

THE ROLE OF SELF-ESTEEM IN COACHES' LEADERSHIP STYLE

IL RUOLO DELL'AUTOSTIMA NELLO STILE DI LEADERSHIP DEGLI ALLENATORI

Anna Maria Mariani

Università degli Studi Nicolò Cusano Dip. Psicologia e Scienze della Formazione
University of Studies Nicolò Cusano Dept. Psychology and Education Sciences
annamaria.mariani@unicusano.it

Stefania Morsanuto

Università degli Studi Nicolò Cusano Dip. Psicologia e Scienze della Formazione
University of Studies Nicolò Cusano Dept. Psychology and Education Sciences
stefania.morsanuto@unicusano.com

Abstract¹

The coach's leadership style is an important element in the success of an athlete or sports team. There has been a lot of research carried out that has analysed different leadership styles and performances in sport, as well as the levels of motivation and satisfaction of athletes. From an educational perspective, the focus of this study is to investigate the factors that determine effective leadership for a coach and, in particular, self-esteem. Self-esteem is a factor that has a decisive influence on the behaviour and relationships that the individual entertains with the surrounding environment. The research presented here is the first part of a larger project that involves the implementation of a psychoeducational programme on coaches, aimed at developing effective leadership by acting on self-esteem. The results are related to the descriptive research carried out on a sample of 38 coaches of adolescent athletes, both in individual and team sports. The measurement of variables was conducted with the Multidimensional Leadership Scale for Sport (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980) and the Rosenberg Self Esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). The results show that the level of self-esteem is inversely correlated with the Democratic and Training And Education style. These data, together with those from a further ongoing descriptive study, will be the basis for the definition of the psychoeducational project for coaches.

Lo stile di leadership dell'allenatore è un elemento importante nella riuscita di un atleta o di un team sportivo. Molte sono le ricerche che hanno analizzato i diversi stili di leadership e le performance nello sport, nonché la motivazione e la soddisfazione degli atleti. In un'ottica educativa, il focus di questo studio è rivolto a indagare i fattori che determinano una leadership efficace per un allenatore e, in particolare, l'autostima. L'autostima è un fattore che incide in modo determinante sul comportamento e sulle relazioni che l'individuo intrattiene con l'ambiente circostante. La ricerca qui presentata è la prima parte di un progetto più ampio che prevede l'implementazione di un programma psicoeducativo sugli allenatori, volto allo sviluppo di una leadership efficace, intervenendo sull'autostima. I risultati sono relativi alla ricerca descrittiva svolta su un campione di 38 allenatori di atleti adolescenti, sia in sport individuali che di squadra. La misurazione delle variabili è stata condotta con il Multidimensional Leadership Scale for Sport (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980) e il Rosenberg Self Esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). I risultati evidenziano come il livello di autostima sia inversamente correlato con lo stile Democratic e Training and Education. Questi dati, insieme a quelli di un ulteriore studio descrittivo in corso, saranno la base per la definizione del progetto psicoeducativo per gli allenatori.

Keywords

leadership, self-esteem, coach, feedback, autocratic

leadership, autostima, allenatore, feedback, autocratic

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Introduction

The literature on different leadership styles and the role they play in people and context, as well as on producing excellent results and personal satisfaction, is extensive, especially in the world of work organizations. Less numerous, but still substantial, is the research that investigates the effects of leadership style on athletes, both in terms of motivation and performance. In recent years, coaches have been identified as leaders. In sports, the most effective coach is identified as the one who has the ability to treat athletes with respect and is able to change his or her style according to the characteristics of the athlete with whom he or she is interacting. A single type of training and interaction does not lead to the same result with all athletes. Every athlete needs to be motivated and trained in a different way, considering the peculiarities that distinguish him or her. Coaches exert a strong influence on their athletes and their leadership is a vital element of their coaching. Coaches, through their leadership behaviour, can have an important impact on athletes' performance and physical and mental well-being, as well as on their motivation for sport (Chelladurai, 1990; Reinboth, Duda, & Ntoumanis; Serpa, 1999; Smith & Smoll, 1996; Chee et al., 2017). In particular, research shows how the coach's leadership style can positively influence the self-esteem of athletes, especially teenagers who are in the evolutionary phase of building their identity (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2009; Smoll, Smith, Barnett, & Everett, 1993). Chelladurai has developed a multidimensional model of Leadership that applies in particular to sport, where he recognises the importance of leadership style and the congruence between the three components identified by him in leadership: 1) behaviour of the actual leader 2) behaviour of the leader perceived by the athlete and 3) behaviour of the required leader (Chelladurai, 2007). There is an extensive literature that links the self-esteem variable with the effectiveness of leadership (Hill & Ritchie, 1977). Our study aims to investigate the relationship between this variable, self-esteem, and the leadership style assumed by the coach, with the aim of identifying a possible psychoeducational intervention working on self-esteem to improve the effectiveness of the coach's leadership.

