

## **PLAYERS PERCEPTION AND PREFERANCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ACROSS PLAYING POSITION OF FOOTBALL PREMIER LEAGUE CLUBS IN ETHIOPIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship among preferred and perceived leadership, their congruence and satisfaction with leadership. The second purpose was to investigate the differences among the offensive, the defensive and the mid-field players of football premier league club players in Ethiopia, in perceived leadership, preferred leadership and satisfaction with leadership. The five leader behaviors which were measured were: training and instruction, democratic behavior, autocratic behavior social support, positive feedback, and. The four aspects of leadership satisfaction, which were measured, were: individual performance satisfaction, team performance satisfaction, training and instruction satisfaction, and personal treatment satisfaction. The study finding indicated that, Player's satisfaction across different playing position showed no significant difference across players playing at different position.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Leadership is a critical component to enhance and sustain optimal sport performance (Chelladurai, Riemer), Gould, Hodge, Peterson, Petlichkoff, 1987; Vealey, 2005) and athlete satisfaction (Rimer, Chelladurai, 1995). A coach is typically responsible for making final decisions on the subject of several team matters, such as strategy, tactics and team personnel (Longhead, Hardy, 2006). A leader is any person who influences individuals and groups within an association, helps them in the setting up of goals, and leading them toward accomplishment of those goals, thereby enables them to be effective.

Leadership has been great value in football coaching and other sports but unfortunately, there were no study conducted to examine coaching leadership style and athlete's satisfaction in Ethiopia. This brought the need of studying this subject. Therefore, this study helps coaches to understand the importance of coaching leadership styles as a determinant of success for sport clubs. Also, this study may encourage them to seek greater understanding of leadership behaviour that will produce the strongest influence on team performance and satisfaction.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Research objective is the evidence of the researcher's clear sense of purpose and direction. The purpose of the study was to investigate the differences among offensive, defensive and

mid-field players of football premier league club players in Ethiopia in their leadership perception and preference. The researcher attempted to answer the following questions in the pursuit of data relative to athletes' perceptions and preference of their coaching leadership behaviour and whether this behaviour is viewed as effective.

To find out the effects of perceptions and preference of leadership behaviours on players' position (offensive, defensive and midfield), satisfaction within their coaching. Players are happy or satisfied within the group a more effective individual performer and does the perception of the coach have any emerging trends that will give us further insight to a more productive player.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Discovering Coaching Leadership

There are numerous dimensions of leadership behaviors that a strength and conditioning or fitness coach can draw from that are sensitive to the situation, sport and/or activity, and skill level of the athlete or fitness level of the client. Six behavior dimensions of leadership exist, including autocratic, democratic, Positive Feedback, Social Support, training and instruction, and situational consideration (Zhang 1997).

**Autocratic leadership:** Autocratic leadership limits the involvement of its participants in decisions. The use of commands and punishments are prevalent as is the prescription of plans and methods for activities (Zhang 1997). With autocratic leadership, a coach or trainer will map out a plan with very little, if any, input from the athlete or client. The Autocratic Behavior dimension is a prime example of a coach or trainer giving the athlete or client what the coach or trainer thinks she/he needs.

**Democratic leadership:** Democratic leadership allows for the participation of athletes or clients in decisions, and coaches are respectful of their rights (Zhang 1997). Under this dimension, athletes or clients are allowed to set their own goals and are permitted to provide input about their training program. According to Coach Wooden, coaches should "consider the rights of others before [their] own feelings and the feelings of others before [their] own rights" (ESPN 2010). This form of leadership engages the athletes or clients that they are working with, making them feel needed and important (Zhang 1997).

**Positive Feedback:** Positive Feedback is based upon a behaviorist approach and is also known as positive reinforcement (Zhang 1997). Coaches and personal trainers will compliment or reward their athletes or a client on their successes, which maintains motivational levels (Mageau 2003; Zhang 1997). The athlete or client will be rewarded for a good performance or effort (Zhang 1997).

**Social Support :** The dimension of Social Support , which is a humanistic style, satisfies the interpersonal needs of athletes or clients by remaining sensitive to them and helping them with their personal problems (Zhang 1997). A high degree of emotional intelligence (Goleman 1998), specifically empathy or having the ability to understand the emotional makeup of people and treating them according to their emotional reactions, will be required to effectively carry out this dimension (Zhang 1997; Goleman 1998).

