

# Exploration and Implication of Motives and Preferred Coaching Behaviors of Players

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## Abstract

The current study explored the situation of motives and coaching behaviour preferences by players as the main factors acting on their potential and leading them to active or passive dedication towards team goals. This is due to the fact that the success of players will depend on how they effectively collaborate with their coach, how they interpret various behaviour and commanding styles that their coach uses as well as individual player motives. 165 players from the Rwanda top tier Handball league answered the perception model of leadership scale for sports and the physical activity and leisure motivation scale. The collected data's reliability was calculated using Cronbach's reliability test and the results were respectively 0.816 and 0.856 showing better and reliable data results. The identified motives of Rwanda handball players are Enjoyment 94.4%, Physical conditions 89.8%, Affiliation 81.9% while the highly perceived coaching behaviors are those during training and instructions with 52.2% (often) and 38.2% (always) seconded by how players and coaches socialize with 54 % (Often) and 20.6% (Always). The Pearson correlation analysis revealed weak association between coaching behavior and sports motives with most correlation coefficients belonging below 0.039\*\* (Mastery versus Training and Instruction, Social Support). Significant Differences in perception of coaching behaviors were also observed with regard to team ownership  $F_{3,164}=12.724$ ,  $p(0.000) < \alpha(0.05)$ , Marital status  $F_{2,164}=13.868$ ,  $p(0.000) < \alpha(0.05)$  and Age range  $F_{5,164}=5.434$ ,  $p(0.000) < \alpha(0.05)$  with Tukey post hoc tests revealing that significant differences lie between school owned teams (with Government and privately owned teams) as well as age category 15-20 (with 20-25 and 30-40). No significant differences in motives were observed. The overall finding emphasizes that motives and coaching behaviors play a big role in players' psychological and physical potential hence they are important and worth exploration for the best of the team, players and the whole management as well as game followers.

**Keywords:** Perception, Coaching behavior, Motives.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sports team's success requires an understanding of all its sectors and a highlight of the role of all parameters involved. Players are essential in any team's overall success and the development and recognition of the sport involved. Henceforth, the science world persistently explores the way to better understand a player and specify what he needs, wants and necessitates to serve better his cause. The achievements of a sport or a team are dictated by what players can do; this implies that there should be excellent and dedicated players with adequate potential to mark the achievement for a team or a sport to succeed. It was indicated that the most important factors

for team success are good preparation and input efforts resulting from good coordination and proper management from appropriate team leadership (Knapp, 2016), yielding a corporate culture of competing and winning.

Both players and coaches own team achievement responsibility throughout the season. Goldsmith (2019) highlighted that the responsibility for the first 25% of the season is for strength and conditioning staff or sports science team, the next 50% of the season is for game-specific coaching practice with the responsible coaching staff, the next 15% of the season is for the medical team and rehab & pre-hab

staff while the last and crucial 10% of the season is for players (Goldsmith, 2019). It is always expected that coaches' leadership behavior and players' reason and drives to practice any sports play a significant role in overall team performance. Team success is not a one-way result but an outcome of complementing understanding of practices for players, coaches, and the overall management.

### **Coaching behaviour and players' performance**

Players are individuals with different personalities that greatly influence their perception depending on their treatment, how they are given instructions, and how they are addressed per the situation, winning or losing, contributing, or missing the game's point. Their performance and success contribution come from how appropriate they are managed and how their potentials are adequately explored, improved, and used to get the best from them. It has been noted that appropriate leadership behavior may lead to players' higher self-esteem, higher competence, and more extended sports involvement (Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007). According to Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Ryan, Bosch, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, (2011), autonomous, competent, recognized, and accepted players will display active engagement and persistence in various activities in training and competition and will report more positive physical and psychological health states. It will be the opposite once players feel rejection, lack of choice, and frequent failures, making them frustrated and may lead to a feeling of burnout.

