

Soccer Management Practices and Team Performance Among Soccer Athletes in A Technical University In Zhejiang Province, China

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines the correlation between soccer management practices and team performance among athletes at a technical university in Zhejiang, China. Data were collected from 164 athletes using a validated questionnaire. Results indicated very positive assessments of coaching practices (Overall Mean=3.81), particularly in Leadership/Motivation and Communication. Team performance was also highly rated (Overall Mean=3.73), with strongest scores in Team Chemistry. Statistical analysis revealed significant positive correlations ($p < 0.01$) between all management practice dimensions and all team performance indicators. Game Management/Decision-Making showed the strongest relationship with overall performance ($r = 0.833$). While age influenced perceptions of coaching effectiveness, sex and experience showed no significant differences. The study concludes that effective management practices—especially in-game decision-making, leadership, and communication—are strongly linked to enhanced team performance. Recommendations include refining feedback mechanisms, tactical training, and motivational strategies, supported by a proposed Performance Analytics and Strategic Planning Program.

KEYWORDS: Soccer Management Practices, Team Performance, Performance Analytics

I. INTRODUCTION

Soccer, as a global sport, requires a blend of athletic skill, teamwork, and effective management practices to achieve success. Soccer management practices encompass strategies, decision-making, and leadership approaches that significantly influence team performance. Research highlights the multifaceted impact of these practices on athletes' performance and team dynamics.

Effective leadership is one of the cornerstone management practices contributing to team success. A study by Nakamoto and Fujisawa (2021) emphasized the role of transformational leadership in fostering cohesion and motivation among soccer players. Coaches who provided clear visions and inspired

athletes to reach their potential saw improved individual performance, which positively impacted overall team outcomes. These findings align with broader global research advocating for leadership styles that prioritize communication and motivation.

Leadership strategies have been linked to tactical execution and team performance. According to Brown and Campbell (2023), soccer teams led by coaches employing democratic decision-making strategies displayed higher tactical adaptability during matches. Players who felt empowered to contribute their insights to game strategies were more likely to execute plays effectively, leading to improved match outcomes. This participatory approach also fostered trust and collaboration among team members.

The integration of sports analytics in soccer management has revolutionized performance evaluation. A study by Thompson and Reeves (2022) revealed that data-driven decision-making enhanced team performance by optimizing player selection, positioning, and workload distribution. Coaches who used performance analytics could identify strengths and weaknesses, enabling tailored training and strategic adjustments. These findings underscore the growing importance of technology in modern soccer management.

In East Asia, an emphasis on cultural adaptability within management practices has yielded positive results. A study by Park and Min (2023) highlighted that culturally sensitive coaching approaches helped bridge communication gaps in diverse teams, leading to better interpersonal relationships and collective performance. Such practices ensured that players from different cultural backgrounds felt valued, fostering a sense of belonging and collaboration.

Player motivation and welfare are also critical components of soccer management. Wilson and O'Connor (2021) explored how holistic management practices that prioritized players' physical and mental well-being influenced performance. Teams with access to mental health resources, nutritional guidance, and injury prevention programs consistently outperformed those without such support systems. The study underscored the importance of viewing athletes as individuals with diverse needs beyond physical training.

Another aspect of management impacting team performance is conflict resolution. Jenkins and Harper (2020) examined the role of conflict management strategies in maintaining team harmony. Coaches who actively mediated disputes and encouraged open communication minimized internal conflicts, leading to improved team dynamics and performance. This proactive approach helped teams maintain focus during high-pressure situations.

Training methodologies employed by management also play a pivotal role in performance outcomes. Research by Chen and Liang (2024) demonstrated that structured, high-intensity training regimens coupled with clear performance metrics improved players' technical and physical capabilities. The study emphasized the importance of balancing skill development with strategic understanding, ensuring that players were prepared for the multifaceted demands of competitive matches.

Teamwork and communication, fostered through management practices, are essential for achieving cohesive performances. In a comparative study, Miller and Roy (2023) found that teams with structured

communication protocols outperformed those without. Regular team meetings, clear role assignments, and feedback loops facilitated better on-field coordination, enhancing tactical execution and match results.

Soccer management practices also impact long-term team success by fostering talent development. A study by Garcia and Henderson (2022) explored how youth development programs integrated into team management frameworks influenced performance trajectories. Teams that invested in nurturing young talent not only saw immediate performance improvements but also established sustainable success by building a robust talent pipeline.

