

Summer 6-2-2015

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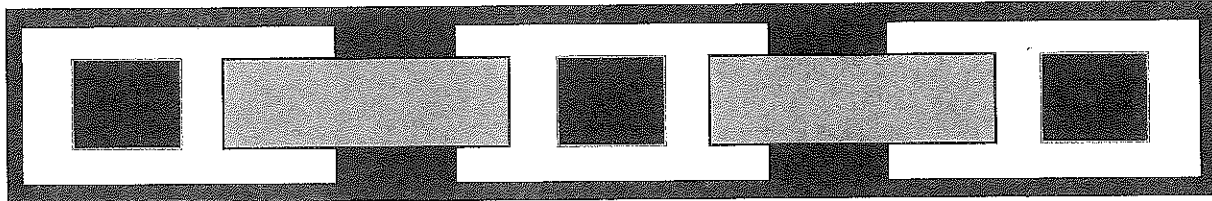
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Leadership in Collegiate Soccer

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One of the most significant athletic and social changes in the United States over the past two decades has been the growing popularity of soccer. Since the mid-1990s, soccer popularity has exploded, fueled by the emergence and growth of Major League Soccer (MLS) (Saporito, 2010). Though soccer is the world's most popular sport in terms of attendance, U.S. soccer matches have modest attendance; however, this may be changing. Soccer popularity has increased through participation and media coverage while becoming integrated into the U.S. culture (Saporito, 2010).

The increased popularity of soccer and an obsessive need for winning in the U.S. culture has created the need for more effective leadership in coaching U.S. soccer at all levels. Collegiate and professional coaches are expected to win to keep their jobs and develop resources for their programs. Adopting proven leadership styles may be the edge that coaches need to succeed. The connection between leadership styles and organizational performance has been well documented in academic literature (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Bass, 1998) and is applicable to the sport or business—of soccer. Effective leadership, as described by Antonakis, Avolio, and Sivasubramaniam (2003), is exercised in a proactive manner and is typically transformational in nature (DeGroot, Kiker, and Cross, 2000). Transformational leaders raise the level of interest and interaction of followers to motivate them to achieve higher levels of performance and accomplish mutual goals (Yammarino and Bass, 1990). According to Hull (2013), a transformational coach would be a visionary, sound in all aspects of coaching and leading a team; skilled at coaching; and skilled at motivating the mind, body, and heart of the athlete to achieve full engagement for the betterment of the team.

Aspects of the Study

The relationship between a coach's leadership behavior and success in athletics at the collegiate level is not fully understood. Prior research using the *Full-Range of Leadership Model* (Bass and Avolio, 1991) focused primarily on leadership in business and the military, with little in the way of research on athletic coaching and team success (Yusof, 1998). Nevertheless, collegiate soccer has become so competitive that managing programs requires greater leadership skills, training, and more experience than ever (MacDonald, 2012). According to Yusof (1998), leadership in sports organizations continues to be a key factor in the success and sustainability of both coaches and the entire institution. Athletics at the collegiate level are no longer just sports programs; they are transitioning into business enterprises (MacDonald, 2012).

Rationale. Research using the *Full-Range of Leadership Model* demonstrates that leader behaviors have a direct and positive relationship on achieving higher levels of follower performance (Avolio and Bass, 2003), which, in turn, may suggest that leadership behavior among coaches has a direct relationship to player performance, and ultimately their programs. The positive impact that top coaches have had on collegiate programs in various sports is well documented. Examples of successful coaches are: Pat Summit, University of Tennessee women's basketball coach; John Wooden, UCLA men's basketball coach; and Anson Dorrance, University of North Carolina women's soccer coach. Each is recognized for exceptional records in terms of championships and their career win/loss records. Despite the speculation regarding the reasons for these successes, whether great athletes, funding, top facilities, commit-

ment, or excellent coaching, there has been little empirical research addressing the presence and relationship of leadership behaviors of athletic coaches and team success (Cathcart, 2009). Finding ways to optimize athletic performance will be imperative for coaches in their attempt to build the ever-elusive winning program.

Purpose. This study sought to determine the existence and type of leadership exhibited by National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II soccer coaches in the southern region of the U.S. and determine whether or not these leadership styles have a significant relationship to the level of team performance (career win/loss percentage) realized by these coaches. This study also provided additional insight into leadership theory and its relationship to coaching success. Toward these ends, the following research questions were addressed:

Research Question 1: What is the predominant leadership style exhibited by NCAA Division II soccer coaches in the southern region of the U.S.?