1. Leadership in Sports

The concept of leadership can be applied to a wide range of contexts and this leads to many different definitions of leadership. Northouse defines leadership as the ability to influence the activities of individuals and groups to achieve specific goals, while Gray (2004, p. 76) suggests that the leader knows what should be done and influences others to cooperate in doing so. Chelladurai (1999) also defines leadership as the process that leads to the involvement of group members towards the achievement of a goal. The business context has produced a large number of research and theories describing the characteristics and limitations of different leadership styles. Different leadership styles have different impacts on individuals and groups depending on the context in which they move and the characteristics of the members. As well summarised by Fletcher and Arnold (2011), the observation of leadership behaviour has led to the definition of leadership styles by several authors.

Lewin et al. (1939) speak of authoritarian, autocratic, participatory and *laissez-faire* style, to which others later add the adjectives charismatic (House, 1977; Weber, 1947), managerial, supportive, participatory and results-oriented (House, 1971; 1996), people-oriented and task-oriented (Tracy, 1987), transactional² and transformational³ (Bass, 1985; Burns 1978).

² Transactional leadership indicates a leadership style focused on the transaction between leader and associate. In this sense, the associate offers his or her work performance and skills in exchange for financial benefits, such as salary. At the heart of this leadership model is the mutual exchange of benefits. As a result, this type of leadership is characterised by control and intervention in the event of error and by the use of incentives to motivate.

³ Transformational leadership is defined as an approach that generates valuable and positive

Talking about the effectiveness of the leader (Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983) and their function (Hackman & Walton, 1986), a series of attributes and competencies are linked to the leader that determine their organisational and leadership effectiveness. These include honesty, self-intuition, flexibility, emotional intelligence, the ability to generate enthusiasm, collective thinking, cooperation, trust and the ability to create a vision (Ringer, 2007; Stein, Papadogiannis, Yip and Sitarenios, 2009; Yukl, 2008). The social perspective focuses on social exchange (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001), leading to a greater attention to the relationship between leaders and their subordinates. More recently, the situational approach (Hersey, 1986) has provided a prescriptive view of leadership along with accompanying suggestions on how leaders can become effective in different types of organisational approaches and activities. Northouse (2010), with a more trait-related approach, states that the individual traits of the leader determine his or her leadership style and that important characteristics for an effective leader are intelligence, determination, integrity, sociality and self-esteem. Self-esteem seems to constitute a requirement for the initiation of leadership behaviour (Bono and Judge, 2004). As far as the sports field is concerned, leadership maintains an identification similar to that of the business world, for example Chelladurai (1999) defines leadership as “a behaviour aimed at influencing the members of a group to achieve the group’s objectives”. At the same time, however, the social aspect of the role is highlighted, as leadership in sport is identified as a complex social process in which coaches must be effective communicators to exert the right influence on athletes and society. Leadership in sport involves, as a matter of fact, different levels, from athletes to sports associations and management (Chee, Rasyid, Tengah, Low, 2017). In this sense it is important to underline the fact that the role of the coach includes technical aspects (training and game strategies, organization and planning) but also interpersonal aspects (motivation, support, strengths and weaknesses, personality of the athletes) (Chiu, Rodriguez, Won, 2016; Fletcher & Roberts, 2013; Surujlal & Dhurup, 2012). Chelladurai (1978, 1993) developed the Multidimensional Leadership Model for Sport (MMLS) which is focused on the sport and the existing transactions between leaders and followers in a specific context, because, as Hollander (1978) says, such transactions are of enormous importance to define leadership processes. The model draws its origins from some of the best-known leadership theories, such as the contingency model (Fiedler, 1967), the goal-oriented leadership theory (House & Dressler, 1974) or the discrepancy theory (Yukl, 1971). Chelladurai’s model takes into account leaders’ behaviours in combination with athletes’ preferences and demands from the context. Fig. 1 is an example of the process that generates leadership style. There are three elements, whose combination gives rise to effective leadership: Situational Characteristics (e.g. cultural context, group’s goals, type of task, gender, age, skills’ level - Box 1), Leader Characteristics (Box 2) and Member Characteristics (Box 3). The characteristics of the leader, members and situation influence the behaviour style of the leader (Box 5) which, at the same time, is also influenced by the set of rules and restrictions required (Box 4) and the preferences of the members (Box 6), which, in turn, are influenced by the characteristics of the members and the demands of the situation. All these elements have a direct and indirect influence on members’ satisfaction and performance (Box 7).

changes in individuals and the social system. This type of leadership increases the motivation, mood and performance of the followers through the connection of the follower’s identity and self to the identity of the group to which they belong, as well as the challenge to followers to take greater responsibility for their work and to understand their strengths and weaknesses.