**Training and instruction:** Another dimension, training and instruction, is utilized to bolster the athlete's or client's skill set. Here a strength coach may help refine an athlete's Olympic lifting technique or a personal trainer may guide his client through some mobility drills or

flexibility exercises that were just introduced. This dimension focuses on explaining the techniques of the exercises and the tactics of the drills, provides rationale as to why these new concepts are being implemented (Mageau 2003), and clarifies training priorities to be worked on (Zhang 1997).

### **Consistency between Perceived and Preferred Leadership in Sport**

When consistency exists between the preferred leadership styles and Perceived leadership styles, player's satisfaction toward their coaches' leadership styles is highest according to his multidimensional model of leadership (Chelladurai, 1984). In order to examine what is effective leadership style in a particular setting, it would be important to investigate the strength of this relationship.

Chelladurai(1984), examined the relationship between athletes' Preferred and preceded leadership styles and their satisfaction, Democratic Behavior, Social Support, and Positive Feedback were greater, or when the players' perceptions relative to the preference in Autocratic Behavior were lower, their satisfaction with leadership was higher. And, the players satisfaction with leadership increased as the coaches' Perceived emphasis on training and instruction increased. And when the players' perception of Autocratic Behaviors from their coaches was equal to their preference, their satisfaction was optimal, however, when the perception that the players felt too much higher or too much little was occurred, their satisfaction decline. Interestingly, the players expressed satisfaction even when the coach's Positive Feedback beavers exceeded their preferences. Chelladurai suggested future researchers should examine the leadership variables and satisfaction measures related to some objective measures on actual performance.

Barrow (1977) defined leadership as "the behavioral process of influencing individuals and groups towards set goals" (p.232). This definition is important because it places emphasis on the vision of a leader (i.e. goals, objectives) while also highlighting the necessary interaction between the leader and group members. The act of leadership attempts to influence and convert others into 'followers' (Tannenbaum, Weschler, & Massarik, 1961) and may be achieved through a variety of mechanisms such as coercion, persuasion and manipulation. Leadership requires an understanding or respect for the power dynamic between the influencer and the follower. The relationship recognizes that every act between the two parties is a 'political act' with potential for coercion (Miller, 1985).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Selection of the Participants**

By using convenient sampling (Gall et al, 1996) random sampling was used to select 7(50%) from 14 premier league clubs in Ethiopia. 182 male football players from 7 clubs were selected as sample size. All seven selected club players was incorporated in the study (N=7×26=182). The players consisted of 52 offensive players, 65 defensive players, and 65 mid-field players.

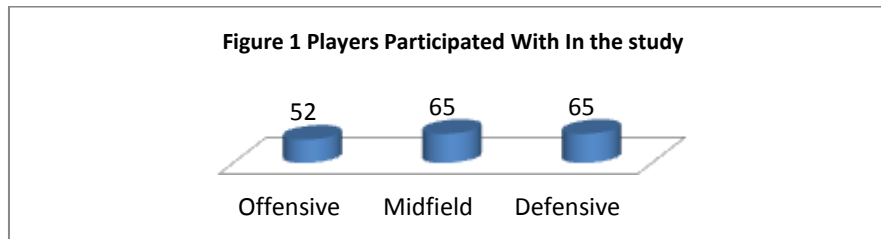
### **Instruments**

The questionnaire was comprised of three major sections such as: Leadership behavior Perceived, Preferred, Athletes satisfaction questionnaire and sample demographic characteristics. Players filled Demographic Questionnaire, Leadership scale for sport Questionnaire (LSS) and Athletes Satisfaction Questionnaire (ASQ).

**RESULT OF THE STUDY**

The result of the study found from data gathered interpreted and described in the following manner.

A total of 182 (figure 1) football premier league club Players from seven (7) clubs of Ethiopia were included in the statistical analysis. The means and standard deviations of perception and preference of Leadership Behavior, and Satisfaction scores and also means and standard deviations by Players' positions were showed in Table 1



**Table 1.** Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Means and Standard Deviations Preferred Leadership Style, Perceived Leadership Style, and Athletes Satisfaction.