Among the individuals interacting with players, the most regular with total responsibility is the coach (Goldsmith, 2019). According to Becker (2009) in Siekanska, Blecharz, & Wojtowicz (2013), a good coach is responsible for supporting the physical, mental, technical, and tactical development of athletes so that they can achieve their highest goals; in other words, a coach is tagged as the trainer, the promoter of players potential and the explorer of that potential to ensure team success. A coach failing to develop a leadership style competent enough to pick-up the consideration, regard, and will to move forward from his or her players is likely to fail to inspire them in any form, which may lead to a lack of team success (Marccone, 2017). The leadership behavioral model (Smoll & Smith, 1989) specified that the ultimate effects of coaching behavior are mediated by the meaning that players attribute to them; in other words, cognitive (logical) and affective (emotional) processes serve as filters between open coaching behavior and players' attitudes toward their coach (Abdilla, 2017). A study about Athletes' perception of coaches' leadership style and tendency to cooperate among competitive teams revealed that Coaching behavior aligned with the players' individual and adapted to the situational demands promoted prosocial behavior, that is, players' intent to benefit others, assist, share, donate, and

cooperate with their coach and teammates to achieve team goals. (Lameiras, Martins, Lopes-De-Almeida, & Garcia-Mas, 2017).

### **Sports drives, motives and players participation**

Everybody needs a reason to engage in a certain business, work, event or with someone. This reason serves as a source of continued invested efforts into that engagement and the reason needs to expand, evolve or diverge to keep that individual into action. A positive message from the coach toward a player is important and needful, however, without the last's vision, that message become useless and time-wasting. Motivation is key to accomplishment, be it in academics, or physical activities and sports as it helps people to perform up to expectation based on their physical and mental capacities hence keeping them satisfied. It is an inspirational process that impels the team members to pull out their weight successfully and provide their dependability to the group (Singh & Pathak, 2017). The authors above emphasized that to learn something new, firstly, there must be a goal that attracts us, and secondly, there must be some obstacle that keeps us away from attaining that goal because if there is no obstacle in our way, our present behavior and knowledge that we have already acquired will lead us directly to our purposes. In such a situation, there would be no need to learn. Players participate in competitive sports for various motives or reasons with some mainly for social engagement and fitness enhancement (Byrne, 2014), signaling that family culture, parents' and older siblings' qualities predicted the younger siblings' interests, skills, and sports involvement (Osai & Whiteman, 2017). Globally, Players and individual sporting beings do so to satisfy the need of maximizing competence, autonomy, and relatedness because motives are mainly psychological refereeing to the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The afore mentioned theory was proven by the verdict that essential psychological needs satisfaction have a direct positive effect on players' engagement and, in turn, an indirect effect mediated by players' self-motivation (De-Francisco, Arce, Sánchez-Romero, & Vélchez, 2018).

### **Association of Coaching behavior and players motives**

Behavioral and sports scientists tried to establish the effect of combined factors to a player such as the prognostic relevance of self-determined motivation, coping, burnout, perceived stress and recovery (Martinent, Cece, Elferink-Gemser, Faber, & Decret, 2018); motivation and overtraining as reliable predictors of burnout (Leonardo Henrique Silva Fagundes, 2021) and the Relationship between perceived coaching behavior and achievement motivation (Soyer, İhsan, & Laurențiu-Gabriel, 2014). The link between the obtained results is that in sports, two or more factors do work together, affect or depend on each other to stimulate a certain result hence the

exploration of motives and coaching behavior in this study. It was indicated that the degree to which players perceived their coaches to be autonomy-supportive significantly predicted the players' perceived competence, autonomy, and sense of relatedness, which in turn, each predicted their motivational orientation (Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007).

