

**TITLE** On the Field and Outside the Lines: Relationships between Student-Athletes' Perceptions of Their Intercollegiate Coaches' Leadership Practices and Student-Athletes' Self-Reported Satisfaction, Athletic and Academic Performance.

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**OBJECTIVE** The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between student-athletes' perceived intercollegiate coaches' leadership practices and those student-athletes' satisfaction, athletic and academic performance when controlling for coach's gender, athlete's gender, athlete's experience, sport, and college division.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The participants in this research included a convenience sample of student-athletes (N = 105) who were enrolled in classes and played intercollegiate sports at colleges in the state of Texas during the time of data collection. Both public/state and private/religious-affiliated schools were involved in this study that included members of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Division I, or the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Divisions I, II and III. The survey was web-based and in person. Out of the 200 online surveys, 95 were completed (respondent rate: 47.5%), out of which 90 deemed usable and out of 15 hard copy surveys distributed in person, all were completed (100%) (N = 105). Participants played the following sports: two American football (1.9%), 17 soccer (16.3%), seven baseball (6.7%), 10 softball (9.6%), 12 basketball (11.5%), 13 volleyball (12.5%), 19 tennis (18.3%), eight track and field (7.7%), six cross country (5.8%), two gymnastics (1.9%), five lacrosse (4.8%), and three other (2.9%) – who specified equestrian, golf, or multiple sports (ran both cross country and track and field). Respondents completed the LPI-Observer form, the Athlete Satisfaction Questionnaire (ASQ; Riemer & Chelladurai, 1998), and provided demographic information. Two-thirds of the sample was women, ranging in age from 18-59 years old, with an average of 1.42 years of playing experience. Approximately 25 percent of the coaches rated were women.

### **KEY FINDINGS**

The most frequently reported leadership practices by coaches were Challenge and Inspire, followed by Enable and Encourage, and Model. All five leadership practices were significantly correlated with all aspects of athletic satisfaction and performance. The most positively related was Challenge, followed by Inspire, Encourage, Model and Enable. The author notes that generally, “the higher student-athletes rate their college coaches' exemplary leadership, the higher they rate their own satisfaction and athletic performance” (p. 57).

*Challenge the process* was the leadership practice variable that most often was a significant predictor of athlete satisfaction, with results indicating it as a significant predictor of six subscales: individual performance, strategy, team integration, personal dedication, academic support services, and external agents. This implies that the more the college coach sought opportunities for improvement, the more the student-athletes were satisfied with their own performance, their coach's tactical decisions, collaborative and own efforts toward team goals, college's advising and counseling, and team support from the community, fans, and the media. *Inspire a shared vision* leadership practice was a significant predictor of athlete satisfaction with ability utilization, training and instruction, team task contribution, and ethics. This implies that the more the college coach demonstrated foresight, the more the student-athletes were satisfied with their coach's implementation of their athletic skills, their coach's sense of direction, their team's leadership, and their moral standards. *Encourage the heart* leadership practice was a significant predictor of athlete satisfaction with strategy, personal treatment, training and instruction, and team social contribution. This implies that the more the college coach expressed consideration, the more the student-athletes were satisfied with their coach's tactical decisions, their coach's behavior toward them, their coach's sense of direction, and their team's actions that affect them personally. *Model the way* leadership was a significant predictor of athlete satisfaction with personal treatment and budget, which implies that the more the college coach exemplified team values, the more the student-athletes were satisfied with their coach's behavior toward them and their team's finances. *Enable others to act* was a significant predictor of athlete satisfaction with team performance and medical personnel, which implies that the more the college coach empowered the team, the more the student-athletes were satisfied with their overall organization's performance and health care providers. These statistically significant findings demonstrated that the higher student-athletes rated their college coaches on the aforementioned leadership practices, the higher their athlete satisfaction (pp. 172-173).

Regression results revealed that *inspire a shared vision* was the leadership practice variable that occurred most frequently as a significant predictor of athletic performance, with student-athletes' perceptions of their college coaches' *inspire a shared vision* leadership practice positively relating to those student-athletes' self-reported athletic performance. This implies that the more the college coach demonstrated foresight by setting long-term team goals and supporting that future orientation, the greater the student-athletes perceived their own athletic performance. This statistically significant finding demonstrated that the higher student-athletes rated their college coaches on *inspire a shared vision*, the higher their athlete satisfaction (p. 174).

No statistically significant relationships were found between the five leadership practices and the student athletes' self-reported academic performance. No demographic variables were found to have significant effects on athletic performance.