<b>Preferred Leadership</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Training and instruction	182	4.46	.13
Democratic Behavior	182	4.47	.16
Autocratic Behavior	182	4.49	.17
Social Support	182	4.47	.18
Positive Feedback	182	4.40	.19
<b>Perceived Leadership</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Training and instruction	182	3.90	.26
Democratic Behavior	182	3.35	.31
Autocratic Behavior	182	3.19	.38
Social Support	182	3.29	.36
Positive Feedback	182	3.27	.62
<b>Satisfaction with</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Individual performance	182	1.91	.57
Team performance	182	1.95	.75
Personal treatment	182	1.96	.33
Training and instruction	182	1.98	.44

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics means and standard deviations of Players satisfaction.

<b>Leadership Behaviours</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Individual performance Satisfaction	182	1.91	.57
Team performance Satisfaction	182	1.95	.75
Personal treatment Satisfaction	182	1.96	.33
Training and instruction Satisfaction	182	1.98	.44

Source: primary Data

Response Scale: - 1=Never (0% of the time), 2=Seldom (25% of the time), 3=occasionally (50% of the time), 4= Often (75% of the time) and 5=Always (100% of the time).

The results of the study indicated that Players Preferred more Autocratic Behavior (M=4.49) and also they Perceived more Training and instruction (M= 3.90) than other Leadership Behaviors. Players Preferred less Positive Feedback and Perceived less Autocratic Behavior (M= 4.40, M= 3.19 respectively). Players were satisfied more with Training and instruction (M= 1.98 on a 3 point scale) and they satisfied less with Individual performance (M=1.91). The Players were consisted of 52 Offensives, 65 Mid-field and 65 Defensive Players.

**Perceived Leadership Style of Player’s across playing position**

Kruskal-Wallis significant test was used to see playing position of player’s Perception of Leadership Styles. The result indicated that Perceived Training and Instruction and Perceived Positive Feedback did not show any significant difference across groups. But the significant difference  $P \leq 0.05$  observed by Players Perceived Democratic Leadership Behavior (Offensive MR=102.98, Midfield MR=78.30, Defensive MR=95.52), Autocratic Leadership Behavior (Offensive MR=70.32, Midfield MR=113.49, Defensive MR=86.45), and Social Support Leadership Style (Offensive MR=74.45, Midfield MR=102.37, Defensive MR=94.27). Perceived Democratic Behavior supposed as better Leadership Behavior by Offensive Players. On the other hand Perceived Autocratic Leadership Behavior and Perceived Social Support better viewed by Midfield Players (See Table 3).

**Table 3.** Player’s Perception of Leadership Style across Playing Position

Perceived Leadership Style	Players position	N	Mean Rank	Test statistics		
				X <sup>2</sup>	df	Sig.
Perceived Training and Instruction	Offensive	52	94.45	.46	2	.79
	Midfield	65	88.13			
	Defensive	65	92.51			
Perceived Democratic Behavior	Offensive	52	102.98	7.02	2	.03
	Midfield	65	78.30			
	Defensive	65	95.52			
Perceived Autocratic Behavior	Offensive	52	70.32	20.85	2	.00
	Midfield	65	113.49			
	Defensive	65	86.45			
Perceived Social Support	Offensive	52	74.45	8.48	2	.01
	Midfield	65	102.37			
	Defensive	65	94.27			
Perceived Positive Feedback	Offensive	52	84.59	2.23	2	.32
	Midfield	65	98.78			
	Defensive	65	89.75			

**Note:** Level of significance: \* $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* $p \leq 0.01$

**Source:** primary data

**Preferred Leadership Style of Player’s across Playing Position**

Kruskal-Wallis significant test was used to see preference of Leadership Styles across Players playing position. The result indicated that only Preferred Democratic Leadership Style (Offensive MR=75.67, Midfield MR=86.55, Defensive MR=109.12) and Preferred Positive Feedback (Offensive MR=99.98, Midfield MR=117.85, Defensive MR=58.36) Leadership Styles showed significant difference across Players playing position. Defensive Players better Preferred Democratic Leadership Behavior and Midfield Players Preferred Positive Feedback Leadership Behavior (See Table 4).

