# THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS IN AHMEDABAD: A STUDY OF TEAM DYNAMICS, HAPPINESS, AND PERFORMANCE

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### Abstract

In sports organizations, leadership is essential for influencing team dynamics, creating enjoyment, and eventually enhancing performance. This research investigates how leadership philosophies affect sports teams' overall performance, motivation, and cohesiveness. This study examines many leadership philosophies, such as transformational and servant leadership, and emphasizes how they affect athletes' performance and overall well-being. The psychological components of happiness in sports teams are also included in the study, along with how leadership techniques might improve team performance and player contentment. The study focused on coaches and players from selected private clubs in Ahmedabad.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Sports, Happiness, Performance, Sports Management

## INTRODUCTION

The essential human quality is the capacity to guide, uplift, and encourage others. In fact, according to certain theories, leadership is essential to the efficient operation of organizations and society (Antonakis, Cianciolo, & Sternberg, 2004). By nature, itself, sport is a social setting that offers chances to participate in actions that may benefit other people. Athletes were able for instance, encourage teammates when they fail, teach them a new talent, or praise them on a job well done. However, there are some activities that might have detrimental effects on other people, such as cheating, insults, and physically harmful actions like elbowing and kicking. These actions take place in sports, especially at the highest levels. As an illustration, consider Louis Suarez's biting incident at the most recent FIFA World Cup, which led to his removal from competition. It is not unusual for actions to have more serious repercussions. An examination of the leader's position in sports management will enable the investigation of methods to enhance the organization using the available resources. As demonstrated by a deeper bond between all staff members, employees' trust in the leader's key choices, and customer loyalty, the leader has assumed responsibility for a shift in the cooperative relationship inside the organization. (Javier et al., 2015). Sports organizations thrive on strong leadership, which affects not only strategic decisions but also the morale and happiness of players. Leadership in sports extends beyond coaching to include team captains, management, and support staff, all of whom contribute to the overall well-being and performance of athletes. This paper aims to explore the interconnection between leadership, team dynamics, happiness, and performance in sports organizations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the success of sports organizations. Effective leadership influences team dynamics, athlete happiness, and overall performance. Research suggests that leadership styles, communication strategies, and motivational techniques significantly impact sports teams (Northouse, 2019). This review explores the relationship between leadership and team effectiveness, with a focus on Ahmedabad's sports organizations.

- According to Bass and Riggin Transformational LeadershipLeaders inspire and motivate athletes to exceed expectations (Bass & Riggio, 2006).
- According to Burns Transactional Leadership Focuses on rewards and discipline to maintain performance (Burns, 1978).
- According to Bass Laissez-Faire Leadership Minimal intervention, allowing teams to self-regulate (Bass, 1990).
- Study by Carron the Team dynamics refer to the interactions, roles, and relationships among team members. Research indicates that strong leadership enhances trust, cooperation, and role clarity, which improves team efficiency (Carron et al., 2005).
- Study by Cotterill is Leaders who foster open communication and conflict resolution contribute to better team chemistry (Cotterill, 2013).

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## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Research Design**
A mixed-methods approach will be used, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods.

**Data Collection**
• Primary Data: Interviews and surveys with coaches, athletes, and management staff from sports organizations in Ahmedabad.
• Secondary Data: Analysis of sports organization reports, leadership case studies, and academic research on sports leadership.

**Sample Selection**
A selection of Ahmedabad-based professional, semi-professional, and amateur sports organizations will be analyzed.

## DATA ANALYSIS

• Thematic analysis for qualitative data.
• Statistical analysis to examine correlations between leadership, happiness, and performance.

**Leadership Theories in Sports Organizations**
Several leadership theories apply to sports organizations, including:

**Transformational Leadership**:
James V. Downton, a sociologist, first used the phrase "transformational leadership" in 1973. According to leadership expert James Burns, transformational leaders aim to alter current beliefs, methods, and objectives in order to improve outcomes and advance society. Leaders inspire and motivate players to exceed expectations, fostering strong team spirit and happiness.

