



Investigating the Mediating Role of Leadership Style in the Relationship Between Personality Type and the Performance of the Staff, Captains, Supervisors, and Medics in Tehran's Soccer Clubs

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Abstract

Background: Football has surpassed the borders of countries and established an integral relationship with national pride.

Objectives: The purpose of the current study was to investigate the association between leadership style and the personality type of Tehran club pro members, first, second, and third leagues, and their performance.

Methods: This descriptive, analytic, inferential, and cross-sectional study was conducted on three hundred and sixty-two members of Tehran Football Leagues' staff, captains, supervisors, and medics. The data were collected by five questionnaires with tested validity and reliability.

Results: Based on the leadership style, the majority of members had the training and exercising style. Considering the personality type, many of the members were inclined towards type B and types one, two, five, and seven of the Enneagram. A significant relationship was observed between the personality type and performance of the football teams in arenas of maintenance, knowing the team, financial issues, and team performance ($P < 0.05$). Besides, there was a significant relationship between the leadership style of training and exercising, and the personality types one, two, five, and seven ($P = 0.039$). Finally, the social support style and personality types one, two, five, and seven showed a significant relationship ($P = 0.04$).

Conclusions: The staff, captains, supervisors, and medics preferred the leadership style of training and exercising as well as the humanitarian aspect. They mostly had personality types B, one, two, five, and seven of the Enneagram. Therefore, it is emphasized to pay attention to personality type A and other types of Enneagram for different professions.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Personality Type, Performance, Sport

1. Background

Coaches in sports teams are the most influential people on the team, whose leadership style and behavior determine the performance of the athletes. According to a theoretical and practical standpoint, it is important to examine the kind of coach's behavior and relationships, and solidarity with other members of the team, which is team cohesion (1). Between a variety of theories and models related to leadership and teamwork, we used the transformational/transactional axis explained by Burns and improved by Bass and the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory by Graen and UhlBien as cited by Chen; a relationship-based approach to leadership that focuses on the two-way (dyadic) relationship between leaders and followers (2). The transactional/transformational leadership model re-

lies on the assumption that all leadership styles can be classified into two different models. According to Yukl as cited by Chen, transformational leadership is "the process of influencing major changes in the attitudes and assumptions of organization members (organizational culture) and building commitment for major changes in the organization's objectives and strategies" (2). The LMX theory evaluates relationships instead of individual leaders and followers and examines the connections between individuals rather than simply the individuals themselves (2). The leadership model in exercise is a groundwork for examining the effective processes, the recognition of which can influence the actions and responses of athletes. The central process of the leadership model shows that the behavior of a coach is clearly reflected by the behavior and attitude of his athletes. This model considers the athletes

and their behavior as an indicator of their coach's behavior. One of the most important aspects of deciding on coaches is choosing the coaching style, which determines how to decide what skills and strategies to teach, how to organize the practice and competitions, etc. (3). Personality characteristics of leaders have frequently been interesting in psychological research. This interest has been mainly in business, educational, and even sports psychology. The phrase "what makes a person special?" might be one of the most frequently asked questions in this area of research and even in everyday life. Because of this, the focus has changed to observing leaders' behaviors and situational factors. Leadership is one of the most important issues in organizational psychology; hence, it has been extensively researched. This extensive information has built the basics for more specific investigations in other fields, such as sports or educational psychology. Thus, before delving further into the state-of-the-art research in athlete leadership, we are supposed to examine the underlying basics of the issue to set up a common understanding of the leadership concept in general and in sports in particular. Fiedler discriminates between task-oriented and relation-oriented leadership styles, which are more or less effectively determined by the favorableness of a situation. Favorableness is thus controlled by the position power, the task structure, and the relationship between leader and follower. Recent studies have reported similar preference patterns of female and male athletes respecting task and relationship-oriented behaviors. This seems to account for expectations regarding coaches' and athletes' leadership behavior. Based on a model of Fiedler's as cited by Wachsmuth, the leader is expected to be a coordinator of his/her subordinates (4). To cultivate and grow athletes' potential in sports, a functional working alliance between the coach and athletes is crucial. An important aspect of the coach-athlete relationship is to enhance performance and success in competitions. Therefore, coaches need to reflect upon their own behavior and understand the motive behind the behavior of others. A good coach must be able to see each athlete as a unique individual and attempt to establish a good rapport with them. Most people do not seem to have a clear picture of their abilities and competencies. The reason for this is that they tend not to know themselves sufficiently. It looks reasonable to propose the idea that individuals tend to perform better provided that they know themselves well, acquire further skills, and enjoy the necessary motivation to do various tasks. In sports, it is very important to know who we are and what we can do. If an athlete is further aware of his or her abilities and potential, one may find success with a much greater chance. Furthermore, understanding the personality traits of athletes can be helpful in accomplish-

