

UNVEILING THE PATHWAY TO SUCCESS: LEADERSHIP IN SPORT AND MANAGEMENT - EXPLORING FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN RESEARCH

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Abstract

This paper seeks to cast light on the critical role of leadership in the realms of sport and management and identify potential avenues for future research. The outcomes and accomplishments of sports organizations, athletes, and teams are greatly influenced by effective leadership. Similarly, in the field of management, effective leadership practices can result in enhanced performance, increased motivation, and enhanced organizational culture. This paper reviews the existing literature, identifies current voids, and suggests potential directions for future research to further our understanding of leadership in sports and management domains.

Keywords: *leadership in sport and management, future research, technology ethics, organizational behavior*

1. INTRODUCTION

As a transdisciplinary topic, leadership has relevance across many contexts, but there are very few where it is more relevant than in sport management [1]. Leadership has long been recognized as a crucial success factor in sports and the world of command [2]. Influential leaders can invigorate, encourage, and steer individuals and teams toward accomplishing their objectives and ambitions. This ability is not limited to sports but can be seen in business boardrooms. The idea of leadership shifts and adapts in tandem with the rapidly changing environments of both business and athletic competition. Exploring the future of scientific research in leadership is crucial to guaranteeing sustained competence in these fields. Many opportunities are available for reinventing leadership paradigms due to the convergence of cutting-edge technologies, data analytics, and a deeper understanding of human behavior.

Coaches, managers, and executives are on the edge of an era defined by data-driven decision-making because of the introduction of virtual reality simulations, wearable gadgets, and artificial intelligence. This is expected to transform how managers develop strategy, coach athletes, and raise productivity in the workplace. Big data, artificial intelligence, data analytics, machine learning, and neural networks are all exciting possibilities in the market right now, and they will afterward be the posterity of the current technological landscape [3]. The study proposes how incorporating technology can open the door for a new generation of leaders equipped with knowledge from large data reservoirs and capable of making intelligent and creative decisions in the quest for greatness. The future of leadership studies will go beyond merely leveraging the power of technology. Instead, it will go into emotional and cultural intelligence—a human touch that transcends data points and analytics. Emotional intelligence is based on three fundamental assumptions: our emotions play an essential role in our daily lives; people differ in their ability to perceive, understand, use, and manage these emotions; and these differences affect individual capability in various contexts, including organizational leadership. This straightforward and clear set of premises has led and should continue to lead a vibrant, developing, and often contentious field of academic investigation [4]. This new wave of leadership research will explore how emotional intelligence can foster more robust team dynamics, improve relationships between athletes and mentors, and enhance overall organizational well-being while emphasizing the importance of empathy, self-awareness, and interpersonal communication.

The paper also explores the fascinating nexus between cross-disciplinary methods and leadership research. Researchers may discover unique ways for talent spotting, leadership development, and performance-boosting by incorporating ideas from organizational behavior, psychology, neuroscience,

and sports science. An integrated understanding of leadership is poised to emerge from collaboration between several fields, promising creative applications across numerous industries. The concept of integrated leadership refers to the concerted actions taken by members of an organization positioned at different levels of the organizational hierarchy to fulfill one of five distinct forms of leadership: task-, relations-, change-, diversity-, or integrity-oriented leadership [5]. The direction of leadership research, which is advancing quickly, will be significantly influenced by ethical issues. The ethical frameworks that value the welfare and dignity of all concerned stakeholders will be included in responsible leadership research, which can affect individuals, teams, and entire organizations.

The authors of a fantastic systematic review by [6] stated, "The sport management discipline has grown in its legitimacy and scholarship since the 1980s, and scholars have tackled the issue of leadership in sport management from diverse angles and in a variety of contexts". They reviewed most papers from the last 40 years and tried to suggest future research directions. This essay will attempt to identify six different possible avenues for further study. They are arguably the most intriguing in a world that is constantly changing. The potential impact that these advancements might have on athlete performance, the dynamics of teams, the achievements of organizations, and the entire development of individuals will be discussed as the discussion moves through the uncharted region of the future of scientific study in management and leadership in sport. It is feasible to create the capacity to change the very essence of leadership by welcoming new trends and taking an active approach to research on leadership in sports and management. This is one way in which the ability to reshape the nature of leadership may be designed.

