

## Comparing the Views of Young Football Players and Their Coaches on Leading Behavior Characteristics

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### ABSTRACT

In the research, the opinions of young footballers were analyzed regarding to the educative and supportive, democratic, social support, autocratic and positive feedback leader behaviors received from their coaches. The demographic characteristics of footballers and coaches were examined. Leader behavior characteristics experienced by coaches were determined and included in the study, also the relationship between the demographic characteristics of football players and leader behavior characteristics experienced by coaches was studied. The data includes the TRNC A2 Super League footballers (total 126) and coaches from 7 different teams located in Nicosia.

In the research, mixed method which includes both quantitative and qualitative methods was used. In the quantitative part of the study, a survey method was applied to determine the leading behavior characteristics of football players from their coaches. In the qualitative part of the study, a semi-structured interview form was prepared and applied to determine the opinions of the coaches about the leading behavior characteristics.

According to the results obtained; the leader's behavioral characteristics that the footballers experienced from their coaches and the opinions of the trainers about their leader behaviors coincide. A significant difference was found between the educational status and football playing time of football players and also their social support behaviors from their coaches. In addition, a significant difference was determined again between the working times of football players with the same coach.

### Introduction

Sport, is the focus of attention amongst people in society (Konter, E. 2016). The concept of competition has become apparent within big communities with football. With the industrial increase of football, expectations within clubs have also increased. People who have invested in clubs expect success. Otherwise, as it has been seen in many situations a tense atmosphere occurs (Singh ve Lamba 2019). In such situations there is an excessive amount of stress and pressure upon football players. Therefore, playing football with this amount of stress and pressure is not easy for each individual player. Considering the level reached in football, being physical sufficient or good is not enough to increase the sportive performance alone. The player's psychological state is as important as their physical state. If a player is insufficient because of their psychological state, even if they are physically ready, they will not be able to reach their target.

Consequently, to be able to increase their performance, players need to be ready psychologically. In such circumstances it is more the role of the trainer than the player to resolve the situation.

A trainer needs to have the characteristic of being a leader, to be able to motivate their players not only physically but mentally. This will lead to the achievement of the club's previously determined target. Being a leader is not only for A Team League footballers, it is an important concept for the lower leagues too. A leader, brings a team together to achieve a predetermined target, with use of knowledge and skills that drives the team to be a whole (Findikçi, 2009).

Children who are going through adolescent may be very competent physically yet they may not be ready mentally for the A Team League. They may be skillful but lacking in the infrastructure in education leads to the loss of a player without being able to move onto a higher level (Zastrow ve Kirst-Ashman, 2015).

The infrastructure consists of training, alongside mental support to equip players. A player who reaches the A Team league, must know what they will be faced with. Hence the trainer will show their leadership and coaching skills through this process (Özsarı, 2010).

A trainer should be technically equipped with their speech, so they set a good example with their speech, crisis management, and their stance. It has been observed that players with a good infrastructure education in the lower league, are more successful in higher leagues (Akkoyn, 2014).

## Method

Mixed research method was used; it is a study which examines behavioral differences of the trainer leadership characteristics provided towards players, and the trainers leadership skills received by the players. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative semi structured questions have been used to be able to ensure that the necessary details and reliable date be collected. For this reason, mixed methods of both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to be able to analysis the techniques within the study. A survey (questionnaire) technique was used to collect the quantitative measurement of the research, in regards to the qualitative measurement a case study was used with the use of face to face interviews with semi-structure questions. Case study is a method widely used in qualitative research (Merriam, 2015). The mixed method is used a source of data collection to be able to analysis data and it is quite common in similar studies (Gürbüz ve Şahin, 2016).

## System and Sampling

This research has been applied to football players in 7 teams aged between 15-19 and their trainers in the Central region of Nicosia in the TRNC Football Super League. The study was conducted with a total of 133 people, 126 football players and 7 trainers, selected with the use of Stratified Sampling method. With the use of mixed method "the Comparison of Young Footballers and Their Coaches' Views on Leader Behavior Characteristics" have been researched. Stratified sampling is a selection technique that allows the subgroups in the system to be identified and be used in sampling with equal proportions (Gay, 2003).

## Data Collection Tools

In the quantitative phase of the study, "Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) Sports Leadership Scale and football players satisfaction questionnaire" (Leadership Scale and Leadership for Sport Scale - LSS) were applied to the football players in order to examine the leadership behavior characteristics that young football players received from their trainers.