ing greater achievements in their range of sports activities. Numerous research studies have been done to demonstrate the effect of personality on sports preferences and the performance of athletes. Hence, the popularity of this area of research has blossomed since the introduction of sports psychology as an academic discipline. In line with that, it is right to say that personality does play an important role in sports and exercise. It could be seen by the extensive research conducted by researchers and practitioners within the sports psychology area. In general, personality could be perceived as the characteristic that makes a person unique. These personal characteristics could determine the consistent and enduring responses of a different individual under different situations (5). Predicting the likelihood of success of a talented young athlete into a skillful adult athlete has been a dream of every practitioner in sports or any other job. Findings have shown that a wide range of personality traits have been related to the levels of achievement in many sports, including basketball, hockey, and football (6). All the football team stakeholders and fans expect the best possible results at the commencement of the season. If the team obtains the achievements, people may feel fulfilled and willing for the new season to start. Nevertheless, data showed that not all fans see their expectations fulfilled, and only one team can be the winner in every competition. Consequently, it looks rational that most of the fans will be more dissatisfied at the end of the season. However, probably most of the fans do not think this way, and they will not leave their losing teams. Thus, most of the teams would keep their fans. Previous studies have examined sports performance through different approaches. Some studies have analyzed the competence of players, while others have evaluated the competence of trainers in order to examine the characteristics of the team. Furthermore, a few studies focus on team performance concerning the relative attacking or defensive attitude of the players. Barros and Leach and Barros and García-del-Barrio as cited by González-Gómez and Picazo-Tadeo, examine financial and sporting purposes in order to measure team performance (7). Enneagram of personality, a model of human personality illustrated by an enneagram figure, includes types 1 to 9. For example, personality type one tends to have the following characteristics: Conformist, diligent, detail-oriented, cautious, dutiful, serious, perfectionist, value-oriented, purposeful, and innovative in setting standards for achieving their goals. Type two people have a number of qualities. They are altruistic, generous, empathetic, diligent, and motivated. They have a strong drive to connect with the world. Individuals with type five personalities are usually shy, clever, thoughtful, solitary, innovative, knowledge-oriented, etc. People with type seven tend to be indulgent, joy-seeking, ambi-

tious, inquisitive, restless, entrepreneurial, motivational, etc. To succeed, a person must have different personality traits and skills. Even if all the individual circumstances and factors are favorable, success will not be achieved unless the environmental factors are desirable. In addition to these factors, random factors also play an important role.

2. Objectives

In this study, we aimed to investigate personality types, leadership styles, and performance of the members of the technical staff, captains, supervisors, and medical teams of the first, second, and third place clubs of Tehran's clubs in Tehran, as well as to study the relationship of these factors with the team's success.

3. Methods

3.1. Design

The present study is a cross-sectional inferential descriptive-analytical study that was conducted in 2017 in the Persian Gulf league and Azadegan first, second, and third leagues in Tehran. These clubs included twenty teams. The population of this study was technical staff, captains, supervisors, and medical staff. In this research, our sample consisted of thirteen teams. The sampling method is multistage sampling. The first stage is the random selection of teams from the pool (13 out of 20 teams in Tehran). Then, from each team, participants were randomly selected. Random number tables have been used for selected random samples. The sample size is 362.

3.2. Measures

The data collection tool consisted of five questionnaires: personality types A and B, personality type of Enneagram, sports leadership style, Barden's leadership style, and the performance of sports coaches. These questionnaires all consist of two parts, i.e., the demographic section and the second part comprising the main questions. The sports leadership style questionnaire with 40 questions has responses including never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always equivalent to one, two, three, four, and five, respectively. A lot of research has been conducted using the sports leadership style. The content validity of this questionnaire was investigated by Chelladurai and Saleh, who, using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, reported the content validity of this questionnaire to be 0.75 (8). The Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated to be seventy-five hundredth hundred percent for this questionnaire (8). In addition, Riemer and Toon recognized the structure of the subscales of this questionnaire as valid and reliable (9).

