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Transformational Leadership Behaviours of Athletic Directors and Their Effects on Coaches' Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menyelidik hubungan di antara gaya kepimpinan transformasi pengarah-pengarah sukan dengan kepuasan bekerja jurulatih-jurulatih di institusi-institusi NCAA Divisyen I dan III di Amerika Syarikat. Kajian ini juga menyelidik sama ada terdapat perbezaan di antara institusi Divisyen I dengan institusi Divisyen III dari segi tahap kepimpinan transformasi pengarah-pengarah sukan dan tahap kepuasan bekerja jurulatih-jurulatih. Data untuk kajian ini dikumpul daripada 618 jurulatih. Transformational Leadership Behaviour Inventory (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter 1990) digunakan untuk mengukur persepsi jurulatih-jurulatih dari segi gaya kepimpinan pengarah-pengarah sukan. Kepuasan bekerja jurulatih-jurulatih diukur dengan menggunakan Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England & Lofquist 1967). Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan analisis pembezaan dan regresi logistik. Jurulatih Divisyen I didapati memberi penilaian yang lebih tinggi dari segi kepimpinan transformasi ketua mereka sekiranya dibandingkan dengan jurulatih Divisyen III. Jurulatih Divisyen I juga melaporkan tahap kepuasan bekerja yang lebih tinggi sekiranya dibandingkan dengan rakan mereka di Divisyen III. Kajian ini juga mendapati hubungan yang signifikan di antara gaya kepimpinan transformasi pengarah-pengarah sukan dengan kepuasan bekerja jurulatih-jurulatih di institusi NCAA Divisyen I dan Divisyen III.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between transformational leadership behaviours of athletics directors and job satisfaction of coaches at NCAA Division I and III institutions in the United States. In addition, this study also examined whether there are differences between Division I and III institutions with respect to the levels of transformational leadership behaviours of athletics directors and coaches' job satisfaction. Data for this study were collected from 618 coaches. The Transformational Leadership Behaviour Inventory developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter (1990) was used to measure coaches' perception of the transformational leadership behaviours of their athletics directors. The job satisfaction of coaches was measured by using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England & Lofquist 1967). Data were analyzed by using discriminant analysis and logistic regression. It was discovered that Division I coaches evaluated their superiors higher in terms of transformational leadership behaviours than their counterparts in Division III. Division I coaches also reported a higher level of job satisfaction than coaches from Division III. The results also revealed that there was a significant relationship between transformational leadership behaviours of athletics directors and coaches' job satisfaction at both NCAA Division I and Division III institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Interest in the study of leadership has been renewed by the emergence of a leadership paradigm known as transformational leadership theory. Burns (1978) noted that leadership has often been viewed as an exchange process in which a leader provides rewards to subordinates in the form of pay or prestige in exchange for

work done by subordinates. Burns (1978) labeled this type of leadership behaviour as transactional leadership.Using the framework provided by Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs theory, Burns (1978) distinguished transformational from transactional leadership by pointing out that, transactional leaders appeal only to subordinates' low level and basic needs such as the need for safety and security. The transformational leader, on the other hand, activates subordinates' higher order needs such as the need for self-actualization. Burns (1978) argued that by activating subordinates' higher order needs, transformational leaders are able to elevate subordinates' motivation. The outcome of transformational leadership behaviours is one of an inspired subordinate who is aiming for higher goals and who is willing to perform work beyond the minimum levels specified by the organization (Bass 1985).

Based on the studies conducted by Bass (1985), Bennis & Nanus (1985), Tichy & DeVanna (1986), Conger & Kanungo (1987), Kouzes & Posner (1987), Yukl (1994), and Yammarino & Bass (1990), it was discovered that transformational leaders are endowed with certain traits and skills such as charismatic personality, strategic vision, superior diagnostic and oratory skills, and the ability to recognize the needs of subordinates. The results of several studies conducted by Avolio & Bass (1988), Bass, Avolio & Goodheim (1987), Howell & Frost (1989) and Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter (1990) showed that these traits are displayed in leadership behaviours which resulted in higher job performance and greater job satisfaction among employees of business and industrial organizations. Since job satisfaction and performance are criteria often used to measure leadership effectiveness (Bass 1990), it could be argued that transformational leadership behaviours are indeed related to effective leadership behaviours.

