

## The application of paternalistic leadership of table tennis coach

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**Abstract:** Every team needs effective leadership for management, while the leadership behavior of coach will affect tournament performance and team cohesion, and it would even concerns the development and success or failure of the entire team. Among Chinese community, paternalistic leadership is not only reckoned with paternal style, but also ingredients of caring for athletes as well as moral leadership. Paternalistic leadership has been verified its existence within sport domain among Chinese community. It is considered as the kind of effective way of leadership for sport team. However, there were few studies conducted at the table tennis field. Hence, this article would hope to provide a new direction of leadership for table tennis coach. From the literatures review, this article has put forth following suggestions regarding the application of paternalistic leadership by table tennis coach: 1. authoritarian is considered as part of the leadership. 2. It needs to pay more attention on benevolent leadership, in order to increase. 3. Table tennis coaches need to use moral leadership to build up trust and understanding with athletes. It is hoped that this article can be used as reference for table tennis coach in the training athletes.

**Keywords:** table tennis coach, paternalistic leadership

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a complex process and a very important strategic skill in today's society; in the sport field, the coach has been playing a role of leader (8). Coach leadership behavior is given with critical value of decisive factor to the improvement of athlete and team performance (22). Therefore, it is important for a coach to possess leadership ability in order to effectively guide a team.

Coaches' responsibility is not only on training but also a role model of players (8). Furthermore, a coach must be in possession of related knowledge on physiology, psychology, kinesiology, training instruction, leadership and management competence, first-aid to injury and so on (19). However, in Taiwan, coach also needs to play the role both as teacher and friend (21). Chou (4) pointed out that if there is any gap between perception of coach behavior by the coach and athlete, it could influence athlete's performance, motivation and team cohesion.

Autocratic coach leadership behavior is widely prevailed in Chinese society. The concept of traditional leadership believes that the coach strict on training would bring forth excellent athletes. The leadership study of sport coach in the country has followed the research trend from overseas. The researchers try to

develop theories to explain the situation of coach leadership in Chinese society. Thus, paternalistic leadership found with features of Chinese culture is able to better interpret the phenomenon of Chinese leadership (10; 7; 20). However, studies focused on paternalistic leadership within the country but there is not paying attention on table tennis. Therefore, this article is hoping to shed a light on paternalistic leadership in table tennis field in order to get a new direction for the coach on leading a team.

### 2. PATERNALISTIC LEADERSHIP THEORY

Paternalistic leadership has integrated Confucian cultural, legalist thought, and family concept. The thought is found existent within domain of movements among Chinese community (4; 1). Chen (1) indicated that theory of paternalistic leadership is found with greater interpretation for leadership behavior of coach in Taiwan than the theory of sport leadership behavior from the western world. Paternalistic leadership refers to Chinese leaders who are in possession of paternal authority and members would demonstrate with authoritarian submission; besides, these Chinese leaders would also display ingredients of concern, understanding, and morality upholding profile of harmony (23).

Paternalistic leadership is a triad of gratefulness,

authority, and kindness, which are respectively found as authoritarian leadership, benevolent leadership, and moral leadership, and it is also the kind of atmosphere within rule by man, demonstrating paternal benevolence and authority as well as moral and selfless code of conduct (20). As noted in the study by Kao (9), paternalistic leadership was extended from corporate organization to sport team. However, the concept of moral leadership was different between sport team and corporate organization in paternalistic leadership. In the sport field, moral leadership was included teaching. Fan and Cheng (6) indicated that paternalistic leadership and members' response to respectively establish "triad model" on paternalistic leadership which are consideration, authority, and kindness of paternalistic leadership as responses of appreciation and paying back, reliance and obedience, and respect and recognition from members. These three items were being elaborated in detail in the following:

(1) Authoritarian leadership:

The authority of coach is not allowing athletes to challenge what the coach asks them to do; in addition, the coach must control stringently, and demands obedience from the team. Authoritarian leadership demonstrates control, image grooming, and instructional behavior. When the coach displays authoritarian leadership behavior, the response from the team is veneration and obedience.

(2) Benevolent leadership:

Benevolent leadership is given with the concept of reciprocation, which is when members receive benefit from the leader they would pay back to the leader. The content of benevolent leadership included individual attention, respect and consideration. When leader demonstrated benevolent leadership behavior, members would response to appreciate and to pay back.