In the qualitative part of the study, the semi-structured interview form, which was created to evaluate the opinions of the trainers on leadership behavior, contains 5 open-ended interview questions to determine the educational and

supportiveness, democratic, autocratic, social support and positive feedback leadership behavior characteristics which the trainer give to the football players.

### Data Analysis

The quantitative data was evaluated using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences; Version 24.0) 24.0 Statistical Package Program. The quantitative data; the calculation mean (x), standard deviation (S), medium and minimum-maximum values were determined. The quantitative data obtained are shown as numbers and percentages. All descriptive statistics are shown in tables and texts within the study. The significance level for the study was calculated and accepted as 0.05. T-Test and one-way ANOVA analyzes were used for the comparative analyzes. A TUKEY test was applied to the comparisons for the significant difference and the significant difference emerged and was determined.

Qualitative data was used to support the validity and reliability of the quantitative data obtained in the study. In the classification of the qualitative data obtained, NVivo 10 program was used and the data obtained was analyzed by the use of descriptive and systematic analysis. In addition, the division of the answers received in these interviews being classified into different groupings were also used (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2016).

### Findings

The findings obtained from the football players regarding their perceptions on their trainer's leadership behavioral characteristics can be seen in the table below.

**Table 1. Educational and Supportive Behavior**

Educational and Supportive Behavior	X	SS
The football player works to the best of their capacity.	1.34	0.62
Explains techniques and tactics related to the sport to each footballer.	1.50	0.80
Pays special attention to correcting the mistakes of football players.	1.46	0.76
Ensures that the function in the team is understood by the football players.	1.69	0.85
Shows the necessary skills of the sport needed to each football player individually.	1.62	0.70
Pre-plans what needs to be done and plans accordingly.	1.37	0.70
Explains to each individual athlete what to do and what not to do.	1.59	0.81
Expects every football player to fulfill their mission, down to the very last detail.	1.69	0.99
The trainer is aware of each football players strengthens and weakness.	1.65	0.98
The trainer provides specific training to each footballer according their situation.	1.86	1.07
The trainer is aware of each footballer's efforts and gives importance to their interconnectedness.	1.83	0.92
The trainer explains how each individual footballer contributes to the end result.	2.19	1.30
The trainer specifies in detail what is expected from the footballer.	1.68	1.00

The data on football players regarding their trainers' educational and supportive behavioral characteristics can be seen in Table 1, on average the response is that the trainers always provide educational and supportive leadership behavior with a high frequency response of "always" and some participants responded as "often".

According to the findings trainers, being aware of football players capacity ( $X=1.34$ ,  $SS=0.62$ ) and pre-calculating in advance, and according to that determines an appropriate plan ( $X=1.37$ ,  $SS=0.70$ ). The response football players provided is that trainers frequently explains to each football player how each individual player contributes to the end result ( $X=2.19$ ,  $SS=1.30$ ). Another finding that is made apparent is that, trainers give importance to each football player's interconnectedness ( $X=1.83$ ,  $SS=0.92$ ). It can also be perceived that most trainers provide each football player with specific training according to each situation ( $X=1.86$ ,  $SS=1.07$ ).

**Table 2. Democratic Behavior**

<b>Democratic Behavior</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SS</b>
The trainer ask football players for their personal opinions on strategies to be followed during the match.	1.90	1.06
Before making important decisions the trainer receives a team consent from football players on important matters.	2.16	1.30
The trainer consults and gets football players opinions while making a decision.	2.16	0.98
The trainer encourages its football players to make recommendations regarding the way training will be implemented.	1.92	0.98
The trainer allows its football players to set their own goals.	1.57	0.75
The trainer allows football players to try their own way, even if they make mistakes.	2.05	0.85
The trainer takes the opinion of football players regarding important coaching issues.	2.42	1.19
The trainer allows its football players to work to the extent of their own capacity.	2.00	0.99
The trainer allows its football players to participate in making a decision on tactics to be used in a competition.	1.77	1.19

In Table 2 the results regarding football players perceptions on their trainer's democratic behavioral characteristics is apparent as the trainer often samples democratic behavioral characteristics.