With a great focus on the sport setting, the Self Determination Theory allowed coaches to know how some of their strategies and associated behaving applied targeting to motivate players may result in a negative outcome on players' motivation and subsequent engagement (Ntoumanis & Mallet, 2014). In this situation, the self-determination theory turned around three proposed constructs such as coaches' interpersonal styles, athletes' psychological needs, and motivational regulations (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Referring to the second level of needs, the Self-Determination Theory, a coach's behavior should be aligned with the needs, capacity, level and potential of players because it suggested that individuals should express an increased behavioral investment as a result of satisfied individual psychological needs (Ntoumanis & Mallet, 2014).

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

### Participants

The target population included all players and coaches registered by their respective ten teams that participated in the Rwanda Handball Senior league 2019/2020 season. Total participants were N=175 with 165 valid, all were male. 90.3% were single while 9.7% were married. The age of participants ranged from 15 years to 40 years, with 30.3 % between 15 to 20 years old, 47.3% ranging between 21 and 25 years old, 13.9% ranging from 26 to 30 years old, 6.7% have between 31 to 40 years old and lastly 1.8% are above 40. Regarding the time spent with the current coach, 34.5% were with the same coach for one year or less, 45.5% between 2 to 3 years, 17% between 4 to 6 years, and 3% for above 6 years. About playing experience, 45.4% played handball for less than 3 years, 28.4 played between 4 to 6 years, 13.8% played between 7 to 10 years, 5.4% between 11 to 15 years, and 6% above 15 years.

### Research Instruments

Based on the variables of the study, the researcher adopted the Leadership Scale for Sports

(LSS; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980 as adopted and used for players' perception of coaches' leadership behavior in Altahayneh, 2003 (Altahayneh, 2003). He also used the Sport Participation motives Questionnaire (SPMQ) adopted as used in participation for physical activity and exercise using physical activity and leisure scale (Chowdhury, 2012).

### Procedure

The researcher collected a letter of introduction from the Director of the institute as well as the Head of Department, Sports management and Policy development. Before going to the field, the researcher got permission from "Federation Rwandaise de Handball" as the body in which the study was conducted. Once the permission was granted, the researcher contacted all team presidents for the data collection schedule. The researcher visited all teams and attended Rwanda Handball league matches and training sessions where possible following the set schedule, and the questionnaires were administered. A Consent was signed before any step forward in data collection.

### Data Analysis

A Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software version 26.0 (IBM SPSS, Chicago, USA) served as the data analysis tool. It was used to stipulate descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages and computing correlations. The collected data was tested via Cronbach alpha; a measure used to assess the reliability or internal consistency of a set of scale or test items to determine the reliability coefficient. The reliability coefficient for the Leadership behavior questionnaire (LSS) was found to be 0.816, and that of Sports participation motives (PALMS) was 0.856, with both results confirming that the used data provided reliable and consistent results.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The dominant basic players' motives

As shown in table 1, in order of agreement, the basic motives of Rwanda handball players are Enjoyment 94.4%, physical conditions 89.8%, Affiliation 81.9%, psychological conditions 79.5%, mastery 75.5%, competition 74.6%, appearance 46.8%, other expectation 32.2%.

Table 1: Summary of result on the basic players' motives

Variables (Sub-scales)	Disagree		Agree		Standard Deviation	Mean
	SD	D	A	SA		
Competition	5.4%	20%	49%	25.6%	14.31	3.68
Psychological conditions	4.8%	15.7%	50.3%	29.2%	15.26	5.49
Enjoyment	0.6%	5.4%	44.2%	50.2%	17.02	2.88
Affiliation	3%	15.1%	43.6%	38.3%	16.18	4.93
Mastery	0%	4.8%	34.8%	40.7%	16.61	2.48
Other expectation	12.7%	55.1%	26%	6.2%	11.22	3.24
Physical conditions	1.8%	8.4%	34.8%	55%	16.55	3.29
Appearance	23.6%	29.6%	27.8%	19%	20.21	4.10

These findings corroborate with the identified major motives for participation which were to develop physical skills and abilities, keeping in shape and interaction with others (Rintaugu, Mwangi, Thangu, & Otieno, 2020). They are also associated to the three most and easily accepted motives being healthy lifestyle, improving fitness and leisure where, a factor analysis with oblique rotation revealed four factors: assertive outcome, physical well-being, socio-psychological well-being, and sports mastery and performance (Ashford, Biddle, & Goudas, 2007).