(3) Morality leadership:

Coach can exemplify with their own conduct to build up personal paradigm, and resort to favorable conduct and behavior to win respect and trust from their teammate. On the other hand, teammate would display imitation and emulation after coach's behavior. Morality leadership emphasizes on leader's personal moral cultivation and separating personal and team benefits and exemplification with one's conduct. Therefore, when leader demonstrates such behavior, response of members would be recognition and emulation. Paternalistic leadership and subordinate response are displayed on Figure 1.

leadership behavior	subordinate response
Authoritarian leadership obedience	Veneration, 1. submission 2. obedience 3. veneration 4. shame
Benevolent leadership	Gratefulness and feedb
1. Consideration 1. Respect	1. appreciation 2. pay back
Morality leadership	Recognition and emulation
1. separating personal and team benefits 2. exemplify with one's conduct	1. Recognition 2. Emulation

Figure 1. Behavior of paternalistic leadership and subordinate response

Source: Hsu (2007). *A study of sport coach behavior of the paternalistic leadership*. 21(1), p. 54.

### 3. PATERNALISTIC LEADERSHIP RELATED STUDIES

Tang and Sung (15) indicated that coach demonstrated morality leadership and benevolent leadership and team members would display cohesion with team and willing to stay in the team. On the other hand, if the coach demonstrated with authoritarian leadership and team members would concern on personal benefit and interest. Otherwise, paternalistic leadership, team cultural value and team commitment were correlated. The study findings by Tang and Sung (17) regarding paternalistic leadership of senior high school volleyball team and transformation leadership have discovered that every factor of transformation leadership was positively related with team efficiency. Furthermore, the team efficiency was conducted through the primary factors as moral leadership, benevolent leadership, and charming.

The study of Chen and Tsai in 2005 investigated paternalistic leadership of Chinese coaches, emotional perception, and athletic burnout. Subjects of study included track and field, table tennis, badminton, judo, and taekwondo, and the study findings have discovered that perception of negative emotion, morality leadership, and positive emotional perception could effectively predicate athletic burnout, while authoritarian leadership and positive emotional perception were found in negative correlation, and found in positive correlation with negative emotional perception and athletic burnout.

The study by Chou (4) investigated the paternalistic leadership of coach between China and Taiwan, and found that moral leadership from mainland Chinese athletes was prominently higher than that of Taiwanese athletes. If Taiwanese and mainland Chinese athletes were aware of higher moral leadership, they would have higher work atmosphere and satisfaction; on the other hand, if Taiwanese athletes were aware of higher moral leadership there would be higher social and work cohesion; moreover, if mainland Chinese athletes were aware of higher benevolent leadership, there would be higher work cohesion.

From the study by Chen and Lin in 2009, it was found that the awareness by tchoukball athletes in elementary school for leadership behavior of coach was respectively demonstrated as morality leadership, benevolent leadership, and authoritarian leadership. For male tchoukball athletes, their awareness at the two aspects of benevolent leadership and morality leadership was higher than that of female athletes, while tchoukball athletes from various grades were found without any difference for awareness of authoritarian leadership, benevolent leadership, and morality leadership.

In the study by Tseng and Lun in 2008 (18), it has been explored how paternalistic leadership behavior affected athletic burnout of college baseball players, and the study showed that benevolent leadership, morality leadership, and athletic burnout displayed negative correlation, while authoritarian leadership and athletic burnout displayed positive correlation; Besides, if the coach preferred to display authoritarian leadership, college baseball players were found with stronger sense of burnout for sport depreciation. In addition, seniority in sport and authoritarian leadership were found prominent prediction regarding athletic burnout, whereas authoritarian leadership was considered an important variable of prediction for athletic burnout.

From the literatures review, it showed that

authoritarian leadership and the athlete's motivation and emotional perception were negatively related, but it were found with positive relationship with competition burnout. However, morality leadership and benevolent leadership were positively correlated with athlete's motivation, but negatively correlated with competition burnout. Therefore, paternalistic leadership had both positive and negative relationship with the psychological variable of athlete, such as motivation, emotional perception, and competition burnout. In addition, moral leadership, benevolent leadership would have exerted influence upon the efficiency of the team. As such, paternalistic leadership was found with prominent effect of prediction for team efficiency.

#### **4. APPLICATION OF PATERNALISTIC LEADERSHIP BY TABLE TENNIS COACH**

Table tennis is considered the kind of exquisite sport, while brain plays rather important function, and the sport is, as well, reckoned as the one of the fastest ballgames (12). Hence, players have to come out with effective and accurate ball-strike with the fast speed and gyration created by table tennis. Then, it is necessary to focus spirit or gather concentration; during the period of competition, players would need to rely on the shouting and reminder of coach outside the court. As such, it is believed to be of the major issue for both athlete and coach as how one can be nurtured of competence for concentration. From the study by Chou and Tseng in 2008(5), it is mentioned that the key of success and failure for table tennis would be of the first three strokes. The physique of Asians is relatively smaller than that of Europeans, but with faster and agile foot-step, and Asians also enjoy better nimbleness. Therefore, table tennis coach could focus the particular features of table tennis to cope with their ways of leadership and explored model of development as reference to promote the game of table tennis.