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between coaches' leadership styles and the outcomes of extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction?

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between the leadership style of soccer coaches and the win/loss percentage of their programs?

Research Question 4: Which leadership styles exhibited by collegiate soccer coaches lead to the most successful win/loss percentage?

Theoretical framework. This study is based on the *Full-Range of Leadership Model* developed by Avolio and Bass (2004). This model describes leadership styles using a continuum, from passive/avoidant (*laissez-faire*) at one end to transactional leadership in the middle, and a fully engaged transformational leadership style at the other end. These leadership styles represent the framework of this study and are used to describe the styles of leadership exhibited by college soccer coaches in the southern region of the U.S. The leadership styles of the *Full-Range of Leadership Model* represent the independent variables in this study.

Nature of the study. A descriptive quantitative method was used to evaluate leadership in collegiate soccer coaching in the U.S. It provided a representation of the current field of soccer coaching, plus insights for learning and improving the field. This study employed Avolio and Bass's (2004) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X Leader Form (Short Form) to learn

about leadership and identify the types of leadership. The study examined potential relationships between leadership behaviors and performance outcomes of the win/loss records of the coaches.

Literature Review

Full-range of leadership model. Bass (1985) posited that existing theories of leadership focused mainly on clarifying follower goal and role clarification and how leaders rewarded follower behavior. This style of leadership is known as "transactional" and is primarily concerned with exchanges between leaders and followers. Bass advocated a paradigm shift to learn how leaders influenced followers to go beyond self-interest for the greater good of their teams, units, and organizations to achieve winning results. This type of leadership was called "transformational." Bass (1985) developed the *Full-Range of Leadership Model*, which included four transformational and two transactional leadership factors and was expanded between 1985 to 1990 (Bass, 1985, 1998; Avolio and Bass, 1991; Avolio, Waldman, and Yammarino, 1991; Bass and Avolio, 1994; Hater and Bass, 1988). The model's current form represents nine single-order factors comprising five transformational leadership factors, three transactional leadership factors, and one for nontransactional *laissez-faire* leadership.

Transformational leaders recognize and exploit an existing need or demand of a potential follower and look for potential motives to satisfy higher needs, thus engaging the full person and converting followers into leaders. The transactional leader approaches followers with an eye on exchanging one thing for another. Bass (1985) refined these concepts with each complementing the other and giving more attention to the follower's versus the leader's needs. Bass and Avolio (1993) found that the best leaders displayed both transformational and transactional leadership. These factors were considered part of a continuum from transformational or active leadership to passive/avoidant (*laissez-faire*) leadership.

This concept has three parts, transformational, transactional, and passive/avoidant (*laissez-faire*) leadership, placed on an active-passive continuum. Traits that are transformational in nature include charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.

The impact of transformational leadership on team performance. Transformational leadership

has received a great deal of recognition as the key to achieving higher levels of performance, not only in business, but also in the military, education, and athletics (Horn-Turpin, 2009). Transformational leaders instill their vision and morals within their team, emphasizing the importance and meanings of collective goals and inspiring the team to sacrifice their own interests for those of the team (Bass, 1998).

Coaching and transformational leadership. A transformational coach realizes the power of the coaching platform to inspire, motivate, and produce positive and sustainable change in his or her followers. They are acutely mindful of the spiritual, moral, social, emotional, and psychological needs of their athletes (Hull, 2013). The transformational leader and coach possess numerous traits as defined by Burns (1978), and reexamined and studied by Bass (1985). As Burns (1978) states, transformational leaders focus on the needs of their followers. The transforming leader makes the effort to recognize and understand the wants, needs, demands, and expectations of followers, so that they may become more fully engaged in their organization (Bass, 1985). Despite the differences in organizational fields, or the personalities, strengths, values, and beliefs of leaders and coaches, transformational leaders desire to do the right thing for their people and organizations (Bass, 2001).