**Servant Leadership**: Servant leadership is a comprehensive leadership style that empowers followers to develop into their full potential by involving them in several facets (such as relational, ethical, emotional, and spiritual). Its primary goal is to cultivate followers based on the moral and humanitarian inclinations of leaders (Greenleaf, 1977)

Servant leadership is defined as (1) an approach to leadership that is other-oriented, (2) a way of prioritizing the needs and interests of followers on a one-on-one basis, and (3) a shift in focus from self-interest to care for others both inside the company and in the community at large.

Leaders prioritize the well-being and personal development of their team members, enhancing their satisfaction and overall performance.

**Autocratic Leadership**: All operational and executive decisions are made by the leader under an autocratic or authoritarian management style. Because the manager issues directives and expects them to be followed without question, it is also known as command and control management. Sometimes, an authoritarian boss would demand obedience and devotion from his staff in return for money or possibilities for professional growth.

Autocratic leadership can work well when there is a need for prompt and decisive action, but it can backfire for elite, competitive sports teams. The autocratic leadership style was the least popular among college student athletes polled, according to research published in The Sport Journal. Respondents stated that the autocratic leadership style can limit players' creativity while playing their sport and lower overall motivation to play. While some respondents indicated that they preferred positive affirmations and reinforcement when playing competitively, the research points out that the autocratic leadership style focuses mostly on negative feedback and criticism. (Academy, 2018)

Coaches and managers make decisions with little player input, which can either streamline performance or negatively affect team morale.

**Democratic Leadership**:
Democracy is defined as "run by the people." Allowing for multiple participation in the decision-making process is a hallmark of this leadership style. Participatory leadership is another name for democratic leadership. (Asana, undated)

Democratic leadership, also known as participative leadership, is based on the understanding that both upper-level and lower-level organizational members participate in decision-making. Democratic leaders typically confer with their subordinates to empower them. (Cheong et al., 2019). Workers typically feel invested in their professional path and believe they may get the promotion and individual recognition they want under a democratic leadership style, which increases their sense of ownership and increases their dedication. However, improvement typically happens more slowly since involvement takes time. Therefore, organizations that place a higher emphasis on quality and cooperation than speed are more suited for a democratic leadership style (Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi, & Shaikh, 2012).

Encouraging player involvement in decision-making fosters teamwork and happiness.

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**Happiness**

The idea of well-being has been used to describe both happiness and contentment (Kahneman and Riis, 2005). According to Alatartseva and Barysheva (2015), well-being encompasses both subjective and objective dimensions of happiness and is made up of both positive and negative experiences from the past and present (Kahneman, 1999; Kahneman and Riis, 2005). The significance of psychological viewpoints on people's well-being in understanding work performance and satisfaction has not received much attention in organizational studies research (Atkins et al., 1996; Wright and Cropanzano, 2004; Lee and Woo, 2017). It implies that academics must comprehend how people control their pleasure through interactions with the whole associated team. Furthermore, the dearth of study necessitates elucidating the types of aspects that might be either beneficial or bad in order to attain both subjective and objective pleasure for individuals. The ultimate goal of happiness is to maximize emotional intelligence, ambiguity, and trust in order to strengthen a person's loyalty to a company and demonstrate their true abilities at work.

**Trust**

An interpersonal relationship is a necessary condition to characterize trust, which is defined as an expectation or belief that someone else has good intentions to improve group performance (Dirks, 1999; Dirks, 2000). According to this perspective, there is a level of trust between teammates and oneself in sports teams, and in an interdependent connection, one party expects the other's performance to be correlated with their level of belief. Each side anticipates that the other will act in a way that corresponds to their level of belief. The "willingness of individuals to expose themselves or become vulnerable to others" is another definition of trust given by Butler (1999). Furthermore, Prati et al. (2003) contended that team members' exchange of emotions and behaviors, such as attitudes, moods, and values, leads to trust. When taken as a whole, the implication is that, depending on the degree of trust, people have somewhat preexisting expectations about the information they will receive and will use to perform the next step of the outcome. This will ultimately influence the degree of dissonance by assessing the discrepancy between expectations and actual performance. This inference implies that trust would act as a mediator between emotional intelligence and equivocality, with pleasure serving as a sign of wellbeing.