Leadership behavior of coach is considered as one of the important factors that affect athlete to take part in team activity and training, while ways of coach of leadership would, as well, influence the motivation of athlete and so as the model of team cooperation, and even team and personal satisfaction. In view of the investigation from the above-mentioned literatures, following suggestions were thus put forth:

##### **1. Authoritarian leadership**

The study by Chen and Tsai (2) pointed out that authoritarian leadership is an integration of multiple aspects. Though it was found with ingredients of reprimand and depreciation, it also contained the elements of instruction and demand for high performance. As viewed, coach would influence athlete

to emphasize more highly of personalized style of sport, lay more stress on personal strength, and take greater importance for competition result as under authoritarian leadership, and athlete would hard work in pursuit for championship.

In the study by Pai and Tu (14), it is noted that spirituality is the decisive factor of competition outcome under similar physical and technical conditions. For athletes with higher resilience to pressure, they were less likely to be affected of their performance from nervous. Since table tennis is the sport with high dexterity and short span of time for response, it was why coach had to place pressure upon athlete during exercise, similar to the tournament within the team in simulation of formal competition and arrangement of friendship competition so that athlete won't panic in competition. From table tennis field, competitions were held in almost every month for juvenile and teenager, and coach need to depend on different levels athlete by using authoritarian leadership. Therefore, if table tennis coach must achieve high-efficient result within short span of time, the coach could demonstrate authority and strict attitude to achieve quickly. In such a way, the training of athlete can achieve better efficiency as they counter serial games one after the other.

## 2. Benevolent leadership

The reason that the coaches were demonstrated benevolent leadership because they have to match up the interpersonal gap resulted by authority on athlete, while the study by Kuo in 2003 (11) showed that with more democratic behavior and training and instructional behavior from table-tennis coach and the team cohesion could be strong. The study by Hung in 2006 and 2007 also indicated that table tennis coaches were demonstrated less consideration behavior on benevolent leadership. Thus, benevolent leadership becomes very important for the table-tennis coach.

In the high level competition, when the score of athletes was close and the nervousness of competition was enhanced and technical competence of athletes were well-matched, the extent of psychological cultivation would become evidently more important (Chang and Kao, 2005). In competition, every ball is considered to the outcome of the competition, athlete would, very much, rely on the reminder of the coach. Hence, if the coach and athlete understand each other well, the athlete would know what to do for the next with an eye-sight from the coach outside the court. As seen, the coach was taken as the pendulum of mind-soothing for athlete, and the athlete would not only be stabilized of their emotion to finish the game.

Of such interaction, it was founded on the benevolent leadership by coach during their regular training, and the coach has shown concern not just on the training, but also care of life, paying much understanding to the hard effort of training, schooling of athlete, respect, and even reduction of punishment in public when athlete made mistake with training. All of these could fully demonstrate the consideration behavior of coach, while athlete would be concentrated on the objective. However, when the score system of table tennis was changed from 21 to 11 points in 2001, psychological pressure of athlete would turn higher than that of 21 points. The new system would also constrain them in terms of tactics use for serving after attack for strike, and it would indirectly affect their psychological aspect (13; 24).

## 3. Morality leadership

The study by Chou (4) pointed out that if it was aware that there was high morality leadership within paternalistic leadership in Taiwan, then there could be higher social and work cohesion. As seen, morality leadership is of such leadership behavior that athlete finds with obvious awareness and is found with predictive effect.

An outstanding and professional table tennis coach should find betterment with their training work so as to enhance the effect of technical training, not to mention their endowment with strong sense of responsibility and noble moral integrity. Given the context of diversified community we have today, it would take balanced development in diversified aspect for a coach to success in this field (3).

The study by Pai and Tu in 2008 (14) had pointed out that the problems of negligence of academic study and alienation from regular school life by table tennis athletes were considered most critical problems. Since what coach do and what they said were perceived with exemplification, it is why coach must further demonstrate higher personal discipline and conduct as to become example of the athletes.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Sport coach has been playing quite many roles, and the relationship between coach and athlete is very closely related; besides, the leadership behavior of coach is also intensely linked to the performance of athlete. In fact, the impact of sport coach upon athlete is significantly profound in Taiwan, and a successful and well-respect coach would, surely, have his own ways of leadership so that athletes would follow the footsteps

with the coach. In addition, every team needs its effective way of leadership for management, whereas leaders do share its existence of importance among athletic team. Furthermore, studies have shown that paternalistic leadership does exist within the domain of sport within Chinese community, while triad model of leadership with consideration, authority, and kindness with paternalistic leadership should be able to best reflect the leadership theory of Chinese leadership behavior as it is most close to the cultural phenomenon of Chinese. Therefore, the researcher does hope that it can be taken as a new direction of athletic leadership and model for table tennis. It is desired that such a concept can be promoted, hoping that paternalistic leadership can better interpret the phenomenon of leadership behavior with table tennis coach.

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