Soccer management practices significantly influence team performance by integrating leadership, analytics, cultural adaptability, and player welfare. Studies consistently highlight the importance of holistic and innovative approaches to management. By prioritizing effective leadership, fostering teamwork, leveraging technology, and addressing player well-being, soccer managers can create environments that maximize both individual and team success.

Statement of the Problem

This study will determine the relationship between soccer management practices and team performance among soccer athletes in Zhejiang Guangsha Vocational and Technical University of Construction in Donyang City, Zhejiang Province, China .

The results of the study will be used as a basis for a performance analytics and strategic planning program.

Specifically, the study will answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the athlete respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. sex;
 - 1.2. age; and
 - 1.3. number of years as a soccer athlete?
2. What is the assessment of the athlete respondents of the soccer management practices of their coaches and leaders in terms of:
 - 2.1. communication and feedback;
 - 2.2. training and tactical preparation;
 - 2.3. leadership and motivation;
 - 2.4. equity and inclusivity; and
 - 2.5. game management and decision-making?
3. Is there a significant difference in the assessment of the athlete respondents of the soccer management practices of their coaches and leaders when they are grouped according to their profile?
4. What is the self-assessment of the athlete respondents of their team performance in terms of:
 - 4.1. communication and coordination;
 - 4.2. tactical execution;
 - 4.3. attacking and scoring opportunities;
 - 4.4. defensive cohesion;

4.5. mental and emotional aspects; and

4.6. overall team chemistry?

5. Is there a significant difference in the self-assessment of the athlete respondents of their team performance when they are grouped according to their profile?

6. Is there is a significant relationship between soccer management practices and team performance among soccer athletes?

7. Based on the results of the study, what performance analytics and strategic planning program can be proposed?

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employs a descriptive, comparative, and cor relational methodology, characterized by its clear definitions, thorough documentation, comprehensive analysis, and a refined understanding of contextual interactions. According to Tan and Ismail (2023), descriptive research systematically identifies and explores the key characteristics, behaviors, and attributes of phenomena within their natural settings. The primary goal is to develop detailed profiles of specific entities or gain a deeper understanding of cur rent situations, thereby providing a solid foundation for future research.

Building on the work of Tan and Ismail (2023), descriptive research plays a crucial role in the social sciences and psychology, as it facilitates an in-depth understanding of natural patterns and behaviors. This approach supports the collection of accurate , unbiased data on the beliefs,actions, and characteristics of target populations, offering valuable insights into societal trends.

Moreover, Aslan and Chen (2024) emphasize the importance of comparative methods in identifying critical variables that affect outcomes across different groups or contexts. They argue that correlational analysis is vital for uncovering potential causal relationships between variables, thus enhancing the explanatory power of research designs. In this study, correlational analysis will explore the relationships between specific demographic characteristics and relevant attitudes or behaviors, contributing to the development of theoretical frameworks and practical strategies.

The descriptive-comparative-correlational methodology employed in this study offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing complex relationships between variables and their contexts. By integrating the perspectives of Tan and Ismail (2023) with the insights of Aslan and Chen (2024), this app roach strengthens the depth and validity of the findings, providing a reliable basis for future research and practical applications in related fields.

This study aims to investigate soccer athletes' assessment of the athlete respondents of the soccer management practices of their coaches and leaders and their self-assessment of their team performance.

This research approach allows the researcher to numerically analyze, compare, and correlate the relationships amongst the dependent variables included in the study.

By utilizing this approach, the researcher will be able to find any significant difference or relationship in the soccer athlete respondents' assessment of the soccer management practices of their coaches and leaders and their demographic data such as sex,age, and number of years as soccer athlete. Also, the

researcher will be able to find any significant difference or relationship in the soccer athletes' self-assessment of their team performance and their demographic data such as sex, age, and number of years as soccer athlete. The soccer athletes' assessment of the soccer management practices of their coaches and leaders and their self-assessment of their team performance will then be correlated.

All the above discussions on the descriptive research method will suit the nature of research that this present study would do; hence this method will be adopted.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Profile of Respondents

The majority of respondents were male (89%), over 18 years old (98.2%), and had more than 5 years of soccer experience (60.4%).

2. Assessment of Management Practices and Team Performance

Management Practices: Athletes rated all aspects of coaching management very positively (overall mean=3.81). The highest-rated dimensions were Leadership & Motivation and Communication & Feedback.