**Team dynamics and Happiness**

Team dynamics refer to how players interact, communicate, and collaborate within a sports team. Effective leadership ensures positive team dynamics by:

• Encouraging teamwork and mutual respect
• Creating an environment of trust and support
• Addressing conflicts constructively
• Promoting mental well-being and happiness among players

Happiness in sports teams is linked to higher motivation, reduced stress, and improved performance. Leaders who acknowledge and support players' emotional well-being contribute to a more cohesive and successful team.

**Leadership's Impact on Performance**

Performance in sports is influenced by multiple factors, including training, strategy, and teamwork. Leadership enhances performance by:

• Boosting player confidence and motivation
• Ensuring effective communication and goal-setting
• Implementing strategies that align with the team's strengths
• Managing stress and pressure in high-stakes competitions

Studies indicate that happy athletes tend to perform better due to increased intrinsic motivation and a positive team environment.

**Case Studies and Real-World Examples**

Analyzing successful sports organizations, such as professional football clubs Blue Tiger Club, Eklavya Club and ACTFC Club provides insights into leadership best practices. Case studies of winning teams often highlight:

The data Collated by the online questioner around 125 sample collected by Blue Tiger Club, Aklavya Club and ACFT Club.

| 1. | Role in the Team | Coach | Athlete | Team Captain | Other (please specify) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 20.8% | 51.2% | 6(5.3)% | 23.2% |

Figure: 1

| 2 | Types of Sports | Football, Basketball | Individual sports (Tennis, Athletes) | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 97.6% | 3.00% | 0 |



Figure: 2

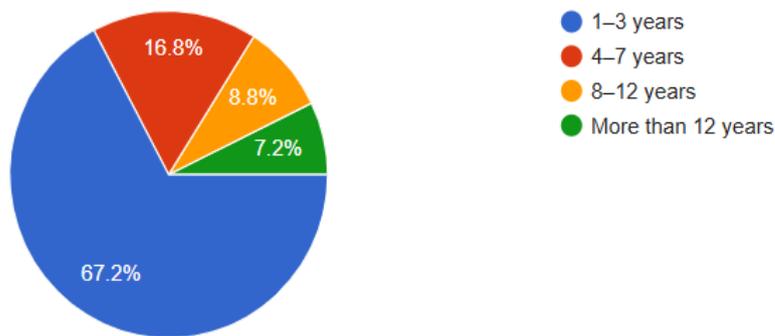| 3 | | Year of experience | 1-3 years | 4-7 years | 9-12 years | More then 12 years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 67.2% | 16.3% | 8.8% | 7.2% |



Figure: 3

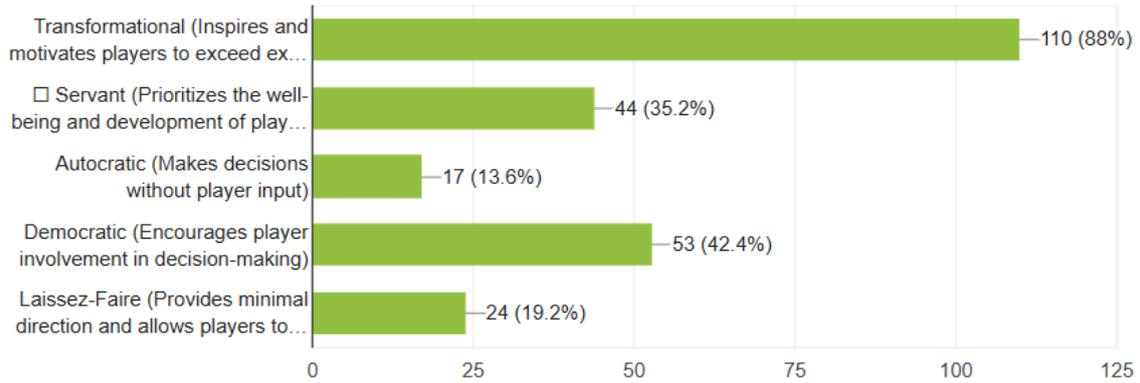| 4 | leadership style | Transformation style | Servant Leadership style | Autocratic Leadership style | Democratic Leadership style | Laissez fair Leadership style |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 88% | 36.2% | 13.6% | 42.4% | 19.2% |

