

TITLE: The Community College Coach: Leadership Practices and Athlete Satisfaction

RESEARCHER: Jodi P. Coffman
Graduate School of Education
University of San Diego
Doctoral Dissertation: April 1999

OBJECTIVE: To examine the perceptions of coaches' own leadership behaviors, athletes' perceptions of their coaches' behaviors, and satisfaction with those leadership behaviors.

METHODOLOGY: The population consisted of California community college head coaches of team sports in which there was a male and female equivalent through the Blue Book of College Athletics (Beazley, 1997). Respondents (N=225) completed the Leadership Practices Inventory (Self), with 57 percent supplying usable surveys (N=129). The sample of athletes (N=280) were taken from the men's and women's soccer teams of the head soccer coaches (n=29) included in the total coaching sample. Fifty-five percent (N=154) of these athletes responded by completing the LPI-Observer and the Scale of Athlete Satisfaction (Chelladurai et al, 1988). Overall, more female coaches (72%) and male athletes (65%) responded.

KEY FINDINGS: No significant differences were found between male and female coaches on four leadership practices (Challenging, Inspiring, Enabling and Modeling). Female coaches reported making more use of Encouraging than their male counterparts. Overall, the leadership practices of coaches were more similar than different between coaches from different sports. For female coaches, their LPI-Self scores were lower than the scores provided them by their student athletes (on the LPI-Observer), with the greatest difference in the area of Inspiring. The opposite was true for male coaches, however, with their scores always higher than those from their student athletes, with the greatest difference in the area of Enabling.

Athlete satisfaction, according to the researcher, "is related to congruence between the perceptions of female coaches and athletes regarding leadership behavior. Female athletes were 'Satisfied' and in most agreement with male and female coaches; while they were 'Extremely Satisfied' and in a great deal of agreement with only female coaches. On the other hand, male athletes were 'Satisfied' yet in low agreement with their male coaches" (p. 102).