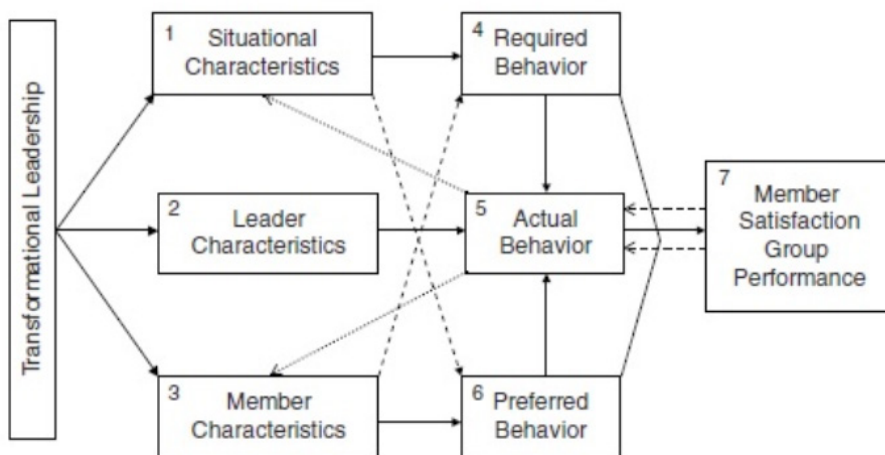


Figure 1 Multidimensional Model of Leadership (Chelladurai, 2007)

If the three elements are convergent, the athletes perceive a higher level of satisfaction. In order to measure the leadership behaviour of coaches, Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) developed the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS). It measures different dimensions of coach behaviour; the first is the decision-making style (democratic and autocratic style), then motivational trends (social support and positive feedback) and finally didactic behaviour (training and education). Specifically, the five dimensions identify:

- **Training and Instruction**, is one of the crucial factors in increasing athletes' performance, as the coach provides technical instructions and suggestions to help athletes improve their technical gesture and develop their physical potential, as well as guidance on how to acquire the necessary skills and tactics. For team sports, the coach coordinates the activities of team members;
- **Democratic Behaviour**: reflects the coach's tendency to involve athletes in the decision-making process, with respect to team or individual goals and how to achieve them; this behaviour affects the motivation and commitment of the athletes;
- **Autocratic Behaviour**: leads back to a coach who makes decisions on his own and with a rather authoritarian style;
- **Social Support**: describes a coach who takes care of the well-being and health of his or her athletes, building a positive climate of interpersonal relationships;
- **Positive Feedback**: concerns the coach's behaviour focused on recognition and reward for positive performance.

Empirical studies carried out by Chelladurai (1993) have shown that athletes are satisfied when coaches show training and instruction-oriented leadership, as well as positive feedback. The same feedback was obtained from studies carried out by Alfermann and Würth (2005). Other studies have shown that training/instruction is positively correlated with performance (Rajabi, 2012). On the contrary, democratic behaviour was found to be positive (Lee, 2007; Rajabi, 2012) and negatively correlated to sports results (Lan, 2009). Studies by Weiss and Friedrich (1986) have shown that social support is more likely to increase athletic performance.

