. (1993), in Sports Commitment Model describe pleasure as a central component of athlete commitment that can be considered in many healthy and rehabilitation programs [18].

As the results, CBS has a positive relationship with AHM, although this correlation coefficient is weak. Perhaps the reason for the low correlation is that more other factors can also affect the pleasure and satisfaction of athletes. In line with this finding, Riemer and Chelladurai (1995) state that team performance and player satisfaction are the result of coaches' behavior that causes pleasure and vitality in team members [19]. Also, Price and Weiss (2000) [20], Boardley et al. (2008) [21], Sympas and Bekiari (2018) [22] indirectly and in line with this finding notice that the

coach's behavior and coaching style can influence satisfaction and pleasure among athletes.

Other results showed that EP was the most relevant when the coach uses a positive feedback style and evaluates the players' performance with a positive expression. Positive feedback or reward behavior is a type of behavior in which the coach praises and rewards athletes for their good performance. In this method, the coach focuses on the strengths rather than the weaknesses, which makes the athlete committed and enjoys the sport. Of course, this athletes' pleasure also showed a significant relationship with the style of training and instruction behavior, which can be explained by the athletes' satisfaction with the coaching expertise in skills training and is especially enjoyable for athletes at the professional level. However, it was expected that this relationship with some other styles, such as democracy and social support, was significant, but there was no significant correlation perhaps due to the cross-sectional nature of the research or the attitudes of athletes of different genders or ages. Also, despite the fact that some studies have negatively evaluated the relationship between Exercise pleasure and dictator style [22], in the present study, no significant relationship was found between these variables, which can be explained by the fact that coaching instruction and commanding approach seems neutral and maybe pointless for athletes.

The findings also showed that there is a significant relationship between CBS and AMH. The results of this study are aligned to some researches which showed that coaching style can have an effect on antisocial and immoral behaviors of athletes [23]. Also, other studies consistently show CBS lead to athletes' ethical variables and

ethical attitudes. Although all dimensions of AMH have a significant relationship with CBS, but among these dimensions, the strongest relationship was related to the dimension of respect to the rules and officials. Observance of rules and regulations is one of the principles that every coach puts foremost, because breaking these rules is a kind of norm breaking that may have many moral consequences such as conflict, aggression and stress [12, 24]. This stress can negatively affect the performance of athletes before, during and after the competition [25, 26]. The interesting point is that the negativity to exercise is inversely correlated to the autocratic behavior of coach. In other words, with the increase of the level of domineering and dictatorial behavior by the coach, the negative view of athletes towards exercise also increases. It should be noted that athletes' negative attitudes toward exercise could be one of the factors that reduce the pleasure and commitment to exercise [27, 28].

5. Conclusion

According to the results, the CBS has an important relationship in creating EP and increasing AMH. Therefore, coaches should be responsible for the ethical behaviors of athletes and the conditions for them to enjoy exercise. Also, considering that the two styles of "training and instruction behavior", and "positive feedback behavior" are more related to EP and AMH, it is suggested to coaches, while raising their knowledge of sports training and performing various exercises, create the same conditions of competition repeatedly for athletes. By identifying the moral behaviors of athletes, coaches should remind them their strengths more than the weaknesses so that with positive feedback,

these successes reinforce in them more than before, reduce their boredom and stress that can lead to immoral behaviors. According to the results, sports administrators are also recommended to pay more attention to coaches, not only as helpers in athletes' physical and mental health, but also as ethics teachers in sports. At the same time, in selecting and motivating coaches, they should make more efforts to observe the moral health of athletes.

Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

Authors' contributions

All authors contributed to the original idea, study design.

Ethical considerations

All stages of this research were carried out by observing ethical considerations and standards such as voluntary participation, fiduciary in data and confidentiality of answers. Also, in the present study, the ethical code (046.1398.REC.SSRC.IR) was obtained from the Iran's Sports Science Research Institute.

Data availability

The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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