Bennis (1989) stated that a transformational leader in a sports environment must have a vision that is contagious and compelling. The effectiveness of the leader is determined by whether or not the coach can inspire the team to become at one with this mission (Cathcart, 2009). Despite the gap in research concerning leadership style and the impact on athletes, studies addressed elsewhere in this paper have examined the impact on coaches and administration performance, satisfaction, and voluntary turnover, as a result of the leadership styles exhibited by athletic directors and other high-ranking organizational personnel. For example, Wells and Peachey (2011) found a positive correlation between the style exhibited by an organization's leaders and followers' intentions to remain with the athletics department of that institution or not. Studies in the area of sports management have highlighted the negative effects of voluntary turnover on organizational and team performance (Wells and Peachey, 2011).

Transformational leadership and outcomes. Transformational leadership encourages emotional response and attachment by followers

to their leader and organization. The resulting high levels of trust, increased satisfaction in the work place, and reduction in the desire for followers to leave the organization is the result of transforming behavior (Tse and Lam, 2008). Lower turnover reduces financial costs in terms of continued recruitment and training and also increases the performance and efficiency of the team.

Judge and Piccolo (2004) found during analyses of cross field studies that transformational leadership had significantly more positive relationships with satisfaction and team performance than either transactional or laissez-faire leadership. These findings were empirically supported by Yusof (1999), who found a significant relationship between transformational leadership style exhibited by athletic directors and job satisfaction experienced by coaches at both the NCAA Division I and Division III levels. Higher levels of transformational leadership were witnessed in Division I programs by coaches who reported higher levels of job satisfaction compared to their Division III counterparts (Yusof, 1999). Since job satisfaction and performance are considered primary measures of leadership effectiveness, Bass (1990) argues that transformational leadership behaviors are undoubtedly related to effective leadership behaviors.

In general, studies in the area of sports, management, and intercollegiate organizations have demonstrated that transformational leadership has led to positive results on team performance and organizational outcomes. Choi, Sagas, Park, and Cunningham (2007) examined leadership styles of athletic directors and discovered that transformational leadership had a positive relationship with extra effort, commitment, and job satisfaction among their head coaches.

Methodology

Nature of the study. This research sought to identify leadership styles among NCAA Division II soccer coaches in the southern region of the U.S. In addition, it looked for relationships between leadership styles and win/loss records. This study also examined the relationship of the coach's leadership style to player willingness to display extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction. The study applied a descriptive correlational research design.

Target population. This study was limited to soccer coaches at the varsity level of the U. S. collegiate soccer system and the almost 2,000 programs that make up member NCAA and

Table 1. Frequencies for Sex, Education, and Age

Sex	f (%)	Coach Education	f (%)	Age	f (%)
Men	41 (78.8)	4-yr College Degree	21 (40.4)	< 40	31 (59.6)
Women	11 (21.2)	Masters or Higher	31 (59.6)	≥ 40	21 (40.4)

N = 52

Table 2. 95% Confidence Limit for Mean Differences Between the Three Leadership Styles

Effect	Est M diff	SE	df	t	95% CL
TransF-TransA	.84	.07	51	11.43*	.70-.99
TransF-Passive	2.55	.09	51	29.57*	2.37-2.72
TransA-Passive	1.70	.09	51	18.10*	1.51-1.89

Note. TransF = transformational leadership (*M* = 3.28), TransA = transactional leadership (*M* = 2.44), Passive = passive/avoidant leadership (*laissez-faire*) (*M* = .74).

**p* < .001

NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) organizations. The sample included coaches at the NCAA II level in the southern region of the United States. Typically, one head coach, one assistant, and sometimes one graduate assistant coach were in each soccer program.

Selection of participants. There were 55 institutions, most with men's and women's varsity teams. In total, 100 programs from within five southern NCAA Division II athletic conferences were represented. Head coaches and assistants were invited to participate. A total of 200 coaches composed the sample for this study, including approximately 100 head coaches and 100 assistant or graduate assistant coaches. Some coaches were responsible for both men's and women's teams.