2. The influence of the level of self-esteem on the leadership style assumed by the coach

Rosenberg (1965) defines self-esteem as an overall self-assessment of oneself and one's skills. The higher the level of self-esteem, the more the individual has self-respect and considers himself to be a valuable person; when one's own mistakes weigh more than one's own value or tend to undermine it, there is low self-esteem which translates into little self-respect and inadequacy (Rosenberg, 1979). The construct of self-esteem can be defined at various levels, situational, task or global (Simpson and Boyle, 1975; Pierce and Gardner, 2004) and its determinants are the signals of the environment in which the person moves, the messages received from others and their perception of self-efficacy and competence (Pierce and Gardner, 2004). The concept of self-esteem has also been addressed in sport. Many studies relate sport to the growth of self-esteem, defining a positive correlation between sport and higher levels of self-esteem (Armstrong & Oomen-Early, 2009; Liu et al, 2014), especially in children and adolescents. The relationship between self-esteem and sports leadership style has been less investigated. Research shows that higher levels of self-esteem are present in athletes with a transformational leadership style (Galante and Ward, 2016). The relationship between self-esteem and transformational leadership has also been investigated in business leaders; Matzel et al. (2015) state that higher levels of self-esteem are positively correlated with transformational leadership. Schoel et al. (2011) research has shown that people with high and stable self-esteem are more confident in achieving their goals and preferably show a democratic leadership style in situations of uncertainty. On the other hand, people with low and unstable self-esteem seem to pay more attention to the autocratic style. For the information available to the research team, there is no evidence linking the level of self-esteem to the coaches' leadership style, while there are several links between the leadership exercised by the coach and the leadership perceived and/or preferred by athletes. For example, the study by Liukkonen and Salminen (1990) shows that team sports coaches are perceived as more autocratic, less democratic and socially supportive than individual sports coaches. Young athletes seem to prefer the Training and Instruction style more strongly, followed by Positive Feedback, Democratic Behaviour, Social Support and Autocratic behaviour (Cruz et al., 2017). A similar result was identified by Pitts et al.'s research (2018), combined with a greater preference for democratic style on the part of athletes who play individual sports rather than team sports.

At this point what Chelladurai (1993) stated seems very appropriate: "A general conclusion that can be drawn about the influences of sport type is that as task dependence and/or task variability increase, the need for training and instruction, autocratic Behaviour, social support, and positive feedback increases (p. 653).

3. Method

Considering the scientific evidence mentioned, which shows a positive relationship between self-esteem and effective coach's leadership and adopting the multidimensional vision of Chelladurai's leadership (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980), which shows how coach's leadership is influenced and should take into account the demands coming from the environment and the athletes, our study was aimed at investigating the relationship between the different leadership styles proposed by Chelladurai and the coaches' level of self-esteem.

3.1 Sample and Procedure

The champion is made up of 38 coaches (Age M = 33.71 years, females 28.9%), of which 50% for team sports and 50% for individual sports. All participants have been informed about the aims of the research, the privacy policy and the limited data set, signing the informed consent. The questionnaires were administered through Google Modules.

3.2 Measures

- **Rosenberg Self-esteem scale RSES** (Rosenberg, 1965). It's a 10 item Likert scale with a 4-point range answer (from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"). It measures a person's overall evaluation of his or her worthiness as a human being (Rosenberg, 1979). The items are equally positively or negatively represented, measuring relatively positive and negative self-esteem (Sarkova et al., 2006). A higher score indicates higher self-esteem.

The RSES demonstrates a Guttman scale coefficient of reproducibility of .92, indicating excellent

internal consistency. Test-retest reliability over a period of 2 weeks. Reveals correlations of .85 and .88, indicating excellent stability. The RSE correlates significantly with other measures of self-esteem, including the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. In addition, the RSE correlates in the predicted direction with measures of depression and anxiety (Boyle, Saklofske & Matthews, 2015).

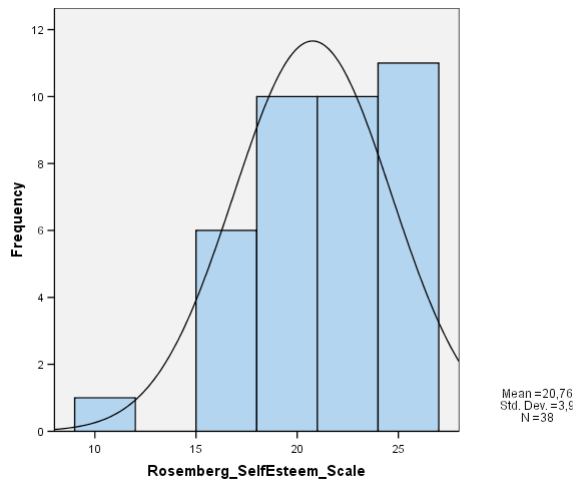
- **Leadership Scale for Sport LSS** (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980). The scale identifies three aspects of sports leadership, the preference of athletes for a specific coach's behaviour (Chelladurai, 1984 ; Chelladurai, Imamura, Yamaguchi, Oinuma, & Miyauchi, 1988 ; Hastie, 1995 ; Horne & Carron, 1985 ; Sherman, Fuller, & Speed, 2000), athletes' perception of the coach's behaviour (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Horne & Carron, 1985) and the coach's perception of his own behaviour (Bennett & Maneval, 1998 ; Brooks, Ziatz, Johnson, & Hollander, 2000 ; Dwyer & Fischer, 1988 ; Horne & Carron, 1985; Salminen & Luikkonen, 1994). It consists of 40 items divided into 5 subscales, whose items are divided into Training and Instruction (13), Democratic Behaviour (9), Autocratic Behaviour (5), Social Support (8) and Positive Feedback (5). The data presented here are related only to the data of the leadership behaviour perceived by the coach.