2. RESULTS

This manuscript outlines six distinct research directions within the sports and management leadership domains. The instructions highlight research areas that need to be sufficiently explored in the existing literature alongside the prevailing trends in the field. These domains possess the potential to offer valuable insights to scholars concerning the influence of effective leadership strategies on both sports' performance and organizational accomplishments. The potential ramifications of these upcoming research avenues may have significant implications for individuals in the field of education and managers and leaders in various industries. Sports problems include a variety of aspects, such as team camaraderie, player motivation, and performance evaluation. Professionals possess the capacity to gain valuable insights and formulate evidence-based strategies to improve team performance and achieve organizational objectives. This can be achieved by further investigating these challenges in future research endeavors. Acquiring a comprehensive understanding of the different leadership strategies utilized in diverse sports contexts can enhance the efficacy of managerial approaches customized for specific sports and teams, resulting in improved outcomes. These proposals are expected to serve as a catalyst for researchers to delve into the study of leadership, athlete motivation, and performance evaluation, with the ultimate goal of providing valuable insights and assistance to practitioners in these fields. Furthermore, integrating team dynamics and communication expertise into leadership strategies can enhance team performance and foster a conducive organizational culture.

Mindfulness and Leadership:

Baron et al. [7] found that mindfulness is positively associated with the overall score of a leader's flexibility and its two dualities: self-assertive and directive versus collaborative and supportive, and long-term plan versus short-term execution. Four of the five dimensions of mindfulness—nonreactivity, nonjudgment, acting with awareness, and describing—are positively associated with adaptability. In another experiment, retreat participants demonstrated significant increases in mindfulness and commensurate reductions in stress that persisted eight weeks after the retreat, and informants corroborated their leadership efficacy enhancements. According to qualitative findings [8], middle managers in health care struggle to maintain a mindfulness practice. The effects of mindfulness training on leaders' self-perceptions require further research. Mindfulness supports the cultivation of self-awareness in leaders and enables them to evaluate their thoughts, feelings, and reactions objectively. Recognizing one's talents, weaknesses, and triggers can help mindful leaders improve their ability to

make leadership decisions. Implementing mindfulness can cultivate a solid and beneficial organizational culture in sports management. Cultivating mindfulness among leaders has the potential to produce a leadership style characterized by increased confidence and emotional intelligence that can impact the entire organization.

Mindfulness practice in sports management has improved leaders' decision-making skills. Mindful leaders exhibit a cognitive process in which they carefully analyze their decisions and consider their potential long-term impact. The integration of conscious decision-making processes can complement strategic methods and contribute to the overall success of sports organizations. Creating a productive and high-performing work atmosphere can be supported through such interventions in sports organizations. The potential development of leadership in sport management through mindfulness, a discipline that promotes optimism and emotional intelligence, is worth exploring.

Leadership in Virtual Environments:

Effective management of virtual sports teams requires implementing novel strategies to inspire, facilitate communication, and foster trust among geographically dispersed members. Virtual collaboration technology and tools are critical in reducing effective virtual leadership by improving communication and coordination. Promoting team unity and a sense of belonging through shared goals and online team-building exercises increases a team's effectiveness. In addition, fostering a positive organizational culture by introducing rituals and promoting shared experiences strengthens commitment to the values the organization upholds. Effectively addressing these challenges enables sports managers to navigate virtual environments and achieve long-term success. As Mysirlaki and Paraskeva [9] found, transformational leadership behavior mediates the relationship between perceived leader emotional intelligence and virtual team performance subfactors. Gender differences were observed in emotional intelligence, transformational leadership, and virtual team performance. Castellano et al. [10] discovered that self-directed executives require efficacy and dedication to improve the performance of virtual R&D teams. Self-leadership necessitates trust for leadership to be shared. They impact managers and organizations implementing intra- and inter-organizational arrangements within virtual R&D teams.

