

The Impact of Coaching Leadership Style on Motivation and Team Cohesion in Volleyball

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between coaching leadership style, athlete motivation, and team cohesion in volleyball. The research was conducted with 28 female players from a local volleyball club in Shkodër, Albania, aged between 16 and 25 years. A mixed-methods design was employed, combining standardized questionnaires with semi-structured interviews to capture both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the athletes' experiences.

The results indicate that democratic and transformational leadership styles are associated with higher levels of intrinsic motivation, greater athlete satisfaction, and stronger perceptions of team cohesion. In contrast, autocratic leadership was linked to lower motivation, reduced commitment, and weaker social bonds within the team. These findings reflect broader changes in Albanian sport, where the persistence of authoritarian coaching traditions inherited from the communist era is increasingly challenged by the expectations of younger athletes raised in a democratic environment.

The study underlines the importance of coach education programs that emphasize inclusive, participatory, and supportive leadership, which not only enhance performance but also contribute to the personal development and long-term retention of players in volleyball.

Keywords: Leadership, Volleyball, Motivation, Cohesion, Coaching