Sports administrators will certainly be interested in investigating the usefulness of the transformational leadership theory in sports settings. Specifically, if transformational leadership behaviours are indeed related to subordinates' job satisfaction in sports settings, perhaps sports administrators may be able to motivate subordinates to achieve higher goals and to do more for the organization with fewer resources. Certainly, the ability of sports administrators to motivate subordinates to perform work beyond the minimum levels required by the organization is important in sports today, especially in intercollegiate athletics in the United States where most programs are being burdened with increasing costs of running such programs and declining revenues (Armstrong-Doherty 1995).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the positive evidence supporting the validity of the propositions of transformational leadership in business settings, there is a lack of research done on this theory in sports settings. The few research studies conducted in sports settings have obtained conflicting results. Specifically, in a study on Dutch national sports organizations, Pruijn and Boucher (1995) discovered no significant relationship between transformational leadership behaviours with subordinates' job satisfaction and commitment. In another study, Doherty and Danylchuk (1996) examined the relationship between the transformational leadership behaviours of Canadian university athletics administrators to coaches' job satisfaction. The authors discovered that transformational leadership behaviours of the athletics administrators were positively related to coaches' job satisfaction. Another study by Wallace and Weese of Canadian YMCA directors (1995) showed no significant relationship between transformational leadership behaviours with employee job satisfaction. In a study conducted by Langley and Weese (1995), the authors reported no significant difference in terms of employee job satisfaction between sports organizations led by high transformational leaders with organizations led by low transformational leaders. Bourner and Weese (1995) found evidence of transformational leadership behaviours among leaders of Canadian Hockey League organizations. However, the authors reported no significant relationship between transformational leadership behaviours and organizational effectiveness.

The conflicting results obtained on transformational leadership research in sports settings suggest the need for more research to test this theory in sports. Furthermore, considering that transformational leadership theory is a relatively new theory, the applicability of this theory in non-business settings needs to be addressed. Certainly, findings from sports

settings may provide a stronger validation of the propositions of the transformational leadership theory. Consistent with this need, the purpose of this study was to address the following question: Do transformational leadership behaviours have a significant relationship with subordinates' job satisfaction in sports settings? Specifically, this study investigated the relationship between transformational leadership behaviours of athletics directors and coaches' job satisfaction at NCAA Division I and III institutions.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study was conducted with the following objectives :

1. To identify the relationship between transformational leadership behaviours of athletics directors and coaches' job satisfaction at NCAA Division I and III institutions.
2. To examine whether there are significant differences between NCAA Division I and III institutions with respect to transformational leadership behaviours of athletics directors and coaches' job satisfaction.

METHODS

Sample

Data for this study were collected during the spring of 1998. Subjects were selected by using two procedures. First, a stratified random sample of 90 NCAA Division I and 90 Division III institutions was selected based on the 1997 National Directory of College Athletics. This directory contains the list of all NCAA Division I and III institutions, as well as the names of all head coaches and assistant head coaches at these institutions. Once the institutions were identified, a simple random sample of 10 coaches from the following sports was selected from each institution : (1) men's soccer, (2) women's soccer, (3) field hockey, (4) ice hockey, (5) men's volleyball, (6) women's volleyball, (7) men's baseball, and (8) women's softball.

A total of 1,800 subjects (900 from each division stratified according to 450 male and 450 female coaches) were randomly selected for this study using the selection procedures mentioned above. Survey packets were sent to the subjects, each packet containing a letter of introduction describing the study, directions for completing the survey, the survey instruments, and a postage paid envelope for returning the survey directly to this researcher. Follow-up letters were sent after one month to thank subjects for responding to the survey or reminding them if they had not done so. A total of 643 subjects responded to the survey representing a response rate of 35.7%. From this sample size, 25 subjects had more than 10% missing or incomplete responses and were excluded from the sample leaving a final sample size of 618 subjects (34.3%).