Cultural Intelligence and Leadership:

International experience research is fragmented, employs inconsistent terminology, lacks conceptual frameworks, and uses several approaches. Despite theoretical assertions that learning, and development require unique environments, scientists have mainly employed quantitative international experience measurements to explain cultural intelligence development [11]. Cultural intelligence involves adaptability and communication across cultures. Cultural intelligence and leadership efficacy may be studied in sports teams and international organizations. Leaders' cultural adaptability, inclusive leadership, and diversity promotion may be examined [12]. Researchers may also learn how leaders employ cultural variety to boost creativity, innovation, and problem-solving to achieve their goals. Leaders' cultural intelligence affects organizational performance directly and indirectly. Cultural intelligence improves performance in multicultural groups. Therefore, these businesses should invest in their leaders' cultural intelligence to enhance their cross-cultural performance and build organizational frameworks that expand their intellectual capital [13]. Cultural intelligence may help sports managers better understand and navigate diverse cultural contexts in the global sports industry. By developing cultural intelligence, sports managers can effectively communicate and collaborate with athletes, coaches, and stakeholders from different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, cultural intelligence can enhance their ability to adapt strategies and policies to cater to diverse audiences' unique needs and preferences, increasing fan engagement and market expansion opportunities.

Adaptive Leadership in Crisis Management:

Martono et al. [14] believe integrative adaptive leadership positively impacts collaboration and affective commitment. The organization should be assisted in implementing collaborative conflict resolution to enhance collaboration. Moreover, affective commitment influences organizational effectiveness positively. Thus, efforts to strengthen the efficacy of an organization must be supported by affective loyalty. In addition, the study revealed that integrative, adaptive leadership positively impacts collaboration. This implies improved execution of integrative adaptive leadership, a higher level of

coordination, and the converse. Each member has distinct responsibilities and duties, and various methods exist to accomplish or resolve the task. A strong team can be formed if the leader can accommodate the faculty's and staff's creativity. The COVID-10 pandemic presented the most significant opportunity to demonstrate adaptive leadership. In research by Garavaglia et al. [15], four key issues emerged: (i) the significance of adaptive leadership and anticipatory governance frameworks aimed at guiding in emergencies (e.g., what to do in the event of limited mask availability and local coronavirus disease; (ii) the significance of promoting institutional spaces for cooperation and collaboration with citizens in their role as volunteers and of other organizations; and (iii) crisis management is a crucial aspect of leadership in sports and management. Adaptive leadership approaches during crises and organizational challenges can be the subject of research. Researchers can examine how leaders navigate unforeseen circumstances, adapt strategies, and foster organizational and team resilience. Researchers can investigate the role of leaders in sustaining team morale, communicating effectively during crises, and guiding teams through ambiguous and difficult circumstances.

Leadership Succession Planning:

Leadership succession planning is critical for sports teams and organizations. For smooth leadership transitions and high performance, effective succession planning is necessary. This research can assist in identifying best practices and ideas for leadership transition. Sports leaders may identify and nurture successors via analysis. Early identification and development may increase leadership preparation significantly [16]. Leadership skills may be developed via mentoring programs, leadership training courses, and increased responsibilities. Leadership succession planning needs a large pool of potential successors. Organizations may avoid leadership shortages and ensure a seamless transfer by building a collection of talented candidates. A comprehensive leadership development plan may inspire prospective leaders and provide expert guidance. Communication and feedback in succession planning might be investigated as well. Aspiring leaders must maintain open and honest communication with current leaders. Individuals may improve their leadership abilities by using constructive feedback to identify their strengths and flaws. Leadership transfers may also be studied in terms of how they impact various elements of sports teams and organizations. Team dynamics may reveal how leadership changes affect morale, collaboration, and performance. Understanding how leadership turnover influences organizational stability can aid in developing long-term success frameworks. How fans and stakeholders perceive leadership changes may disclose brand reputation and financial consequences. Understanding these mindsets can assist sports organizations in gaining stakeholder support and participation. Finally, research on leadership succession planning in sports teams and businesses can produce substantial insights that enable effective management. Sports organizations may ensure long-term success by knowing how to identify and groom successors, facilitate smooth transfers, and maintain performance levels.

Leadership and Technology Ethics:

Technology improves performance, data-driven decision-making, and audience engagement in sports. As AI, data analytics, and wearable technologies grow, ethical considerations must be carefully examined and applied. Researching responsible sports and management technology use is crucial. Leaders must handle data gathering, storage, and ethics. Strategic data utilization and athlete/employee privacy must be balanced. Use technology ethically. AI and data analytics boost leadership decision-making. Technology may bias decisions. Researchers may explore how leaders avoid biases by installing safeguards, diversifying data sources, and employing human supervision in decision-making. This ensures that technology enhances human judgment, keeping sports organizations fair and inclusive. Technology-driven leadership requires the human touch. AI and data analytics may improve operations and automate chores, but leaders' connections with athletes and employees should be protected. Study how leaders use technology for efficiency, empathy, and incentives for team cohesion and personal growth.