The Enneagram questionnaire has 115 questions. The responses are listed based on Likert scale from 0 to 6 with answers including 0 = completely disagree, 6 = completely agree, 1 through 5 = the various stages between the two extremes. Validity and reliability of this questionnaire have been investigated and approved by Becker (10). The Burden and Metzcus leadership style questionnaire consisting of 35 items as cited by Pfeiffer and Jones, is used to assess leadership style (ordinary relationship and orbit duty) (11). The score for the questionnaire is a five-point Likert scale, namely 'never,' 'rarely,' 'sometimes,' 'often,' and 'always' equivalent to one, two, three, four, and five, respectively. In Shah Hosseini's study, quoted by Mosadeghrad, the alpha coefficient of this questionnaire was reported to be 0.93 (12). Personality type questionnaire A and B have 25 questions with yes/no answers. The scores are in the form of the average range, with a score of 13. Accordingly, each of the upper and lower grades of this type of personality type is specified, for example, more than average: The tendency type A, and therefore, less than average, tendency to type B. In addition, less than five, strong tendency to type B; more than twenty, strong tendency to type A. The validity of this test in most studies was above 0.70 and 0.80 quoted by Ganji (13). The questionnaire on the performance of sports coaches comprises 50 questions and aims to assess the performance of the club's coaches from a variety of dimensions (team maintenance, work, and technical behaviors, athletic training and development, public relations, team recognition, financial affairs, team performance, coaches' technical performance). The questionnaire is scored on the five-point Likert scale. This questionnaire has eight dimensions, including the following subsections: Keeping the team (questions 1 - 13), working and technical behavior (questions 14 - 25), training and growth of athletes (questions 26 - 32), public relations (questions 33 - 36), team recognition (questions 37 - 42), financial affairs (questions 43 - 45), team performance (questions 46 and 47), technical performance of coach (questions 48 - 50). The answers include very poor, poor, moderate, good, and very good. Its scoring is one, two, three, four, and five. The reliability of this questionnaire was also obtained by Cronbach's alpha of 0.75 (14). Confidentiality and freedom to fill in the questionnaire or not were two ethical considerations observed in our study.

3.3. Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using SPSS version 21.0. Three statistical analyses used in the study included descriptive statistics, Fisher's exact test, and regression. The first two tests were employed to investigate the relationship between different leadership styles and demographic factors, the relationship between personality types with

the performance, and the relationship between leadership styles with personality types. Furthermore, the regression model was used to study the effect of demographic variables on some leadership styles and personality types.

4. Results

The descriptive findings showed that of the 362 people serving as the research sample, including the technical staff, captains, supervisors, and medics, 36 were female (9.9%), and 362 were male (90.1). Also, 80 were undergraduate (37.5%), 77 with a Master's degree (35.7%), and 57 with Ph.D. (26.8%). In addition, 66 had grade 1 (31.4%), 89 had grade 2 (42.4%), and 55 had coaching grade 3 coaching certificates (26.2%). In addition, 69 persons had a coaching experience between one and five years (41.8%), 46 had a coaching experience between six and ten years (27.8%), 37 had a coaching experience between 11 and 15 years (22.5%), and finally, 13 had above 16 years of coaching experience (7.9 %) (Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of Technical Members, Captains, Supervisors, and Medical Staff in Premier League Clubs, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Levels in Tehran

Variables	No. (%)
Sex	
Men	326 (90.1)
Women	36 (9.9)
Education level	
Bachelor's degree	80 (37.5)
Master's degree	76 (35.7)
Doctorate	57 (26.8)
Coaching degree	
Grade 1	66 (31.4)
Grade 2	89 (42.4)
Grade 3	55 (26.2)
Coaching experience	
Between 1 and 5 years	69 (41.8)
Between 6 and 10 years	46 (27.8)
Between 11 and 15 years	37 (22.5)
More than 16 years	13 (7.9)

Descriptive data on personality and leadership style showed that most of the staff members, technical staff, captains, supervisors, and medical teams were weak in duty dimensions, and a moderate level in the humanistic dimension, and in the compilation dimension, they were average. Furthermore, most members of the technical staff, cap-

tains, supervisors, and medical teams showed a tendency to type B (Table 2).