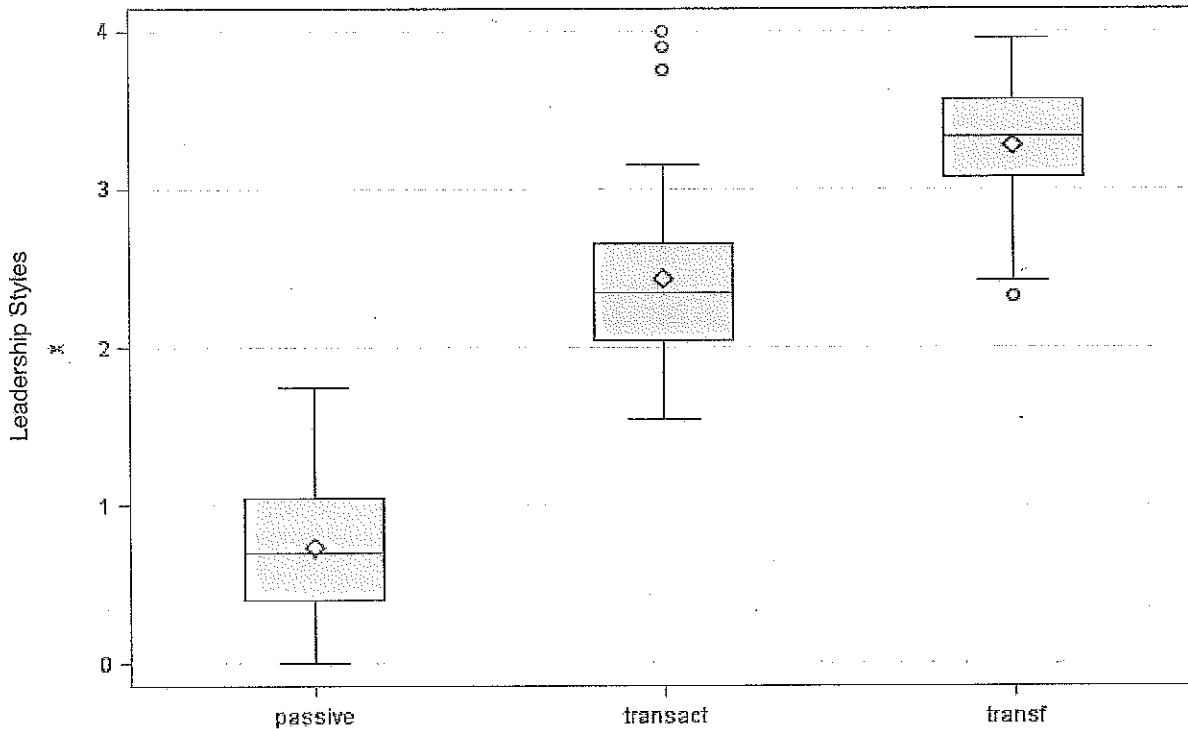
Variables. The independent variables for this study were transformational, transactional, and passive/avoidant (*laissez-faire*) leadership styles from the Avolio and Bass (2004) Full-Range Leadership Model. Transformational leadership has five factors: idealized influence (attribute), idealized influence (behavioral), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The second style within the model is transactional and has two factors: contingent reward, and management by exception (active). The third leadership style is

passive/avoidant and is made up of management by exception (passive) and *laissez faire*. The dependent variables measured were the win/loss percentage of the studied coaches' programs, as well as coaches' self-perception of their ability to encourage extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction in their respective teams.

Measures. Data were collected for this study using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X leader form (Short Form-Self-Rater Version) (Bass and Avolio, 2004). The questionnaire is a comprehensive survey measuring the full range of leadership styles from transformational to *laissez-faire*, as identified by Bass (1985) and the Full-Range of Leadership Model.

Procedures. Initially a phone call was made to each head coach of both the men's and women's programs within the five southern conferences that make up the population of this survey. This call discussed the purpose of the study and requested participation from the program's coaching staff. After obtaining verbal consent, an e-mail was sent to each coach (head, assistant/graduate assistant) outlining the study and its purpose, providing a link to take the survey, and including an online consent form. The survey was completed online and submitted electronically, with the information stored on the research team's office computer.

Figure 1. Bar Plot of the Scores of the Three Leadership Styles



Note. For each box, Med = middle line, M = diamond (\diamond). Each box represents where the middle 50% of scores fall, and the vertical line issuing from the box extends to the minimum and the maximum.

Data Analysis and Results

The response rate had 52 out of 200 completing the survey (26.0%). For a demographic perspective, the instrument asked a coach's program (i.e., men, women, both), position (i.e., head, assistant), education, age, and sex. These data could help understanding of primary responses. Table 1 presents frequencies for sex, education, and age.

It was assumed that the leadership style preferred by a coach remained relatively consistent during his or her career, and the score of the leadership style for each coach was attributed to their entire career rather than reflecting their current status. Otherwise, the leadership style may not be relevant to the historical win percentage as in our situation.