The final sample consisted of 310 subjects (50.2%) from Division I institutions while 308 subjects (49.8%) were from Division III. There were 313 males (50.6%) and 305 females (49.4%). The age range of the sample was 22-69 years with a mean age of 36.08 years. The majority of the subjects (n=490, 79.4%) were employed as full-time coaches while 496 subjects (80.3%) were head coaches. A total of 225 subjects (49.4%) reported performing administrative duties in addition to coaching while 259 subjects (36.4%) reported having teaching responsibilities. The number of years of coaching experience ranged from 1 year to 43 years with a mean of 11.83 years.

The determination of the sample size of 300 subjects (from each division) was based on a +/- 5.65 % tolerated sampling error. According to Backstrom and Hursh-Cesar (1981), using the formula $n = Z\ (PQ) / T$, where n is the required sampling size, Z is the Z deviate at 0.05 confidence level (1.96), T is the desired sampling error (5.65%), PQ is the heterogeneity of the main variables (50/50), a sample size of 300 subjects (from each division) drawn randomly from the population is associated with a tolerated error of +/- 5.65 %. The total sample of 600 is associated with a sampling error of +/- 4% at the 0.05 level of significance.

Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study was divided into three sections. The first section consists of the Transformational Leadership Behaviour Inventory developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990). This instrument was used to measure the coaches' perception of the transformational leadership behaviours of their athletics director. The instrument has a reported internal consistency that ranges from 0.78 to 0.92 (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter 1990). The second section of the questionnaire measures the subjects' job

satisfaction. This section consists of the 20-item short form of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire developed by Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquist (1967). The authors reported the internal consistency of the short-form MSQ to range from 0.77 to 0.92. In the final section of the questionnaire, the subjects were asked to respond to question items pertaining to demographic information such as age, gender, gender of athlete, type of sport, number of years of coaching experience, coaching status, employment status, win/loss record, teaching and administrative duties, and athletic affiliation.

Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed in two stages. First, discriminant analysis was used to examine whether significant differences exist between NCAA Division I and III institutions with respect to transformational leadership behaviours of athletic directors and coaches' job satisfaction. In the second stage of data analysis, sequential logistic regressions were used to examine the relationship between transformational leadership behaviours of athletics directors and coaches' job satisfaction, while controlling the effects of other variables.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of the discriminant analysis. It can be seen from this table that NCAA Division I and Division III institutions differed significantly ($p<0.05$) in terms of coaches' job satisfaction and athletics directors' transformational leadership behaviours. An examination of this table shows some interesting findings. First, athletic directors from Division I institutions were evaluated higher than their counterparts in Division III in terms of transformational leadership behaviours. Second, coaches from Division I institutions reported a higher level of job satisfaction than coaches from Division III. When taken together, these two findings suggest that coaches (from Division I) who evaluated their superiors higher in transformational leadership behaviours, reported a higher level of job satisfaction than coaches (from Division III) who evaluated their leaders lower in transformational leadership behaviours.

Since the results of discriminant analysis show a significant difference between Division I and Division III institutions, sequential logistic regressions were conducted separately by division. For the logistic regression analyses, the subjects were classified into one of two groups based on the median scores on job satisfaction. Specifically, subjects who scored below the median of 74.0 were classified as having low job satisfaction while those who scored above the median were classified as having high job satisfaction. All demographic variables (age, gender, coaching status, employment status, number of years coaching, administrative and coaching duties) were forced to enter the logistic regression model first. Next, in a second model, the variable under investigation (transformational leadership behaviours) was added to the logistic regression model. Comparison was made between the demographic (covariate) model with the full model. Any significant improvement in the full model indicates that adding the transformational leadership variable reliably improves the prediction of the dependent variable. This is the same as saying that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership behaviours of athletics directors and the dependent variable, coaches' job satisfaction. Table 2 shows the results for the full model after the addition of the transformational leadership

TABLE 1
Variables which discriminate between Division I and Division III institutions

Variable	Division I (Means)	Division III (Means)	Std Discrim Coefficient
Transformational Leadership	73.28	71.59	0.24
Job Satisfaction	73.93	73.53	-0.27

Eigenvalue	Canonical	Lambda	Chi-Square	Df	Sig
0.24	0.44	0.81	125.54	10	$p<0.05$

Classification Rate: Div I 68.1% Div III 69.2%

variables for Division I institutions. An examination of this table shows that Model Chi-Square was significant ($p<0.01$), indicating a significant improvement in the prediction of the dependent variable from the previous model (covariate-only model). Transformational leadership was significant ($p<0.01$) with a positive logistic regression coefficient. The two findings suggest that adding the transformational leadership variable in the full model reliably improves the prediction of the dependent variable job satisfaction. In other words, there was a significant relationship between the variable under investigation (transformational leadership behaviour) and the dependent variable (coaches' job satisfaction). The classification accuracy rate was 67.38% for coaches with low job satisfaction and 73.25% for coaches with high job satisfaction. These suggest that this model successfully differentiates coaches with low job satisfaction from those with high job satisfaction.