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Personality Type and Leadership Style of Technical Members, Captains, Supervisors, and Medical Teams of Premier League Clubs in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Levels in Tehran

Variables	No. (%)
Humanistic	
Weak	7 (4.8)
Average	129 (89.6)
Strong	8 (5.6)
Functional	
Weak	88 (63.8)
Average	48 (34.8)
Strong	2 (1.4)
Compilation	
Weak	23 (18)
Average	103 (80.4)
Strong	2 (1.6)
Personality type	
Strong tendency to type B	1 (2.2)
Tendency to type B	32 (72.8)
Strong tendency to type A	10 (22.8)
Tendency to type A	1 (2.2)

Among the Enneagram personality types, type two was the most frequent among members of the technical staff, captains, supervisors, and medical staff; however, type three, four, six, eight, and nine were not seen in any of the members (Figure 1).

All of the teams had worked more on some aspects of performance. These aspects include the technical performance of the coach, the coaches' technical and professional behavior, the training and growth of athletes, public relations, and team performance. Most members of the technical staff, captains, supervisors, and medical teams tended to adopt teaching and exercising leadership style (Figure 2).

A simple linear regression model was fitted to examine the effect of gender, level of education, coaching level, team type, and coaching experience, on training and practice styles, democratic, authoritative, and social support styles. Among the variables listed, coaching degree was significant ($P < 0.05$) in predicting training and practice style. In addition, the experience was borderline on the training and practice style. On the other hand, 'coaching and coaching experience' variables were observed as significant correlates of both democratic style and social support ($P < 0.05$) (Table 3).

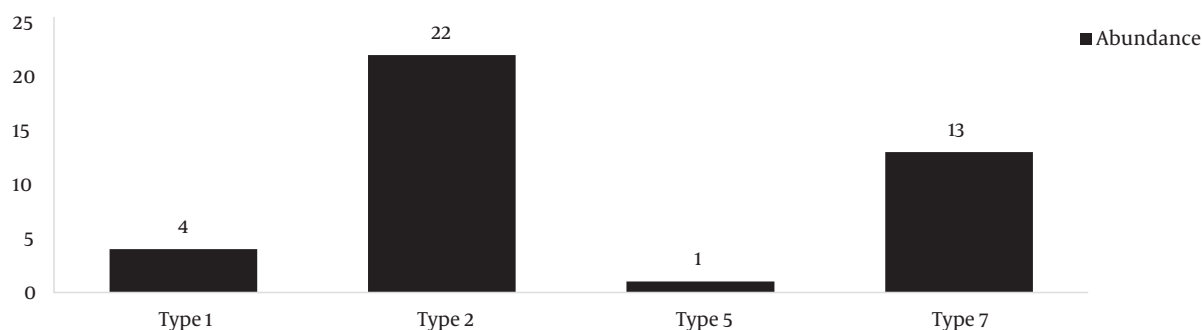


Figure 1. Frequency distribution of personality type (Enneagram) in technical members, captains, supervisors, and medical staff of Premier League clubs in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd levels of Tehran

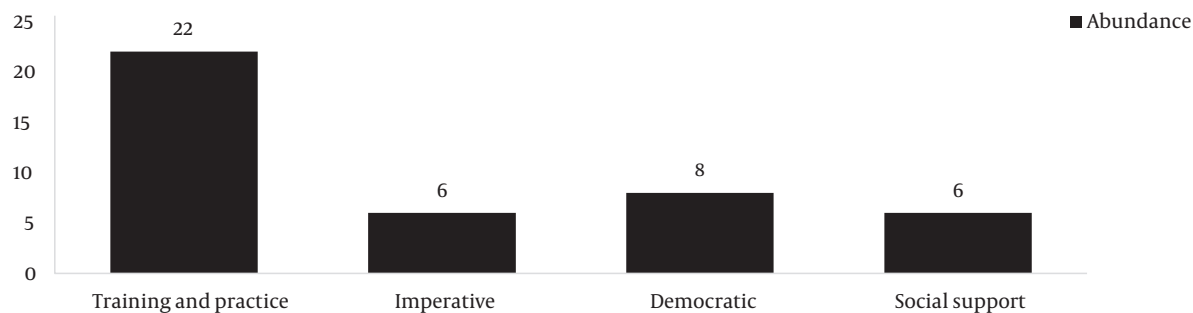


Figure 2. The distribution of the leadership style in four dimensions of teaching and practice behavior, authoritarian, democratic, and social support style

Table 3. The Relationship Between Demographic Factors and Leadership Style Using the Regression Model