The responses regarding the trainer are as most of the time "always" or most of the time "often". The findings on the trainers are, the football players are permitted to set their own targets ( $X=1.57$ ,  $SS=0.75$ ) and the players are able to contribute to the decision and tactics to be used during the match as ( $X=1.77$ ,  $SS=1.19$ ). The responses which the football players provided regarding the trainer consulting and taking on their opinions on important issues related to coaching were as often ( $X=2.42$ ,  $SS=1.19$ ). According to the research one thing that is comprehensible is that trainers acquire the ideas of their athletes for the strategies to be followed in certain competitions ( $X=1.90$ ,  $SS=1.06$ ). Hence most trainers, allow for football players to try out their own way even if it is believed that there is a miscalculation ( $X=2.05$ ,  $SS=0.85$ ).

**Table 3. Social Support Behavior**

<b>Social Support</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SS</b>
The trainers helps their players with their personal problems.	1.47	1.00
The trainers helps resolve conflict amongst the team members.	1.93	1.17
The trainer wants their player to be personally good in every aspect.	1.42	0.79
The trainer provides personal support to their players.	1.64	0.82
The trainers expresses their feelings towards their players.	1.96	1.10
The trainer encourages their players to trust and believe in themselves.	1.81	1.03
The trainer has a close and informal relationship with their players.	2.00	1.12
The trainer is encouraging.		
The trainer invites players to their home.	3.01	1.59

The responses of the football players regarding the social support behavioral characteristics they received from their trainers is apparent in Table 3 there is an indication that the trainers frequently practice social support leading behaviors towards their players.

The answers given in this section on average are, that most of the trainers are at the "often" and some of them are at "always". According to the findings obtained from the study, it was determined that the trainers wanted the football players to be good in every aspect ( $X = 1.42$ ,  $SS = 0.79$ ) and support the players with their personal problems ( $X = 1.47$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ). With the responses provided, the football players stated that their trainers provided personal assistance and support to their football players. ( $X = 1.64$ ,  $SS = 0.82$ ). One of the results found in this study is that trainers often encourage

football players to have close and informal relationships ( $X = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ). However, it can be seen that a small sum of the trainers invite their football players to their homes. ( $X = 3.01$ ,  $SS = 1.59$ ).

**Table 4. Autocratic Behavior**

Autocratic Behavior	X	SS
The trainer makes plans relatively independent of their players.	2.51	1.20
The trainer does not provide an explanation to their players about their behavior.	2.42	1.31
The trainer does not argue with their players about issues which they have already decided on.	2.24	1.39
The trainer has a distant between them and the players.	3.33	1.47
The trainer speaks in a competently manner which prevents players from asking questions.	3.08	1.80

In Table 4, the responses provided by the football players to the autocratic behavioral characteristics they received from their trainers indicate that the trainers frequently practice autocratic leading behaviors.

When analyzing the answers provided in this section, on averaged it can be seen that most of the trainers received a response of "often" and some of them "occasionally". The findings obtained from the research show that some of the trainers keep at a distance from their football players ( $X = 3.33$ ,  $SD = 1.47$ ) and it shows that they speak competently too prevent players to ask questions or have any kind of requests ( $X = 3.08$ ,  $SS = 1.80$ ). With the replies players delivered, the football players stated that they did not argue again about issues that their trainers had already decided. ( $X = 2.24$ ,  $SS = 1.39$ ). A result obtained from this study is that the trainers do not give explanations to their players about their behavior ( $X = 2.42$ ,  $SS = 1.31$ ).

**Table 5. Positive Behavioral Feedback**

Positive Behavioral Feedback	X	SS
The trainer praises a player in front of others for their good performance.	1.89	0.97
The trainer informs the player when they have done a good job.	1.47	0.76
The trainer takes care to reward the player for their good performance.	1.93	0.94
The trainer appreciates when a player has performed well.	1.46	0.83
The trainer praises a player when deserved at the given time and place.	1.76	1.08

In Table 5, the responses of the football players regarding positive feedback characteristics which they received from their trainers is indicated as, the trainers always practice positive feedback towards positive behaviors. When the responses are observed in this section on are averaged, it is seen that most of the trainers are at the "always" and a large part of them at "often". The findings from the study show that trainers appreciate when a football player performs well ( $X = 1.46$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ) and it also shows that when the player does a good job, they are informed ( $X = 1.47$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ). With the players responses, the football players stated that their trainers showed their players the praise they deserved at the given time and place ( $X = 1.76$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ). A result found in this research is that the trainers praise their players in front of others for their good performance. ( $X = 1.89$ ,  $SS = 0.97$ ).