4. Data analysis⁴

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

The histogram of the data for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale shows that the coaches' self-esteem falls within the average normal values of the test (scores between 15 and 25 are in the normal range), with only one value below 15 points (scores below 15 indicate low self-esteem). The histogram also shows that the highest frequency occurs for values greater than 24, indicating that the coach generally has high self-esteem.

⁴ Data analysis was carried out through the SPSS statistical software



Graph. 1 Rosenberg selfesteem

We now compare the results of the Leadership Scale for Sport test obtained from the questionnaires addressed to the coaches.

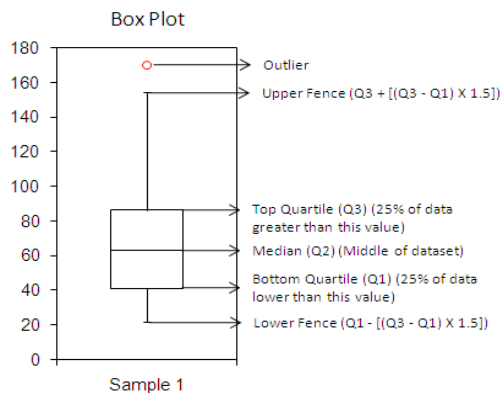
Explanation of the Box plot

We use the box plots of the 5 areas. The box plot shows the minimum value (Q0), the first quartile (Q1), the median (Q2), the third quartile (Q3) and the maximum value (Q4) of a variable. The box (the box) is between the first and third quartile and shows the width of the central half of the distribution. The height of the box is in fact equal to the interquartile range (IQR) and contains 50% of the central half of the observations made, those between the first and third quartile. The line inside the box instead represents the median.

The two segments starting from the box and extending upwards and downwards are called “moustaches”. These moustaches indicate the dispersion of values lower than the first quartile and those higher than the third quartile that are not classified as outliers.

The highest value among those present in the variable which does not identify an anomalous value defines the end of the upper moustache. Similarly, the lowest value, which does not identify an outlier value, defines the end of the lower moustache.

If there were any abnormal values, they would be represented in the boxplot as isolated points above and/or below the distribution moustaches. An illustrative graph follows:

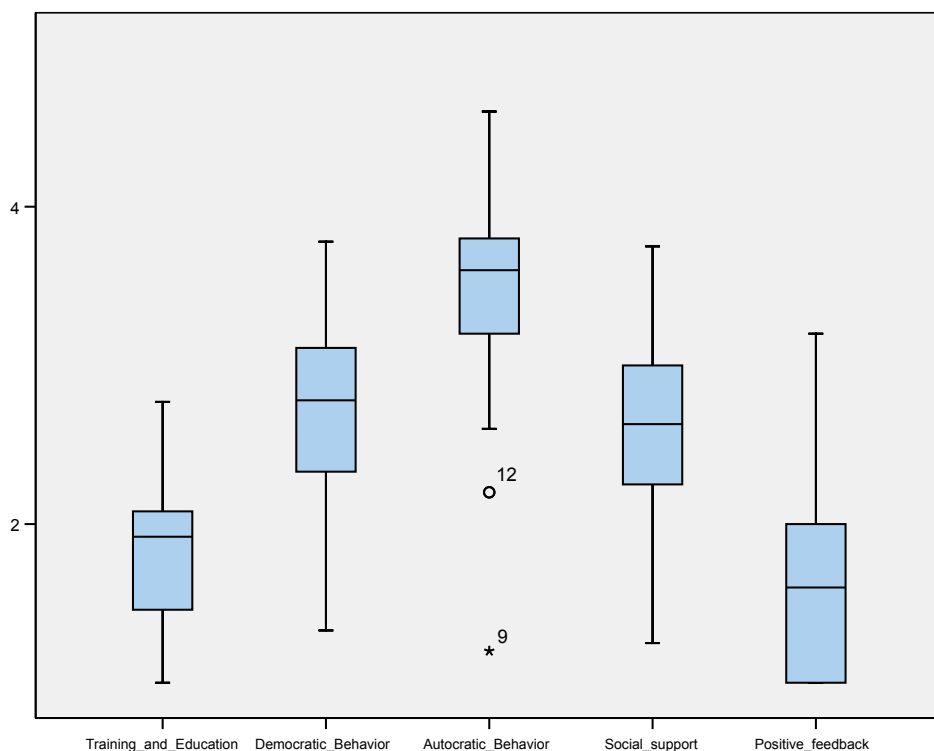


Graph. 2 Box Plot explain

In the questionnaires the maximum value of the score is 5 (high tendency to the described behaviour) and the minimum value is 1 (low tendency). In the boxplot, the averages are indicated. Comparing the values obtained in the questionnaires, it is immediately evident that **the Autocratic behaviour is the dominant characteristic of the coaches**, even if we have two outliers.