**Table 4.** Player’s preferred of Leadership Style across Players Playing Position

Preferred Leadership Style	Players position	N	Mean Rank	Test statistics		
				X <sup>2</sup>	df	sig.
Preferred Training And Instruction	Offensive	52	97.41	1.21	2	.54
	Midfield	65	86.85			
	Defensive	65	91.42			
Preferred Democratic Behavior	Offensive	52	75.67	13.05	2	.00
	Midfield	65	86.55			
	Defensive	65	109.12			
Preferred Autocratic Behavior	Offensive	52	91.18	3.74	2	.15
	Midfield	65	83.22			
	Defensive	65	100.04			
Preferred Social Support	Offensive	52	94.65	.45	2	.79
	Midfield	65	88.30			
	Defensive	65	92.18			
Preferred Positive Feedback	Offensive	52	99.98	48.50	2	.00
	Midfield	65	117.85			
	Defensive	65	58.36			

**Note:** Level of significance: \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01,

**Source:** primary data

**Player’s Satisfaction across Playing at Different Position**

Kruskal-Wallis significant test was used to see player’s satisfaction across playing at different position. Players Satisfaction such as Individual Performance Satisfaction, Team Performance Satisfaction, Training & Instruction Satisfaction and Personal Treatment Satisfaction across different playing position showed no significant difference p<0.05 across Players playing at different position (See Table 5).

**Table 5.** Player’s Satisfaction across Players Playing at different Position

Players Satisfaction	Players position	N	Mean Rank	Test statistics		
				X <sup>2</sup>	df	Sig.
Individual Performance Satisfaction	Offensive	52	90.35	.72	2	.69
	Midfield	65	88.25			
	Defensive	65	95.68			
Team Performance Satisfaction	Offensive	52	83.10	2.23	2	.32
	Midfield	65	92.72			
	Defensive	65	97.01			
Training & Instruction Satisfaction	Offensive	52	82.28	2.38	2	.30
	Midfield	65	95.75			
	Defensive	65	94.63			
Personal Treatment Satisfaction	Offensive	52	89.68	.64	2	.72
	Midfield	65	95.61			
	Defensive	65	88.85			

**Note:** Level of significance: \*p≤0.05, \*\*p≤0.01

**Source:** primary data

**Perceived, Preferred and Satisfaction between Players Position**

Player’s Perceived Leadership Style and preferred Leadership Style as well as their Satisfaction across groups tested using kruskal- Wallis test. As indicated in the table below Players Perceived Leadership Style showed statistical significance difference p≤0.05 between Players position. In order of rank the Midfield Players record mean rank of 104.35, Defensive position of player’s record mean rank of 93.80 and Offensive Players record mean rank of 72.57. The rest Preferred Leadership Styles and Players Satisfaction showed no statistical significance difference p≤0.05 across Players position (See Table 6).

**Table 6.** Perceived, Preferred Leadership style and Satisfaction between Players Position

Ranks				Test statistics		
Perceived, Preferred Leadership & Satisfaction	Players position	N	Mean Rank	X <sup>2</sup>	df	Sig.
Perceived Leadership Style	Offensive	52	72.57	10.74	2	.01
	Midfield	65	104.35			
	Defense	65	93.80			
	Total	182	-			
Preferred Leadership Style	Offensive	52	96.87	1.42	2	.49
	Midfield	65	93.12			
	Defense	65	85.59			
	Total	182	-			
Satisfaction Style	Offensive	52	80.50	3.10	2	.19
	Midfield	65	93.48			
	Defense	65	98.32			
	Total	182	-			

**Note:** Level of significance: \*p≤0.05, \*\*p≤0.01

**Source:** primary data



**DISCUSSION**

Kruskal Wallis significant test was used to see perception of players to leadership behavior across different players playing position. Significant difference ( $P \leq 0.05$ ) observed by players perception of Perceived democratic leadership behavior (Offensive MR=102.98) and autocratic leadership behavior (Midfield MR=113.49) and Social Support leadership behaviors (Midfield MR=102.37). Perceived Democratic Behavior supposed as better leadership behavior by offensive players, Perceived autocratic leadership style and Perceived Social Support better viewed by midfield players.