How technology influences teamwork and employee well-being is another crucial subject. Wearables and advanced analytics show athletes' performance and health. Understanding how to use this data to optimize performance without jeopardizing athletes' physical and mental well-being is vital. Technology may reduce stress and boost performance in a supportive workplace. Sports technology impacts culture.

Technology affects corporate communication, decision-making, and authority. Leaders may benefit from understanding these effects. Finally, sports management must address ethics as technology transforms. This research helps sports and management professionals use AI, data analytics, and wearable technology ethically. Data security, bias mitigation, human touch in leadership, team dynamics, employee well-being, and corporate culture may help researchers build ethical standards for successful and sustainable sports technology integration.

3. DISCUSSION

The scientific study of leadership in sports and management promises a thrilling and innovative future. This research explores unexplored territory using cutting-edge technology, a better knowledge of human behavior, and varied views. Leadership research can use technology's impact on sports and business. VR simulations, wearable gadgets, and AI will change leaders' decision-making, training, and organizational optimization. Leaders may boost team and individual performance by using data-driven insights.

This study emphasizes the need for emotional intelligence in leadership despite technical advances. Leadership research incorporates empathy, self-awareness, and interpersonal communication. Emotionally intelligent leaders can build trust, motivation, and camaraderie with athletes, workers, and team members beyond data-driven measures. Cross-disciplinary leadership research has great potential. Researchers can discover novel talent identification, leadership development, and performance enhancement methods using psychology, neuroscience, organizational behavior, and sports science. The future of leadership research embraces multiple viewpoints to provide leaders with integrated knowledge of their positions and help them solve complex problems using diversified methods. Leadership research relies on ethics. Data privacy, biases, and the well-being and dignity of athletes, workers, and stakeholders are part of responsible leadership. Leaders must protect ethics while pursuing excellence to secure a bright future.

Athletes must be considered stakeholders and contributors to the success of any sports organization. Understanding athletes' goals, objectives, and obstacles enables sports management to make educated decisions that can improve their performance and overall professional experience. Players get a sense of ownership and empowerment when given a voice in decision-making, leading to a more cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship between players and sports administration. It is also important to remember many individuals, such as coaches, technical staff, and physiotherapists, because their experience and support are critical to players' performance. These people help to create and implement training plans, injury prevention techniques, and general athlete well-being. Sports managers may develop a complete and holistic approach to athlete management that optimizes performance potential by taking into account the feedback and views of this varied group. A vast collection of administrative personnel also contributes to athlete management by handling logistics, scheduling, and administrative responsibilities, allowing players to concentrate entirely on their training and performance.

These organizations require intellectual and skilled leadership to successfully coordinate and optimize their contributions. A competent leader can encourage and motivate administrative employees, physiotherapists, and other support personnel to collaborate smoothly to improve athlete performance. Furthermore, effective communication and collaboration between different groups may be facilitated by intelligent leadership, producing a harmonious and efficient working environment. Economic and management studies must focus on successful trials and analyses to develop effective leadership methods that may be used in sports organizations. Researchers can give significant insights and recommendations for enhancing leadership practices in sports management by examining and evaluating these successful initiatives.

Furthermore, researchers must consider the unique dynamics and problems of the sports sector to guarantee that their results are appropriate and relevant to this specific environment. Finally, while applying leadership approaches in sports companies, it is critical to consider the practical ramifications. This involves assessing the resources, time limits, and limitations. By considering these practical aspects, researchers may guarantee that their recommendations are practicable and reasonable for sports

management to implement effectively. Furthermore, continual review and adaption of leadership methods based on stakeholder feedback may help continuous progress and success in sports management.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Leadership research in sports and management will usher in a new era of transformative leadership. Leaders may succeed in a complicated society by embracing new technology, respecting emotional intelligence, encouraging cross-disciplinary cooperation, and preserving ethics. The potential for discoveries and inventive applications allows for unmatched successes, not only on the field or in the boardroom but in the lives of athletes, employees, and the global community. As scholars, leaders, and stakeholders explore leadership research's uncharted territories, they create a future where leaders thrive; organizations thrive, and human potential soars to new heights.

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