### Differences in players' motives with regard to team ownership, players' marital status and age range

Table 2 demonstrates the study of differences in motives with regard to other individual parameters. All results showed that no significant differences in motives exist with regard to players' team ownership  $F_{3,164}=0.31$ ,  $p(0.969) > \alpha(0.05)$ ; Marital Status  $F_{2,164}=3.490$ ,  $p(0.64) > \alpha(0.05)$ ; Age group  $F_{5,164}=1.772$ ,  $p(0.137) > \alpha(0.05)$ .

**Table 2: ANOVA for Significant differences of Sports participation motives with regard to Team Ownership, Marital status and Age category**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<i>Sports Participation Motives per team Ownership</i>					
Between Groups	.018	3	.009	.031	.969
Within Groups	46.287	162	.286		
Total	46.305	164			
<i>Sports Participation Motives per Marital Status</i>					
Between Groups	.971	2	.971	3.490	.064
Within Groups	45.335	163	.278		
Total	46.305	164			
<i>Sports Participation Motives per Age group</i>					
Between Groups	1.965	5	.491	1.772	.137
Within Groups	44.340	160	.277		
Total	46.305	164			

The above finding stipulates that motives are mainly personal and are rarely destabilized with regards to social statuses or team situation. Most of the cases where they vary are in gender consideration, and other intrinsic or extrinsic factors that might intervene. A study that assessed participation and motivation in sport concerning general mental health and social physique anxiety demonstrated that males and females participated in recreational and competitive sport mainly for social engagement and fitness enhancement (Byrne, 2014). This is a developmental and physical activity drive for young players, with some targeting to progress into a professional sport where one is attracted by their peers while others wish to build their body and align their look to social appreciation. The drive to participate in sports may be intrinsic and extrinsic. Alexandris, Tsorbatzoudis, & Gronios (2002) cited in Heerden (2014), noted that sports participation motives differ, and a distinction can be made between the

intrinsic: the pleasure of participating, and extrinsic: future rewards or punishment motivation of men and women when engaging in sports activities (van Heerden, 2014).

### The dominantly perceived coaching leadership behavior

As shown in Table 3, considering perceived coaching behaviors, it was revealed that players consider and pay much attention to how their coaches behaved during training and instructions with 52.2% (often) and 38.2% (always) seconded by how players and coaches socialize with 54 % (Often) and 20.6% (Always). The leadership traits observed from coaches can be classified in order of occurrence as follows: Training and instructions 90.4%, Social support 74.6 %, Positive feedback 74 %, Democratic behavior 57.6%, Autocratic behavior 19.4%.

**Table 3: Summary of the results showing the leadership traits observed from coaches**

Variables	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	often	Always	Mean	St.dev
<b>Training and instructions</b>	0%	0.6%	9%	52.2%	38.2%	55.08	7.20
<b>Democratic behavior</b>	0.6%	8.5%	33.3%	42.4%	15.2%	33.12	7.18
<b>Autocratic behavior</b>	29.1%	30.9%	20.6%	13.4%	6%	11.70	5.54
<b>Social support</b>	0%	0.6%	24.8%	54%	20.6%	20.64	3.33
<b>Positive feedback</b>	1.2%	3.6%	21.2%	35.1%	38.9%	20.21	4.10