Type of Leadership Style and Demographic Factors	B	SE	BETA	T	P
Training and practice					
Coaching history year (6 to 10)	0.640	0.323	-0.457	-1.982	0.057
Coaching level (grade 2)	1.637	0.715	1.256	2.289	0.029
Coaching level (grade 3)	1.232	0.721	0.932	1.707	0.089
Democratic					
Coaching history year (6 to 10)	-0.429	0.179	-0.505	-2.392	0.023
Coaching level (grade 2)	1.441	0.397	1.795	3.633	0.001
Coaching level (grade 3)	1.140	0.401	1.398	2.841	0.008
Social support					
Coaching history year (6 to 10)	-0.537	0.221	-0.570	-2.436	0.021
Coaching level (grade 2)	1.058	0.488	1.189	2.171	0.038

Using Fisher’s exact test, a significant relationship was found between the personality type of the members and the performance of the football teams in terms of preservation, team recognition, finance, and team performance ($P < 0.05$). There was no significant relationship between

personality type and team performance in terms of technical coaches’ performance, technical and work behaviors, training and growth of athlete, and public relations. Using Fischer’s exact test, the relationship between each of the leadership styles (training, practice, authoritative, demo-

cratic, and social support), with nine personality types was examined. There was a significant relationship between practice and training styles with personality types one, two, five, and seven ($P < 0.05$). Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between social support style with personality types one, two, five, and seven ($P < 0.05$) (Table 4).

Again, using Fisher's exact test, the relationship between each of the leadership styles (training, practice, authoritative, democratic, social support) was also examined by the authoritative leadership style with the trainer's personality types (A and B) which showed that there is a significant relationship between the practice and training style and the personality trait type ($P < 0.05$). On the other hand, the 'coaching degree' variable was significant in the amount of respondents' attention to the task-related dimension ($P < 0.05$) and in the compilation leadership style in the borderline. Using the linear regression model, the relationship between demographic factors and personality types of Enneagram was investigated. Regarding this analysis, the following results were obtained: Among the demographic factors, the experience of coaching was between six and ten years with type one ($P = 0.02$); gender was borderline on type three ($P = 0.075$), and coaching experience between six and ten years and over sixteen years with type four ($P < 0.05$). Besides, coaching experience between six to ten years showed a borderline relationship with type four and coaching experience with six to ten years of borderline on type five ($P = 0.084$) and coaching experience over sixteen years of age with type five ($P = 0.05$). Coaching experience between six to ten years was on type six ($P = 0.021$). Coaching experience between six to ten years of borderline on type six ($P = 0.069$). On the other hand, coaching experience from six to ten years with type seven ($P = 0.05$).

5. Discussion

Our purpose in this study was to examine the leadership style and personality types of the technical staff, captains, supervisors, and medical teams of the premier, the first, second, and third league, as well as their performance. The results showed that the leadership style of the under-study sample was the leadership style of training and practice (52.4%). This indicates that members of the technical staff, captains, supervisors, and the medical teams of the premier, first, second, and third leagues lead players to improve their performance levels aiming at promoting the performance of athletes, emphasizing practicing and teaching skills, techniques, and strategies. The training and practice leadership style requires the leader

of a group or team to particularly focus on the behavioral aspects of the players. Most of the members employ the leadership style of training and practice towards their subordinates. The results of the present study are consistent with those of Pilus and Saadan's study (15). They concluded that athletes mostly prefer training and practice (15). Among the dimensions of leadership, the most frequent was the 'human dimension' among the members. Besides, the relationship-oriented (humanist) style was evident among them. This per se tends to strengthen morale and increase satisfaction (16). In addition, members were more often inclined to type B rather than A. Type B personality is calm, patient, and gentle, with balanced morale. Individuals with type B usually work steadily, have no problems with timing, allocate sufficient time to their favorites, speak clearly and slowly, and do not spend all their time on earning professional achievements or social competitions. Our results in the personality type and leadership style demonstrate that there was a significant relationship between personality type and leadership style. This is consistent with the results of the study of Ristic et al., which concluded that there is a significant relationship between personality type and leadership style (17). Among the nine types of Enneagrams, types one, two, five, and seven were observed. Few studies have been carried out focusing on probing the relationships between types one, two, five, and seven and the leadership styles. Concerning performance, our results indicated that personality types influence some performance dimensions, including maintenance, team recognition, financial issues, and team performance ($P < 0.05$). These types determine the strength and weaknesses in team performance. The major limitations of the study were the limited sample number, the lack of cooperation of some of the technical staff, captains, and medical team in responding to and filling out the questionnaires in a timely fashion, along with the time-consuming nature of the data collection. The results of our study are consistent with the study of Tyler and Newcombe, who concluded that there was a significant relationship between personality type and performance (18). Besides, Siadat et al. also concluded personality type and performance had a statistically significant relationship (19). To improve the status of leadership in teams, it is suggested that members change their leadership style in different situations and choose their leadership style according to the circumstances and conditions. This tends to cause minimum conflict and generate the highest level of coordination among team members and other contributors. It is also suggested that from leadership styles, one should work on a justification style, in which the leader not only guides but also explains the reason to accomplish a specific task and establishes a two-way communication. The success of a sports team re-