TABLE 2
Sequential logistic regression analysis – transformational leadership
Division I institutions (full model)

Variable Added to the Full Model	Coefficient (B)	Significance
Transformational Leadership	0.051	0.01
-2 Log Likelihood	330.41	
Goodness of Fit	312.93	
Model Chi-Square	30.678	$p<0.01$
Improvement	30.678	$p<0.01$
Classification Rate:	Low Satisfaction	67.38%
	High Satisfaction	73.25%

As shown in Table 3, the results for Division III institutions were similar to those obtained for Division I. The significance level of Model Chi-Square ($p<0.01$) indicates that adding the transformational leadership variable in the full model reliably improves the prediction of the dependent variable from the covariate-only model. The predictor variable under investigation (transformational leadership) was significant ($p<0.01$) with a positive logistic regression coefficient. When taken together, the two findings suggest that transformational leadership behaviours of athletics directors were significantly related to coaches' job satisfaction at Division III institutions. In this model, 61.15% of the coaches were correctly classified as having low job satisfaction, while the correct classification rate for those with high job satisfaction was 75.0%.

TABLE 3
Sequential logistic regression analysis – transformational leadership
Division III institutions (full model)

Variable Added to the Full Model	Coefficient (B)	Significance
Transformational Leadership	0.034	0.01
-2 Log Likelihood	354.01	
Goodness of Fit	294.28	
Model Chi-Square	15.95	$p<0.01$
Improvement	15.95	$p<0.01$
Classification Rate:	Low Satisfaction	61.15%
	High Satisfaction	75.00%

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

On the basis of the results obtained in this study, it can be concluded that there was a significant relationship between transformational leadership behaviours of athletics directors and coaches' job satisfaction at both NCAA Division I and III institutions. Specifically, the results support the propositions that transformational leadership behaviour increases subordinates' job satisfaction. As Bass (1985) pointed out, a transformational leader conveys high expectations in terms of the ability of the subordinates to achieve the goals of the organization. By engaging in transformational leadership behaviours, Bass (1995) asserted that subordinates' self-confidence and job satisfaction are positively affected, to the extent that subordinates are willing to perform work beyond the minimum levels expected of them. On the basis of Bass's (1985) assertion, it can be argued that by increasing coaches' job satisfaction, transformational athletics directors are able to motivate coaches to perform beyond the minimum levels expected of them. Certainly, this ability to motivate subordinates to do more work with fewer resources is important in sports today, in view of the rising costs and declining revenues facing most sports programs today.

However, it is less obvious why there are differences between NCAA Division I and Division III institutions with respect to transformational leadership behaviours of athletics directors and coaches' job satisfaction. Specifically, the findings of this study suggest that coaches (from Division I) who evaluated their superiors higher in transformational leadership behaviours, reported a higher level of job satisfaction than coaches (from Division III) who evaluated their leaders lower in transformational leadership behaviours. Why are there differences between Division I and III coaches' job satisfaction and their evaluation of the transformational leadership behaviours of their athletics directors? It is possible that the nature of work situations and the levels of professionalization that exists in an institution might influence coaches' job satisfaction. A comparison between Division I and III institutions suggests that there are differences between the two divisions in terms of structure (Atwell, Grimes & Lopiano 1980), levels of professionalization and commercialization (Sack 1987), and levels of competition (Coakley 1986). Specifically, NCAA Division III institutions differ from Division I with respect to the following : (1) offer no athletics scholarships, (2) spend less money on athletics, (3) generate less revenue, (4) sponsor a fewer number of sports, and (5) employ fewer coaches. It should be pointed out that most coaches at Division III institutions have faculty appointments. As educators, Division III coaches are bound to consider teaching and good performance in the classroom as more satisfying than winning games or coaching. In addition, Division III coaches are more likely to be promoted and rewarded in the institution on the basis of their ability as good educators and not as winning coaches. For this reason, Division III coaches may consider the transformational leadership behaviours of their athletics directors as being less important to the coaches' job satisfaction. On the other hand, most Division I coaches have full time appointments and these coaches are promoted and rewarded on the basis of their ability to win games. Thus, coaches at NCAA Division I institutions may consider coaching, winning games, or transformational leadership behaviours of athletics directors as being important to their job satisfaction.