On the other hand, it is peculiar how very low is the result related to positive feedback. The 50 of the observations is in fact below the value 2 and the upper extreme reaches the maximum value 3, which indicates the average value of the investigated variable.

The box plot of the Training and Education variable is also very oriented towards low values. Democratic behaviour and social support are instead distributed around the average value.



Graph. 3 T-Test Leadership style

T-Test

Null hypothesis: two populations have equal averages on some metric variables

Conditions

1. Independent observations: This often applies if each case in the ASP represents a different person or another statistical unit. This seems to apply to our data.

2. Normality: The dependent variable must follow a normal distribution in the population. This is only necessary for samples of less than about 25 units. We will see the actual size of the samples used for our t-test after running it, so we will not worry about normality until then.

3. Homogeneity: The standard deviation of our dependent variable must be equal in both populations. We need to apply this hypothesis only if the size of our sample is (clearly) unequal.

SPSS verifies whether this applies when we perform our test t. If not, we can still report the correct test results.

Null hypothesis: Men and women have equal averages in the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

Group Statistics

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Rosemberg_SelfEsteem_Scale	Female	11	19,18	4,976	1,500
	Male	27	21,41	3,261	,628

Graph. 4 Group Statistics Female/Male Rosemberg Selfesteem Scale

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
Rosemberg_SelfEsteem_Scale	Equal variances assumed	,894	,351	-1,631	36	,112	-2,226	1,365	-4,994 ,543
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,368	13,645	,193	-2,226	1,626	-5,722 1,271

Graph. 5 Independent Samples Test Rosemberg Selfesteem Scale

The observations are independent, and the samples are greater than 25 (1), so the Normality check can be overlooked.

From Levene's test (2) on the equality of variances I obtain a Sig. value higher than 0.05, so the hypothesis of equal variances is valid and consequently the first line of the test will be considered.

Since the p-value - Sig. (2-tailed) - is greater than 0.05 (3), the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, and it is thus concluded that the difference between the averages is not statistically significant (4).

The gender does not influence statistically significantly the average self-esteem value.

The same analysis is carried out for the average values obtained in the Leadership Scale for Sport test to check if there is a statistically significant difference between the averages of male and female coaches in the 5 areas.

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Training_and_Education	Female	11	1,7627	,52094	,15707
	Male	27	1,8826	,43838	,08437
Democratic_Behavior	Female	11	3,0709	,32577	,09822
	Male	27	2,6252	,55330	,10648
Autocratic_Behavior	Female	11	3,6000	,40000	,12060
	Male	27	3,3704	,75591	,14547
Social_support	Female	11	2,5827	,57385	,17302
	Male	27	2,6319	,53953	,10383
Positive_feedback	Female	11	1,4182	,73460	,22149
	Male	27	1,7185	,51816	,09972

Graph. 6 Group Statistics Female/Male Leadership

Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
									Lower Upper
Training_and_Education	Equal variances assumed	,954	,335	-,724	36	,474	-,11987	,16554	-,45559 ,21586
	Equal variances not assumed			-,672	16,087	,511	-,11987	,17829	-,49766 ,25793
Democratic_Behavior	Equal variances assumed	3,362	,075	2,489	36	,018	,44572	,17906	,08258 ,80887
	Equal variances not assumed			3,077	30,901	,004	,44572	,14487	,15023 ,74122
Autocratic_Behavior	Equal variances assumed	3,355	,075	,950	36	,349	,22963	,24184	-,26084 ,72010
	Equal variances not assumed			1,215	33,220	,233	,22963	,18897	-,15473 ,61399
Social_support	Equal variances assumed	,149	,702	-,250	36	,804	-,04912	,19647	-,44759 ,34934
	Equal variances not assumed			-,243	17,621	,810	-,04912	,20179	-,47372 ,37547
Positive_feedback	Equal variances assumed	1,520	,226	-1,432	36	,161	-,30034	,20974	-,72570 ,12503
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,236	14,240	,236	-,30034	,24290	-,82049 ,21982

Graph. 7 Independent Samples Test Leadership

By carrying out the same considerations made previously, it can be inferred that the observations are independent, and the samples are greater than 25 (1), and therefore the verification of Normality can be neglected. From Levene's test (2) on the equality of variances I obtain a Mr. value higher than 0.05 in all areas, so the hypothesis of equal variances is valid and, consequently, I will consider the first line of the test.