**When looking at the Comparison of Football Player Demographic Information and Coach Leader Behavior Characteristics**, to sum up the responses provided by football players a significant difference was observed between the educational status and the sub-dimensions of the questionnaire between the "Social Support Behavior" ( $P = 0.043$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) that the football players received from their trainers. Thus according to the findings; social support behaviors perceived by university students from their trainers were found to be more positive than those of high school students.

The answers provided in the measurement by the football players were collected and the relationship between their ages and sub-dimensions of the questionnaire was checked and no significant difference was found between these sections.

The relationship between football players playing time and sub-dimensions of the questionnaire was checked. According to this; a significant difference was determined in the "Social Support Behavior" ( $P = 0.017$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) section in respect to social support behavior that football players received from their trainers, and no significant relationship was found in other sub-dimensions. According to the analysis results, it was determined that among the responses presented by the football players who played football for 4-6 years and 10-12 years, the athletes who played football for 10-12 years saw more social support behavior from their trainers ( $MD = .46$ ).

The responses provided by the football players were collated and the relationship between work with current trainers of players and the sub-dimensions of the questionnaire was checked. According to this; a significant difference was found in the "Autocratic Behavior" ( $P = 0.001$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) and "Positive Feedback Behavior" ( $P = 0.049$ ,  $P < 0.050$ ) measurements regarding football players and their trainers. When the duration of working with the same trainer and the autocratic behavior sub-dimension of the football players were examined, it was found that among players who worked with the same trainer for 0-1 years and 4 years or more ( $MD = .72$ ) and between players who worked 2-3 years and 4 years or more ( $MD = .64$ ) a significant difference was determined. According to this, autocratic behavior perceptions of players who worked with the same trainer for 4 years or more are more positive. In addition to this, a significant difference was determined between football players who worked with the same trainer for 0-1 years and over 4 years ( $MD = .28$ ). Consequently, positive feedback behavior perceptions of players who worked with the same trainer for 4 years or more were found to be positive.

### Examining the Perceptions of Coaches on Leader Behavior Features

During the interview the responses submitted by trainers and the findings are in the tables below.

**Table 6. Educational and Supportive Behavior**

Educational and Supportive Behavior (n=7)	F
The techniques and tactics related to the sport were explained.	6
Tries to correct player's mistakes.	7
Shows players individually their sportive skills	5
Determines the duties of the players and ensures their fulfillment.	5
Calculates and plans what is to done.	7
Knows the strengths and weaknesses of players.	7
Provides special training for players about what to do in every situation.	5
Explains each player's contribution to the result.	5
Explains in detail expectations from players.	6

In Table 6, it was revealed that all of the trainers' responses regarding educational and supportive behaviors trying to correct the inaccuracies of players, calculating what could happen in the trainings or matches to be held and were planned, and also trainers were aware of the strengths and weaknesses of players. It was observed that five of the trainers demonstrated their sports skills to each player individually, provided players with support to fulfill their duties successfully after determining and thoroughly conveying their duties, and also explained the positive or negative contributions that players had to the result, and in every case they gave special training to their players about what to do. Six trainers stated that they explained the techniques and tactics related to football to their players, they tried to make them act accordingly and explained their expectations from players in detail.

**Table 7. Democratic Behavior**

Democratic Behavior (n=7)	F
Ideas and strategies are received from her players before the competition.	6
Decisions are made with players.	6
Ideas about the implementation of training are asked for from athletes.	1
Players are allowed to set individual targets.	6
Ideas about the trainers coaching style is asked for from players.	6

In Table 7, the findings show that in the responses of the trainers about democratic behavior, six of them allowed their athletes to set their individual goals, and also received ideas from their players about their coaching style. Six of the trainers stated that they received ideas from their players on strategic matters before the competition and made decisions together with their players, while a trainer stated that they received ideas from their athletes about training practices.

**Table 8. Social Behavioral Support**

Social Behavioral Support (n=7)	F
Helps player's with their personal problems.	7
Solves conflicts within the team.	7
Provides personal assistance to their players.	5
Is open with their feelings towards their players.	5
Ensures that their players trust them.	7
Invites players to their home.	2

In Table 8, the findings show that all of the trainers responses regarding social behavioral support helped football players with their personal problems, made efforts to resolve conflicts within the team, and did what was necessary to gain the trust of the players. Five of the coaches stated that they provided personal assistance to their footballers and at the same time they were open about their feelings about the football player. Two coaches stated that they met with their football players outside the field and invited them to their homes.

