



The Impact of Coaches' Servant Leadership on Athletes' Performance

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◆ Purpose

It has been argued that the components of servant leadership—including trust, inclusion, humility and service—enhance coach behaviors that have an effect on athletes' performance (Rieke, Hammermeister, & Chase, 2008); therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate how coaches' servant leadership influences athletes' exercise immersion and exercise achievement related to their athletic performance. The study hypothesized that the impact of the coaches' servant leadership on the athletes' exercise immersion and achievement would be statistically significant.

◆ Methods & Materials

The participants of the study were chosen through a convenience sampling method, and a total of 224 student-athletes at a university in Seoul, South Korea, participated in this study. Data were collected through a servant leadership questionnaire (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006), an exercise immersion questionnaire (Kanungo, 1982), and an exercise achievement questionnaire (Fiedler & Gillo, 1973) that consisted of five-point Likert scale questions. Collected data were analyzed through descriptive statistic and confirmatory factor methods, which utilized PASW 18.0 and Amos 18.0.

Table 1. Participants of the study (n=224)

Variables	Content	Frequency	Percentile(%)
Gender	Male	43	19.2
	Female	181	80.8
Grade	Freshman	48	21.5
	Sophomore	143	63.8
	Junior	20	8.9
	Senior	13	5.8
Team	Individual	128	57.1
	Group	96	42.9

◆ Results

The reliability of the questions and the content validity were checked by means of internal composite reliability and maximum likelihood. The results of the question reliability and the content validity checks showed that the questions of the three questionnaires were suitable for this study (internal composite reliability = .794 ~.894) and that the relationship among the variables reached an appropriate level (CFI=.970, TLI=.957, SRMR=.039, RMSEA=.066). The analysis of the structure equation modeling was conducted to test an established model, and the result indicated that the model was appropriately prepared ($\chi^2=63.427$, $df=32$, $p<.001$). The results of the hypothesis testing using a qualified model were as follows: First, the coaches' servant leadership significantly influenced the university student athletes' exercise immersion (path coefficient=.364, $t=4.735$, $p<.001$). Second, there was a significant relationship between the coaches' servant leadership and the university athletes' exercise achievement (path coefficient=.226, $t=3.235$, $p<.001$). Third, the relationship between the university athletes' exercise immersion and their exercise achievement was significant (path coefficient=.562, $t=7.019$, $p<.001$).

Table 2 . Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Measurements	Standard Value	S.E	Reliability	AVE	
S L	Psychological Counselling	.882	.133	.921	.834
	Altruistic Calling	.873	.135		
	Persuasion Ability	.825	.175		
E I	1	.723	.429	.811	.571
	2	.796	.271		
	3	.728	.357		
	4	.773	.278		
	5	.663	.381		
E O	Exercise Outcome	.905	.060	.829	.648
	Perceived AP	.487	.513		

$\chi^2=63.427(df=32, p<.001)$, CFI=.970, TLI=.957, SRMR=.039, RMSEA=.066

Fourth, the coaches' servant leadership had not only a direct effect ($b=.226$) but also an indirect effect ($b=.204$). Finally, the total casual effect ($b=.430$) showed that the athlete's exercise immersion was a mediating variable between the coaches' servant leadership and the athletes' exercise achievement.

Table 3. Correlations among variables

	Servant Leadership	Exercise Immersion	Exercise Outcome
SL	.834 ^{a)}		
EI	.324**	.571 ^{a)}	
EO	.345**	.516**	.634 ^{a)}

** $p<.01$, ^{a)} AVE value

Table 4. Results of single dimension verification

Single Dimension	SC	SE	t value	Sig.	Reliability	AVE
A C C A L L I N G	.792	.081	13.959	.001	.869	.731
	.883					
	.770					
P S Y C H O L O G I C A L C O U N S E L L I N G	.850	.062	15.927	.001	.894	.783
	.867					
	.841					
P E R S U A S I O N A B I L I T Y	.709	.060	15.813	.001	.875	.741
	.854					
	.874					
E X E R C I S E I M M E R S I O N	.720	.091	10.954	.001	.811	.571
	.795					
	.732					
	.772					
	.666					
E X E R C I S E O U T C O M E	.593	.177	7.381	.001	.794	.501
	.649					
	.570					
	.717					
	.639					
P E R C E I V E D A P	.612	.059	15.984	.001	.800	.607
	.545					
	.888					
	.901					

$\chi^2=373.195(df=215, p=0.00)$, CFI=.943, TLI=.933, SRMR=.060, RMSEA=.057

◆ Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of the study revealed that the university elite sports coaches' servant leadership positively influenced both the student-athletes' exercise immersion and their exercise achievement. Consequently, this study pointed out the importance of coaches' leadership in providing athletes opportunities to demonstrate creativity and potential in order to improve their athletic performance.

◆ References

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