Since the p-value– Sig. (2-tailed) – is less than 0.05 (3) only in the case of Democratic Behaviour, we cannot reject the null hypothesis, and thus we conclude that the difference between the averages is not statistically significant (4) for all the other four areas, while, for the Democratic Behaviour area, the difference between the averages is statistically significant and therefore we reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the averages: Males 2.62, Females 3.07. The latter appear to have a higher average of more democratic behaviour than their male colleagues in a statistically significant way.

Correlation Matrix

Correlations								
		Age	Training_and_Education	Democratic_Behavior	Autocratic_Behavior	Social_support	Positive_feedback	Rosemberg_SelfEsteem_Scale
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	-,117	,173	-,209	,040	-,081	,163
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,486	,299	,207	,811	,627	,328
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38	38
Training_and_Education	Pearson Correlation	-,117	1	,165	,281	,559**	,375*	-,377*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,486		,321	,087	,000	,020	,019
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38	38
Democratic_Behavior	Pearson Correlation	,173	,165	1	,195	,441**	,063	-,375*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,299	,321		,240	,006	,708	,020
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38	38
Autocratic_Behavior	Pearson Correlation	-,209	,281	,195	1	,443**	,118	,170
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,207	,087	,240		,005	,480	,309
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38	38
Social_support	Pearson Correlation	,040	,559**	,441**	,443**	1	,242	-,260
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,811	,000	,006	,005		,143	,115
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38	38
Positive_feedback	Pearson Correlation	-,081	,375*	,063	,118	,242	1	-,090
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,627	,020	,708	,480	,143		,591
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38	38
Rosemberg_SelfEsteem_Scale	Pearson Correlation	,163	-,377*	-,375*	,170	-,260	-,090	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,328	,019	,020	,309	,115	,591	
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38	38

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the bivariate correlation matrix, it can be seen that there are two negative correlations between the results of the Rosenberg Self-Estimate Scale Test and the areas of Training and Education and Democreatich Behaviour, which indicates that as the coach's self-esteem increases, the values in these areas decrease.

Type of Sport: Team or Individual

Group Statistics

	Sport Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Training_and_Education	Individual	19	1,7653	,50305	,11541
	Team	19	1,9305	,40880	,09378
Democratic_Behavior	Individual	19	2,7768	,62406	,14317
	Team	19	2,7316	,44374	,10180
Autocratic_Behavior	Individual	19	3,2842	,74927	,17189
	Team	19	3,5895	,57145	,13110
Social_support	Individual	19	2,4100	,51228	,11753
	Team	19	2,8253	,50101	,11494
Positive_feedback	Individual	19	1,7053	,63725	,14619
	Team	19	1,5579	,55609	,12758
Rosenberg_SelfEsteem_Scale	Individual	19	20,42	4,337	,995
	Team	19	21,11	3,494	,802

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
Training_and_Education	Equal variances assumed	1,759	,193	-1,111	36	,274	-,16526	,14871	-,46686	,13633	
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,111	34,554	,274	-,16526	,14871	-,46730	,13677	
Democratic_Behavior	Equal variances assumed	3,654	,064	,258	36	,798	,04526	,17567	-,31101	,40154	
	Equal variances not assumed			,258	32,496	,798	,04526	,17567	-,31235	,40288	
Autocratic_Behavior	Equal variances assumed	,814	,373	-1,412	36	,167	-,30526	,21618	-,74370	,13317	
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,412	33,646	,167	-,30526	,21618	-,74477	,13424	
Social_support	Equal variances assumed	,003	,955	-2,526	36	,016	-,41526	,16439	-,74866	-,08187	
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,526	35,982	,016	-,41526	,16439	-,74866	-,08186	
Positive_feedback	Equal variances assumed	,305	,584	,760	36	,452	,14737	,19403	-,24615	,54088	
	Equal variances not assumed			,760	35,352	,453	,14737	,19403	-,24640	,54113	
Rosenberg_SelfEsteem_Scale	Equal variances assumed	,070	,792	-,535	36	,596	-,684	1,278	-3,276	1,907	
	Equal variances not assumed			-,535	34,440	,596	-,684	1,278	-3,280	1,911	

By carrying out the same considerations made previously, it can be seen that the observations are independent, and the samples are greater than 25 (1), so I can overlook the verification of Normality. From Levene's test (2) on the equality of variances I obtain a Sig. value higher than 0.05 in all areas, so the hypothesis of equal variances is valid and consequently I will consider the first line of the test.