Team Performance: Self-assessments were also highly positive (overall mean = 3.73). The strongest aspect was Overall Team Chemistry, while Attacking & Scoring Opportunities had a relatively lower rating.

3. Differences Based on Demographic Factors

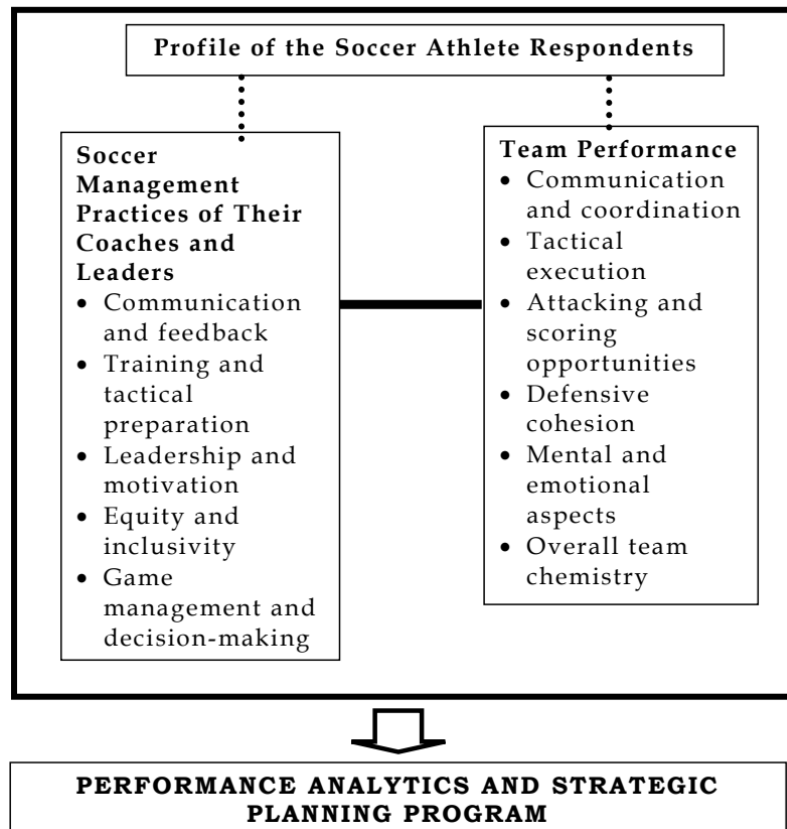
Age: Significant differences were found in the evaluation of management practices, with older athletes (>18 years) providing more positive ratings. A significant difference was also found in Mental & Emotional Aspects of team performance.

Sex: No significant differences were found in either management practices or team performance evaluations.

Years of Experience: A significant difference was found only in the assessment of Attacking & Scoring Opportunities, with more experienced athletes rating it higher.

4. Relationship Between Management Practices and Team Performance

A strong positive correlation was found between all management practice dimensions and all team performance indicators ($p < 0.01$). Game Management & Decision-Making showed the strongest correlation with overall performance ($r = 0.833$), particularly with Mental & Emotional Aspects ($r = 0.827$).



The results demonstrate that effective soccer management practices—especially in game decision-making, leadership, and communication—are strongly associated with enhanced team performance.

IV. CONCLUSION

The Critical Role of Management Practices:

The study confirms that effective football management practices—particularly in areas such as match management and decision-making, leadership and motivation, communication, and feedback—are essential for enhancing team performance. Excellence in these areas by coaches directly and positively influences the team's tactical execution, defensive cohesion, mental resilience, and overall team chemistry.

Targeted Areas for Improvement:

Despite the overall positive assessment, the study also identifies areas with room for further optimization. For example, within management practices, there is potential for enhancement in providing individualized skill feedback, motivation in high-pressure situations, fair distribution of playing time, and real-time tactical adjustments. In terms of team performance, key areas requiring attention include the efficiency of converting scoring opportunities into goals and the defensive flexibility to adapt to opponents' offensive strategies.

Support for the Theoretical Framework:

The findings align with and support the transformational leadership theory, which serves as the study's theoretical foundation. By demonstrating transformational leadership behaviors—such as articulating a clear vision, offering individualized support, and inspiring players to transcend self-interest for the team's benefit—coaches can effectively foster an environment conducive to high-level team performance.

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