Is the predominant leadership style transactional in nature? For a general analyses, a standard ANOVA was used to determine the predominant leadership style. However, associations revealed by the correlational analyses suggest it would be more appropriate to use a mixed-effect model that compared the scores of the three leadership styles while considering their inter-correlations. The results of the comparison are displayed in Table 2.

Results indicate that coaches reported transformational leadership ($M = 3.28$) as the style that they generally practiced, followed by transactional leadership ($M = 2.44$), and then passive/avoidant ($M = .74$). In terms of the differences in preferred styles, results were significant, with transformational over transactional ($t = 11.43, p < .001$) and transactional over passive/avoidant ($t = 18.10, p < .001$).

Table 2 also displays the 95% confidence limits for mean score differences between each pair of leadership styles. Results for 95% confidence indicate that the mean score difference for transformational and transactional is between .70 and .99 points. In general, transformational leadership style scores are the highest while passive/avoidant leadership style scores are the lowest. In average, the transformational score is 2.55 higher than the passive avoidant, and .84 higher than the transactional.

The predominant leadership style reported was transformational, followed by transactional. Figure 1 displays the differences between the leadership styles, where the vertical axis stands for the score of leadership style. For each box, the middle line is the median, diamond is the mean,

Table 3. Correlations among Three Leadership Styles

	Transformational	Transactional	Passive
Transformational	1.00	.36**	-.32*
Transactional	-----	1.00	-.03

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, $N = 52$

Table 4. Correlations for Extra Effort (EE), Effectiveness (Eff), and Satisfaction (Sat) with Factors comprising the Three Leadership Styles

Leadership Style Factor	EE	Eff	Sat
<u>Transformational</u>			
IA	.39**	.43**	.41**
IB	.40**	.39**	.15
IM	.61***	.61***	.44**
IS	.40**	.51***	.32*
IC	.45***	.48***	.37**
<u>Transactional</u>			
CR	.54***	.33*	.35*
MBEA	.18	.24	.16
<u>Passive/Avoidant</u>			
MBEP	-.11	-.20	-.35*
LF	-.29*	-.40**	-.14

Note. IA = idealized attributes, IB = idealized behaviors, IM = inspirational motivation, IS = intellectual stimulation, IC = individual consideration, CR = contingent reward, MBEA = management-by-exception: Active, MBEP = management-by-exception: passive, LF = laissez-faire.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. $N = 52$

the box represent where the middle 50% of scores fall, and the vertical line issuing from the box extends to the minimum and the maximum.

Are there relationships between leadership styles and the outcomes of leadership styles? In the current research, individual respondents had three scores corresponding to the three leadership styles. Correlations were calculated to determine if relationships existed among the leadership styles, since between the three leadership styles show such relationships. A positive correlation between transformational and transactional was significant ($r = .36, p < .01$). A negative correlation between transformational and passive/avoidant was significant ($r = -.32, p$

$< .05$). Transactional and passive avoidant were not significantly correlated (see Table 3).

An analysis was conducted to determine relationships between leadership style factors with extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction. The correlations are presented in Table 4. The five factors comprising Transformational leadership had strong positive relationships in every case except one, as the correlation between idealized behaviors and satisfaction was not significant. Transactional leadership comprised two factors. All three correlations with contingent rewards were significant (positive), and those with management-by-exception: active were not significant. The last style, passive/avoidant, had

Table 5. Relationships of Effectiveness (Eff), Extra Effort (EE), Satisfaction (Sat) with Leadership Styles

Response	Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>ME</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Eff	Transform	1	6.72	6.72	57.44	< .001
	Error	46	5.38	0.12		
EE	Transform	1	3.62	3.62	25.99	< .001
	Transact	1	.33	.33	2.35	.134
	Passive	1	.72	.72	5.20	.028
	Transact x Passive	1	.74	.74	5.35	.026
	Error	39	5.43	.14		
Sat	Transform	1	2.77	2.77	20.62	< .001
	Transact	1	0.58	0.58	4.31	.044
	Passive	1	1.53	1.53	11.40	.002
	Transform x Passive	1	1.72	1.72	12.82	.001
	Error	41	5.52	0.13		

Table 6. Relationships between Win Percentage and the Three Leadership Styles

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Transform	1	.06	.06	4.72	.037
Transact	1	.08	.08	6.32	.017
Passive	1	.00	.00	.35	.556

two factors. Correlations among the factors were negative and only half were statistically significant.