Since the p-value – Sig. (2-tailed) – is less than 0.05 (3) only in the case of Social Support, we cannot reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the difference between the averages is not statistically significant (4) for all the other four areas and for the Rosenberg Self-Extrem Scale, while for the Social Support area the difference between the averages is statistically significant and therefore we reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the averages: Individual 2.41, Team 2.83. In team sport the coach has a statistically significant higher average of Social Support than a colleague of his or her in an individual sport.

5. Discussions

The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between the different elements of leadership defined by Chelladurai and the level of self-esteem of coaches. The results show that the Autocratic style is the dominant characteristic of the coaches, while the Positive Feedback and Training and Education behaviours cover lower values. These results are not influenced by gender, with the exception of Democratic Behaviour, where female trainers have a higher average intake of such behaviour than their male colleagues. This figure is congruent with the literature, which shows much more marked democratic leadership behaviour in women than in men, as well as greater transformational leadership (Górska, 2016; Eagly and Carli, 2003; Pounder and Coleman, 2002; Burke and Collins, 2001). Team sports training compared to individual sports does not seem to influence leadership style except for Social Support, which seems to be more present in team sports. Moreover, the data elaborated showed that there is a negative correlation between self-esteem levels and the area of Training and Education and Democratic Behaviour, so as the level of self-esteem increases, the adoption of Training and Education and Democratic Behaviours decreases. If we divide the sample between individual and team sports coaches, we notice that the same correlation is maintained. As we know, self-esteem is understood as the view of oneself as a valuable person and the self-esteem levels in the champion's coaches are within the average value. Reading this data, this suggests that the average levels of self-esteem may not be sufficient to flexibly assume leadership behaviours that expose the vision of oneself to confrontation and to potentially contrary or critical external inputs, such as Democratic behaviour (involving athletes in decisions and in the definition of objectives) and/or Training and Education (dedicated to developing and educating the technical skills of one's own athletes). The Autocratic style, as well as Positive Feedback and Social Support, have in common a behaviour that does not expose themselves to exchanges and potential confrontation and criticism. As highlighted in the previous paragraphs, leadership, in order to be effective, has to take into account the rules, difficulties, needs of the context and people and adapt its style to the needs that have emerged, responding effectively to the different interlocutors. Therefore, a lack of flexibility in the adoption of the Training and Education or Democratic style could make coaches' leadership ineffective on some athletes or at certain times. Moreover, when the coach is responsible for teenage athletes, more flexibility in style is required, as teenagers may need different ways of growing up, depending on the stage of development they are in and the maturity they have reached. The data that emerged from this study urge us to continue along this line of research, increasing the sample and linking the leadership data perceived by the coach with that perceived and desired by the athletes.

Conclusions

According to the literature and our findings, coaches' training programs should focus also on professional development activities that help them in adopting an effective leadership style. If combined with study results, the proposal of a psychoeducational intervention to foster self-esteem could be useful to balance their efficacy. Our proposal aims to provide a psychoed-

educational protocol that works on goal setting and limiting and empowering thoughts, as well as on stress response strategies. In particular, goal setting and work on limiting and empowering thoughts have been identified as interventions that help to strengthen self-esteem (Heydari, Soltani and Mohammadi-Nezhad, 2018; Hammermeister, Pickering and Ohlson, 2009). Furthermore, coaches are strongly goal-oriented and, therefore, this would make the training intervention more effective. As far as stress response strategies are concerned, our proposal includes mindfulness interventions designed to help to manage the pressure of the sports environment. Longshore and Sachs (2014) have highlighted how a Mindfulness Training for Coaches (MTC) has helped coaches decrease anxiety and increase emotional stability. The hypothesized protocol is 8 training sessions of one and a half hours each for a total duration of 12 hours over two months. The course of the sessions is an integration between mental skill training strategies and mindfulness strategies, within which sessions are foreseen for awareness, normalization of unpleasant emotions, acceptance of adverse emotions, definition of clear objectives and commitment to their achievement, identification of limiting and empowering thoughts, visualization of success (Baltzell et al., 2014; Kaufman et al., 2018; Rothlin, 2020).

Limitations

This study presents some limitations that need to be addressed. Generalizability of the findings is restricted by the limited non-random and voluntary sample, that cannot be considered representative of the entire population for this reason. Moreover, it was not possible to compare the LSS data in the three scales, as only a small part of the athletes replied to the questionnaire, so it will be necessary to repeat the research by ensuring, with a larger sample, the comparison between the three scales (Leadership self-perceived, perceived and desired by the athletes).

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