Corroborating with the results above, it was shown that distinct groups of players could be identified in terms of perceived coaching behavior, and these

perceptions may impact the amount of enjoyment and effort exerted during training and competition, perceived competence, achievement goals, and



autonomy (Wang, Teck-Koh, & Chatzisarantis, 2009). Perceived coaching behaviors also have some effects hence its low level of perception. The study of Effects of Coaching Styles on Artistic Swimmers' Intention to Continue Athletic Career revealed that democratic coaching style has a positive influence on athletes' intention to continue their careers, whereas autocratic coaching style had a negative influence on athletes' intent to continue; thus, the democratic coaching style could be more effective than authoritarian coaching style to induce long-term participation in sport (Kim, Pang, & Park, 2019). Discovering the role of perceived leadership behavior on players' dedication to work, a study that focused on leadership style discovery in performance coaching within social context (Naseer, Mughal, & Javed, 2019); with the leadership styles, coaching strategies, and social support as predictor factors significantly influenced the sport achievements

of players; results discovered a positive and highly significant relationships of leadership styles (autocratic and democratic), coaching strategies (social support and positive feedback), social support (parents, siblings, peers and sport teachers) with sport performance of players.

#### **Differences in players' perception of Coaching Leadership behavior with regard to Team Ownership, Marital status and Age category**

Table 4 demonstrate that there is a significant difference about how players from different team and their owners perceive their coaches' behavior. It was revealed that there are differences in players' perception of coaching behavior with regard to their team ownership  $F_{3,164}=12.724$ ,  $p(0.000) < \alpha(0.05)$ , Marital status  $F_{2,164}=13.868$ ,  $p(0.000) < \alpha(0.05)$  and Age range  $F_{4,164}=5.434$ ,  $p(0.000) < \alpha(0.05)$ .

**Table 4: ANOVA for Significant differences of Coaching Leadership behavior with regard to Team Ownership, Marital status and Age category**

Coach leadership behavior per team ownership					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.276	3	2.638	12.724	.000
Within Groups	33.586	162	.207		
Total	38.862	164			
Coach Leadership Behavior per Marital Status					
Between Groups	3.047	2	3.047	13.868	.000
Within Groups	35.815	163	.220		
Total	38.862	164			
Coach Leadership Behavior per Age groups					
Between Groups	4.648	5	1.162	5.434	.000
Within Groups	34.213	160	.214		
Total	38.862	164			

Tukey's Post hoc tests of differences in coaching behavior with regard to Team ownership and Age Category in table 5 revealed that for team ownership, a significant difference exists between

Schools owned teams and respectively Government owned teams, private owned teams and vice versa. A significant difference also exists between age category 12-20 and respectively 21-25, 30-40 and vice versa.

**Table 5: Tukey's Post Hoc Test Results**

Dependent Variable: Coach Leadership Behavior Tukey HSD						
(I) Team Ownership	(J) Team Ownership	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
schools	government	.349*	.080	.000	.16	.54
	private	.424*	.126	.003	.13	.72
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.						
(I) age	(J) age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
15-20	21-25	.260*	.084	.019	.03	.49
	26-30	.235	.117	.263	-.09	.56
	30-40	.662*	.154	.000	.24	1.09
	40<	.223	.275	.927	-.54	.98
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.						

The above finding reveals that the process of perceiving a behavior varies and depends on a lot of factors as demonstrated above. With regard to age range, the study about autocratic and participative

coaching styles and its effects on students' dance performance which considered the effectiveness and usefulness of every coaching style, revealed that the autocratic coaching way has a significant impact in

influencing the performance of the individuals who are still beginning to master a skill; thus, it touches on the intrinsic motivation of an individual in increasing the person's performance (Castillo, *et al.*, 2014). It was also revealed that the way communication affects coaches and athletes depends on the content of the message, method of delivery, and the relationship between the sender and receiver (West, 2016); thus, developing and professional coaches should bear in mind that during their communication and interaction with players, it is the best time to build a social cohesion that will guide their activities, improve collaboration and competitiveness leading to intended success. The way players perceive the behavior of their coach guides their response, boosts their motivation and implementation of his or her guidelines as well as the accomplishment of the set individual or group targets. In the perspective study to find out why some make it and others not, it was revealed that the psychological factors that predicted career success while statistically controlling for initial performance level and demographic variables were goal commitment, engagement in problem-focused coping behaviors, and social support seeking (Yperen, 2009).