**Table 9. Autocratic Behavior**

Autocratic Behavior (n=7)	F
Makes plans independent of their players.	4
Does not provide an explanation to their players regarding their behavior.	4
Once a decision is made, it is not discussed.	6
Keeps at a distance with their players.	4
The coach is the only decision-making body.	4

In Table 9, in the findings, it is perceived that in the answers given by the trainers about autocratic behavior are, four of them stated that they did their plans independently from their players and did not explain their behaviors to their players. It was observed that four of the trainers kept their distance with their players and stated that they were the only decision-making body during the decision making stage. Furthermore, six trainers stated that they did not allow the decision to be discussed within the team after a decision was made.

**Table 10. Positive Behavioral Feedback**

Positive Behavioral Feedback (n=7)	F
Praises their players for their good performance.	7
The player is told when they have achieved something good.	7
The player is shown appreciation at the given time and place.	5

In Table 10, the findings show that in the responses of the trainers regarding positive feedback behavior, all of them praise the players for their good performance and tell them when the player has achieved something good. Five of the trainers stated that they appreciate the footballers when they achieve something at that specific moment and place.

### Discussions and Results

In this section, the results obtained based on the discussion and the findings of the research will be examined.

When the democratic behavioral characteristics which football players received from their coaches were examined, the result was again high. It is seen that democratic behaviors within the team and individually have benefits in success and personal development (Bensiz, 2016).

The responses given by the football players regarding the educational and supportive behavioral characteristics which they received from their coaches are averaged. The findings demonstrate that a great majority of the trainers respond as "always" and a small part of them as "often". Subsequently, it is seen that most of the trainers give specific training to each player regarding what to do in every situation.

The social support behavior results were found to be high in the leadership behavior traits perceived by the trainers. Along the lines, it has been determined that there are player's trainer who contributes to both the player's social life as well as their football life. When the leadership behavior characteristics of football players received from their coaches were examined, it was discovered that the trainers' educational and supportive behavior characteristics were high. This contributes positively to the development of football players at this age (Donuk, 2007).

When the autocratic behavioral characteristics which trainers provided to their football players were examined, it was found that the trainers displayed moderate autocratic behavioral characteristics. This shows that coaches sometimes adopt a leadership approach that does not take into account strict discipline and emotional needs.

When the data obtained from the football players were examined, the positive feedback measurement of the trainers were found to be high. This displays that the trainers exhibit rewarding and admirable attitudes.

In the light of the qualitative information obtained from the trainers, it was determined that the educational and supportive leader behavior characteristics measurement applied to football players were high. Accordingly, it was revealed that the trainers tried to correct the inaccuracies of their players, calculating what could happen during trainings or matches that were to be held and were planned, and they knew the strengths and weaknesses of their players. When the responses given here are compared with the responses provided by the players, it is apparent that the results overlap with each other.

In line with the qualitative information obtained from the trainers, the democratic behavioral characteristics they apply to the football players show a variation. It is comprehensible that most coaches allow football players to set their individual targets and ensure their own development. With the exception of a single trainer, it was observed that particular trainer planned their training on their own without consulting their footballers. When the answers given here are compared with the answers given by the players, it is seen that the results overlap with each other.

All things considered, the qualitative information attained from the trainers, the responses given by the trainers about autocratic leader behaviors and the responses given by the football players intersect. According to the average of the data obtained from the trainers; it appears that the trainers maintained distance with the players. It was determined that the trainers made the plans independently and did not discuss these decisions within the team once a decision was made on a particular issue. This shows us that the decision making body in the team is the coach.

When looking at the social support behavioral responses received from the trainers, it is obvious that all of them helped the football players with their personal problems, made an effort to resolve the conflicts in the group, and did what is necessary to gain the trust of the football players. The answers given here and the answers given by the football players overlap. It is known that praising and supporting football players is an important issue for success (Özsarı, 2010).

When analyzing the positive feedback behaviors received from the trainers, the average measurement was found to be high. It has been established that trainers praise their footballer for their good performance and tell him when the player has achieved something well. This increases the motivation of the football player and enables him to make more effort with the set goal (Bakan, 2013).

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