Figure: 4

| 5 | coach/leader provide constructive feedback to help improve individual and team performance | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | often | Always |
| | | 0 | 0 | 11.2% | 22.4% | 66.4% |
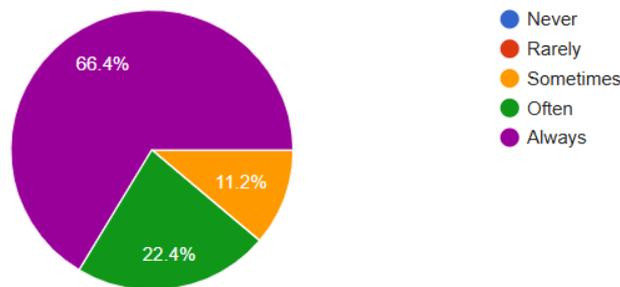


Figure: 5

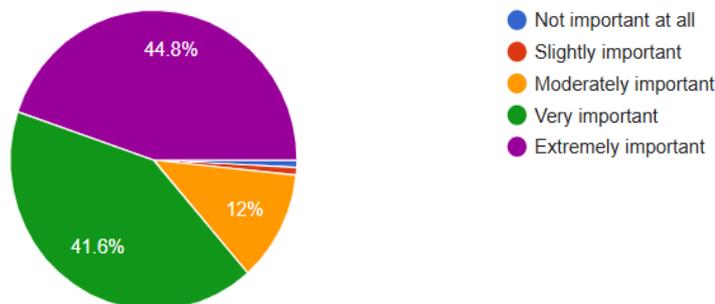| 6 | How important is happiness in your overall sports performance? | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Happiness | Extremely Important | Very Important | Moderately Important | Slightly Important | Not Important |
| | | 44.8% | 41.9% | 12% | 2% | 1% |



Figure: 6

| 7 | How well does your coach/leader contribute to a positive and enjoyable team environment? *(1 = Not at all, 5 = To a great extent)* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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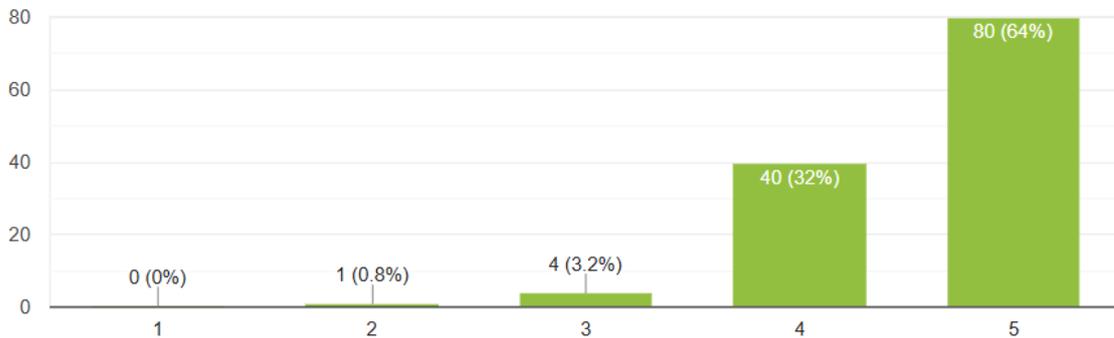| | | 0% | 1% | 4% | 40% | 64% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|



Figure: 7

## CONCLUSION

The data from Blue Tiger Club, Eklavya Club, and ACTFC Club highlight the critical role of leadership in sports organizations. The majority of respondents were athletes (51.2%), mainly participating in team sports (97.6%). Most had 1-3 years of experience (67.2%), emphasizing the need for leadership that supports early career development.

Transformational leadership was the most preferred style (88%), followed by democratic leadership (42.4%), indicating a preference for motivation-driven and participative approaches. Constructive feedback was highly valued, with 66.4% stating they 'always' receive it. Happiness was considered essential for performance, with 86.7% rating it as 'extremely' or 'very important.' Additionally, 64% rated their coach's contribution to a positive environment at the highest level.

These findings affirm that strong, positive leadership fosters team cohesion, motivation, and performance. Future research should explore how leadership strategies can be further enhanced to optimize athlete development and success.

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