This study has important implications for practitioners and researchers in sports settings. The findings of this study suggest that sports administrators should display transformational leadership characteristics toward their subordinates, because by engaging in transformational leadership, transformational leaders were discovered to make a significant difference on subordinates' job satisfaction. Since job satisfaction has been suggested by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) to be positively related to high subordinates' performance, low job turnover, low absenteeism, and higher productivity, athletics directors who are transformational will make a significant difference in terms of the organization's performance and effectiveness. Further, since transformational leadership is a skill that can be learned (Yammarino and Bass 1988), training athletic directors, sports administrators, and coaches to be transformational leaders should be the top priority of sports organizations. On a related issue, it has been pointed out that transformational leadership "converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents" (Burns 1978, p.3). According to Burns (1978), subordinates can be turned into leaders if the subordinates are encouraged to engage in transformational behaviours. This view has been supported by Bass, Waldman, Avolio and Bebb (1987) who suggested that transformational leadership can have the same effect as falling dominoes. The authors noted that transformational leadership of upper level managers can have an effect on the lower level managers. One implication from this suggestion is that sports organizations can create more transformational leaders by encouraging subordinates to exhibit transformational behaviours. One way of encouraging subordinates is by rewarding and promoting people on the basis of exhibiting transformational leadership characteristics. In addition, sports organizations should screen candidates for administrative positions on the basis of their potential to be transformational leaders.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study has provided evidence of the applicability of the transformational leadership theory in sports settings. The current findings support earlier research which showed that transformational leadership is not limited to world leaders (Hater and Bass 1985), but also can be found in educational and non-profit settings such as schools and universities (Trice and Beyer 1984;

Yammarino and Bass 1988). Specifically, this study demonstrated that the positive influence of transformational leadership on subordinates' behaviours is significant not only in business and industry, but also within the context of intercollegiate athletics.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The following research is recommended to build on the results of this study and to further improve our understanding regarding transformational leadership behaviours in sports settings :

1. Examine the relationship between transformational leadership with other criterion variables in sports settings (such as organizational citizenship behaviours, organizational commitment, or organizational culture). First suggested by Graham (1987), the relationship between organizational citizenship behaviours with transformational leadership behaviours has received some empirical support from a study conducted by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990). In addition, transformational leadership behaviours have also been studied, in business and industry settings, in relation to organizational culture (Schein 1992) and organizational commitment (Hater & Bass 1988). Significant findings obtained in sports settings with respect to the relationship between transformational leadership with these criterion variables will provide further confirmation of the usefulness and the applicability of the transformational leadership theory in the sports context.
2. Conduct a qualitative study to find out the behaviours, traits, personalities and characteristics of leaders who are perceived by subordinates as transformational leaders in the sports context. Besides examining the antecedents of transformational leaders (in terms of traits and personalities), in a qualitative research, the actual behaviours of transformational leaders can also be determined. Specifically, such a study can investigate how transformational leaders interact with subordinates on a daily basis. The information gathered from such a study will be useful in terms of developing an instrument for measuring transformational leadership specifically for the sports context. In addition, the information gathered will be useful for sports administrators in designing programs to train athletics directors, coaches, and other sports administrators to be transformational leaders.
3. Replicate this study and compare the transformational leadership styles of the following : (1) athletics directors vs. other sports administrators, (2) athletic directors vs. sports coaches, (3) coaches of different sports, (4) leadership styles of different units within the Division of Athletics. Similar to the above suggestion, the findings from this research can be used towards developing an instrument for measuring transformational leadership, and to enable administrators to design training programs to create transformational leaders in sports settings.

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