Table 4. Relationship Between Personality Type and Leadership Style Using Fisher's Exact View

Type of Leadership Style	Personality Type	df	Value	P-Value
Authoritative leadership style	Type 1 and 2, 5 and 7	1	8.250	0.519
Training and practice	Type 1 and 2, 5 and 7	1	7.054	0.039
Trend style	Type 1 and 2, 5 and 7	1	6.144	0.632
Democratic style	Type 1 and 2, 5 and 7	1	0.972	0.893
Social support	Type 1 and 2, 5 and 7	1	7.154	0.040

Abbreviation: df, degrees of freedom.

quires a driving force to continue to succeed, considering the fact that highly motivated players tend to work harder while being more aware of their purpose. It is necessary to work on their sense of responsibility and improve their motivation using a collaborative leadership style. On the other hand, it is suggested that attention be paid to individuals' personality characteristics and types while designating them to a specific post. For example, type B is used where the relationship is more important. Individuals with this type will not spend all their time on their professional success. However, type A individuals tend to be more appropriate where order, discipline, and accountability are more important (20). In addition, type A individuals usually promote rapidly in the organization, and their promotion occurs rather quickly. Among the Enneagram types, type 8 is used when there is a need to manage a team or a position that involves a big subset. The reason for this is that people with type 8 tend to be powerful, confident, and straightforward. In cases where there is a team goal and task, type 2 individuals would be more appropriate. Therefore, club managers need to consider appointing a personality type compatible with the position. Considering the fact that performance dimensions had not been sufficiently worked, it is suggested to focus on these aspects in order to improve various performance aspects of the team. This will pave the way for the team to demonstrate its best performance.

5.1. Perspectives

Attention to leadership style in sports teams is highly recommended for athletes. In line with the leadership style, consider the personality type of the players, whether players or athletes, to improve performance and to align the individuals and players. The results on personality type and leadership style provide convincing evidence that club managers and other athletes need to have a thorough understanding of regular exercise and training protocols for their use.

5.2. Conclusions

It was shown that the members of the technical staff, captains, supervisors, and medical teams were interested in the leadership style of practice and training and humanism dimension. These people generally had type B, and had the lowest responses to team preservation, team performance, finance, and team recognition. As a result, it is possible to ignore team goals and teamwork. This may increase their indifference towards team effort, which per se, leads to the loss of motivation among the members, and the stagnation of activities. Such developments may bring about future losses and failures. It also paves the way for disintegration and team coordination, leading to distrust among clubs. Hence, club managers should choose the technical staff, captains, supervisors, and medical team according to their personality type. These members need to reflect on their work and have a broad look at the issues of team preservation, teamwork and finance, and team recognition. Since experience has shown that supervisors with excellent performance are more attentive to the human dimension, members should take advantage of the leadership styles, which are amplifiers in the conditions ahead to drive teams to success to obtain the desired results.

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Footnotes

Authors' Contribution: A. L., T. S. B., A. H. M., H. D. and A. H. R. contributed to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results, and to the writing of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interests: Tohid Seif Barghi is a member of the journal's editorial board.

Data Reproducibility: The data used to support the findings of this study were supplied by Tehran University of Medical Sciences and so cannot be made freely available. Requests for access to these data should be made to Sports Medicine Research Center. Address: No 7, Al-e-Ahmad Highway, Tehran, P.O Box: 14395-578, Iran.

Ethical Approval: This study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Tehran University of Medical Sciences (IR.TUMS.VCR.REC.1395.1511). The authors declare that all procedures of this study conform to the ethical guidelines.

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Informed Consent: Informed consent was obtained from the participants in the questionnaire.

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