Significant test to see preference of leadership styles across players playing position was indicated that only Preferred democratic (Defensive MR=109.12) and Preferred Positive Feedback (Midfield MR=117.85) leadership styles across players position showed significant difference ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Defensive players preferred more democratic leadership behavior and midfield players Preferred more Positive Feedback leadership style. Player's satisfaction across different playing position showed no significant difference ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) across players playing at different position. Similar study of Riemer and Chelladurai (1995) results showed that defensive players Preferred and Perceived greater amounts of Democratic Behavior, Autocratic Behavior, and Social Support than did offensive players. Here preference for Democratic Behavior is similar with this study.

Overall assessment Player's Perceived leadership style and preferred leadership as well as their satisfaction across groups tested as summery indicated that players Perceived leadership style showed statistical significance difference ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) between players position. Midfield players record highest mean rank of 104.35. The rest Preferred leadership styles and players satisfaction showed no statistical significance ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) across players position. In Cakioglu, Asli(2003) study except Perceived leadership behavior preference of leadership behavior and satisfaction showed similar result.

Of course the practice on ground may be perceived by different position players in different ways. But the leadership Preferred and satisfaction counted was similar across sub group. What has to be understood here are different leadership behaviors within Perceived as well as preferred leadership styles revealed difference among players playing position. Coaches now leading the players must identify the difference in perception of existing leadership practice by players and must identify preferred leadership styles by players. This would lead to gaining required satisfaction and may enhance Ethiopia football premier league club player's performance and satisfaction. According to Cakioglu, Asli(2003) players in different positions have different athletic environments and different skills so they have different demand.

Coaches can use the following suggestion to coach their clubs based on this study result offensive players can be treated by Democratic Behavior, midfield players can be treated by autocratic leadership style and Social Support . Defensive players Preferred more democratic leadership behavior and midfield players also preferred more Positive Feedback leadership style. Still it has to take so cautiously that there is no one best way of leadership behavior it depends on situation. For example Weiss and Friedrichs (1986) in their study involving 201 male NCAA Division 1-AA football players found that defensive players, whose tasks were more open, preferred higher amounts of Democratic Behavior and Social Support than offensive players with less variability in the play environment.

**CONCLUSION**



- Perceived Democratic Behavior supposed as better leadership behavior by offensive players, Perceived autocratic leadership style and Perceived Social Support better viewed by midfield players.
- Significant test to see preference of leadership styles across players playing position was indicated that only preferred democratic and Preferred Positive Feedback leadership styles across player's position showed significant difference ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).
- Player's satisfaction across different playing position showed no significant difference ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) across players playing at different position.

### RECOMMENDATION

Coaches now leading the players must identify the difference in perception of existing leadership practice by players at different position and must identify preferred leadership styles by players playing position. This would lead to gaining required satisfaction and may enhance Ethiopia football premier league club player's performance and satisfaction. Players in different positions have different athletic environments and different skills so they have different demand.

As this study implied coaches can use the following suggestion to coach their clubs. Offensive players can be treated by Democratic Behavior, midfield players can be treated by autocratic leadership style and Social Support. Defensive players Preferred more democratic leadership behavior and midfield players also preferred more Positive Feedback leadership style. Still it has to be taken so cautiously that there is no one best way of leadership behavior it depends on situation.

The coming environment changes and world dynamics must be considered in selection of coaching leadership styles. Remaining stagnant, traditional and not following technological innovation has negative pay off. To increase Ethiopia clubs competitive advantage in the world following the tail of technology is so critical. Observing Africa leading clubs coaching leadership behaviors is so important. Coaching leadership guide line to each position players must be prepared as manual.

Actually players expressed their preference for what their leaders should be in the future and reflected their perception on existing leadership practice. By one way or other players satisfaction positively or negatively related with different leadership behaviors. Most relationships resulted negative relationship with players satisfactions.

Therefore from existing Perceived leadership obtaining positive relationship is so difficult. This means if players treated by their preferred leadership style their satisfaction will go farer than what is observed now. Therefore by enhancing the Perceived leadership to the status of what is Preferred now is fundamental to generated maximum satisfaction from players. The players' preference and Perceived leadership behavior must be examined to achieve all satisfaction by applying leadership approach fit for purpose.

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