### The extent of relationship among coaches' leadership behavior and sport participation motives variables

The development of sports practices turns around leadership and motivation with studies working on discovering the link between the two or how one may affect the other with regard to overall achievement. As shown in table 6, looking at the coefficients of correlation in the correlation matrix, it was found that all the coefficients between coaches' leadership behavior and sport participation motives are less than 0.39, and that implied that their association is weak. The inter-correlation of the relationship between sports participation motives variables demonstrates that many correlation coefficients are weak with only two variables (enjoyment & mastery and enjoyment and affiliation) having a moderate correlation. The inter-correlation of the relationship between coaches' leadership behavior variables resulted also in many correlation coefficients being weak with only one variable (social support & Democratic Behavior) being moderate.

**Table 6: Correlation matrix showing the relationship between coaches' leadership behavior and sports participation motives variables**

	TI	DB	AB	SS	PF	CT	PSC	EJ	AF	MA	OE	PHC	AP
TI	1												
DB	0.46**	1											
AB	0.011	0.19**	1										
SS	0.48***	0.53**	0.29**	1									
PF	0.41**	0.34**	0.09**	0.46**	1								
CT	0.23**	0.25**	0.26**	0.30**	0.13**	1							
PSC	0.23**	0.21**	-0.10**	0.22**	0.22**	0.29**	1						
EJ	0.22**	0.28**	-0.05**	0.20**	0.25**	0.47**	0.41**	1					
AF	0.13**	0.28**	-0.02**	0.26**	0.35**	0.43**	0.21**	0.56**	1				
MA	0.39**	0.29**	0.09**	0.39**	0.31**	0.50**	0.30**	0.53**	0.45**	1			
OE	0.15**	0.11**	0.19**	0.21**	0.04**	0.41**	0.24**	0.32**	0.17**	0.46**	1		
PHC	0.17**	0.22**	0.03**	0.26**	0.25**	0.30**	0.29**	0.44**	0.36**	0.48**	0.41**	1	
AP	0.17**	0.23**	0.20**	0.27**	0.11**	0.46**	0.41**	0.36**	0.27*	0.42**	0.55**	0.41**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 (2-tailed); \*Correlation is significant at 0.05 (2-tailed).

NOTE: Training and instruction (TI), Democratic Behavior (BE), Autocratic Behavior (AB), Social Support (SS), Positive Feedback (PF), Competition (CT), Psychological conditions (PSC), Enjoyment (EJ), Affiliation (AF), Mastery (MA), Others Expectation (OE), Physical Condition (PHC), Appearance (AP).

The results above corroborates with that of the study "The Relationship Between Motivation and Leadership" (Ahmad & Parnabas, 2019) demonstrating that both variables were independent. The overall correlation between leadership and motivation was low with a negative relationship between both variables and a positive independent contribution of leadership and motivation to team performance. This result is also connected to that got from the study "The Relationship between Perceived Coaches' Leadership Style And Motivation of Middle and Long Distance Runners' of Addis Ababa City Administration Second Division Athletics Clubs" which revealed a lack of significant correlation between autocratic leadership style and

athlete motivation and Laisser-faire leadership style with motivation, though a significant relationship between democratic leadership style and athletes' motivation was proven (Jembere, Eba, Wondirad, & Girma, 2019).

Motivation and leadership behavior have been and are still tipped to be the driving factors in the success of players, progress of careers and long-lasting achievement. Their contribution to success makes them crucial and worth exploration generation to generation in order to identify if their role remains the same, varies per factor or introduces new implications as the world of sports improves.

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no competing interests.

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