To arrive at a more precise understanding of the relationship between the leadership styles and extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction, a linear regression was employed. Separate analyses were calculated for effectiveness, extra effort, and satisfaction, with the three leadership styles serving as explanatory variables. Results are presented in Table 5:

Overall, the Transformational leadership style had a positive relationship with effectiveness ($F = 57.44, p < .001$), Extra Effort ($F = 25.99, p < .001$), and satisfaction ($F = 20.62, p < .001$). This suggests that as the explanatory variable (transformational) increases, responses tend to increase as well. Transactional and passive/avoidant styles did not account for any meaningful variance with effectiveness.

The overall relationship of transactional to extra effort was not significant, but did produce a significant result with satisfaction ($F = 4.31, p = .044$). A negative interaction effect between transactional and passive/avoidant was also found with extra effort ($F = 5.35, p = .026$).

Passive/avoidant leadership produced negative relationships to extra effort ($F = 5.20, p = .028$) and a positive relationship to satisfaction ($F = 11.40, p = .002$). A significant interaction between transformational and passive/avoidant with satisfaction was also obtained ($F = 12.82, p = .001$).

Is there a relationship between leadership and win/loss percentage? Using a similar process as the analysis in the last subsection, we conducted a linear regression analysis with response “win percentage” ($M = .58, s = .13, N = 47$), and the three leadership styles as explanatory variables. Results can be found in Table 6.

The overall relationship of transformational leadership was positive to the response, win percentage ($F = 4.72, p = .037$). Similarly, the overall relationship of transactional leadership to that response was also positive ($F = 6.32, p = .017$). The overall passive/avoidant effect was not significant to win percentage.

Conclusion

Based on the analyses, we are able to conclude that the predominant leadership style exhibited was not transactional, but transformational. For every one unit score increase of transformational leadership style, the score of effectiveness increased by 1.07 unit. The other two leadership styles, transactional and passive/avoidant, did not show a significant relationship with the outcome effectiveness. Overall, with other factors fixed, the transformational leadership style shows a positive relationship with extra effort. Transactional leadership was positively correlated with transformational leadership ($r = .36, p < .01$).

Generally, each leadership style has a positive relationship with satisfaction. Furthermore, the transformational and transactional leadership styles had positive relationships to the win percentage. In general, the passive/avoidant leadership style had no significant relationship with the win percentage.

Limitations and Future Research

While Avolio and Bass (2004) stated that a combination of transactional and transformational leadership styles has led to success in both profit and nonprofit organizations, this may not be true in soccer team success, in general. Further limitations arise from geographic location of the participants. This study focused solely on the southern region of the United States, so results may not apply to other parts of the country and globally. A selection of participants from different geographic regions of the U.S. may result in different findings. Additionally, the participants were taken from collegiate soccer programs at the NCAA Division II level. Differing results may be found among NCAA Division I, II, or NAIA programs.

A low response rate from the target population (southern sample) in this study is a concern and a limitation because it increases the potential level of nonresponse error. Higher questionnaire response rates would improve the validity of inferences of the results in future studies. Low response rates may lead to sample bias, low

power, and inaccurate effect size. Those employing the multifactor leadership questionnaire for research about coaching and team success should consider estimation strategies designed to minimize nonresponsive (Sivo, Saunders, Chang, and Jiang, 2006).

Transformational leadership has been determined to lead to more positive outcomes and higher levels of team performance than transactional or laissez-faire alone. Combining transformational and transactional leadership augments the chance of leadership success. The data collected in this examination should guide future research regarding coaching leadership styles and their impact on team performance. Our data should also help expanded research into soccer and additional sports. The present study can serve as the baseline for exploring into the possibility of adapting these leadership styles to soccer at all levels of competition and implementing them in other sports.

Dr. McCann, who teaches management strategy, conducts research in leadership, strategy, decision-making, organizational performance, and ethics and is a certified professional in human resources. He has published in international journals. Dr. Kohntopp, currently on the faculty in the School of Management, Walden University, is also a partner at Performance Transformations Group as well as a licensed I-O psychologist and certified senior professional in human resources. Paul Keeling, a former assistant soccer coach at Lincoln Memorial University, is a marketing research analyst at Power Home Remodeling Group in Chester, PA.

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