

**LEADERSHIP STYLES IN SPORTS MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA
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Abstract

Leadership style in sports management are affected by number of coaches/captains, and supervisor's factors including the personality of the coach, knowledge, experience and competence in sports delivery, coaches management style and his ability to create a conducive sporting environment that makes for meaningful learning in the absence of fear, stress and tension. Of the many coaches variable in the field of play, the coach's management styles can be said to have the greatest influence. This paper therefore, examines the various management styles adopted by coaches in their effort to reach the sports men/women with sporting knowledge and information. The paper then concludes that management styles in coaching include the autocratic, the democratic and the laissez-faire style. It further states that the characteristics of each management styles are presented along with the possible effect with each style on the sportsmen. Based on the conclusion, the paper recommends that good sport leaders/ Coaches have good sporting knowledge and experience; they should be democratic in their sports management.

Keywords: Leadership style, Sports and management

Introduction

Man is a social animal; this means that whenever human being comes together for work, social gathering, and religious activity or even in a sporting competition, there must be someone to speak for the group. Blake and Mouton (2005) state that there are different types of leaders, but all of them see that things are done according to plan in various organizations which they are heading.

Leadership therefore is a key organization. More so, all sports organization requires leadership because every human organization, large or small is structured to have leaders and followers. The success or failure of any organization is more often attributed to its leadership. Leadership is the ability to lead efficiently in sports and is one of the keys to being an effective manager. Leaders therefore play a critical role in helping groups, organizations or

societies to achieve their goals (Awoyinfra, 2005).

Leadership in sports organization comes from the Coaches, captains and supervisors. Leadership is of very importance in sports administration because of its far reaching effects on the attainment of sports goals. Sports administration therefore demand the best leadership styles/skills that can provide the necessary outcomes, goal and objectives into meaningful reality through the inculcation of worthwhile values, knowledge and skills to the sportsmen

The Coach who is also the trainer is the catalyst that makes thing happen. He is the moulder of tomorrows sports leaders and one who lays the foundation for the sporting activity to sports lovers. The sport trainers motivation, zeal for sporting events, ambition in life, his creativity and reflective potentialities, and his ability in thinking are all ignited and fired on what the coach does in the field of coaching and the kind of direction provided by the coaches' management style (Ladani, 2007).

This paper attempts to provide the various management styles adopted by coaches/captains in the field, showing their characteristics and the influences they exert on trainer's behaviour, learning and state of well being. Also the

leadership styles exhibit by coaches in the training of its sportsmen and there management ability in sporting events.

Leadership in an organization is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group in its efforts towards target achievements (Yahaya&Akinyele, 1988). It involves influencing people to exert some effort in some task or to change group member behaviour. D'Souza(2002) says that leadership involves working with and through people to achieve results. Leadership has also been defined by McFarland(2005), as the ability of an individual to influence others to work beyond ordinary levels to achieve goals. The leader has significant impact on the attitude, behaviours and performance of colleagues and subordinates, which calls for good management abilities.

Fasan (2004), defines management as a process of getting things done through effort of other people. It is also the process of making decisions and issuing commands on behalf of an organization's membership groups, taking into consideration the complexity of objects.

Mgbodile (1986) views management as the efforts of men and women in leadership positions to use the human and material resources available to achieve organizations goal. He stated that managers engage in essential

functions of planning and decision making, organizing, controlling, motivating, coordinating and evaluating the activities of people towards goal attainment. They act in certain ways to influence the workers under them and the work they do. This peculiar way of acting or behaving to influence the behaviour of workers is what we refer to as styles and can therefore be simply defined as the manner of behaviour of the leader to influence the behaviour of others in the organization.

In ordinary parlance, we understand style simply as the way or manner someone does something or the manner something is done. We therefore talk of the style of the football player, the building style, the style of dancing, the style of talking, teaching, and the new styles of sewing and dressing etc, but we must bear in mind that style is not just involved for its own sake it is invented for a purpose. It could be to perform an act better, to get people attracted, to achieve a better result, to attract attention or support or to get people to follow or to conform to a leader's dictates or wishes. Sport/sports is an activity that is done for pleasure, fun or amusement which use physical efforts, usually done in a special area according to fixed rules. Sports therefore include athletics and games as well as recreation and dance. Watt(2004) defines sports as form of physical activities aim

at expressing or improving physical ability, fitness and mental well being, forming social relationship or obtaining results in competition at all levels. Adenyi and Abdullahi (2009) view sport as physical activity engaged by individuals for recreation or competitive purpose.

Management Styles in Sports

Managers and all men and woman in leadership positions use different styles to administer or manage their organizations. The style they use have been classified into three main types namely: Autocratic style, Democratic style and Laissez-faire style. Each of this leadership style produces some effects on the coach in sporting activities, and on the general state of the organization. Some of the effect may be good or positive; others may be bad or negative. When a leadership style produces effects such as high morale or motivation of the athletes, happy feeling in the field of play, progress and achievement of required results, we can say, that style is good or productive (Malslow 2004). On the other hand, when the leaders management style produces effects such as low morale of athletes, tension and stress in the organization, low athletes output or productivity, we can say that such a style is poor.

We must understand that many sports managers and administrators of organizations do not understand the effect which their leadership styles have on their trainers in the field of play. Neither do they know what it has done in their organization or on the general state of health of their organizations. This is part of the reasons there are low productivity in sporting activities, feeling of dissatisfaction and low morale among athletes, sometimes leading to athletes sabotage and non-challant attitude in the field. For the above reasons, sport managers need to be trained to acquire professional knowledge and skills that will help them manage their establishments.

The Coach as the Manager of Athletes

Coaches are managers of athletes. They are the leaders in the field in the essence that they are the ones to take decision on what is to be done by the athletes in the field. They are the one who will plan what take place in the field and how things should be done. The performances of athletes as well can be evaluated through the performance of the Coach or manager. Sports Coaches are required to function effectively in our educational institutions.

Educational Institutions are organizations established by law with facilities and structure where formal

(organized) Education; Teaching and Learning take place. It could be public; that is those own/established by the Government or Private; the one established by individuals or non-governmental organization.

As a sport manager, he must be using different types of styles or the combination of any of the following management style listed and explained below; Autocratic, Democratic and Laissez-faire. Each of these styles has its characteristics thus:

The Autocratic Management Style

The autocratic coach/leader is often regarded as a dictator.

He believes that every authority belongs to him and has little regards for the individuals right of the athletes such as the right to be well treated as human beings, to be listened to patiently when they are talking, reporting or complaining, to be allowed freedom of expression as well as freedom of association (Fiedler, 2004).

Autocratic coach neither trust nor delegate functions to anybody. He sees others as mere receptacles who should take order without reacting or asking questions.

In the mind of such coach, the athletes are meant to be obedient without

questioning the authority. They are meant to confirm to rules and regulations without questions. Obedience to him signifies doing what one is asked to do in the manners required. The coach uses harsh and unpleasant languages to his athletes. He takes delight in showing his authority. He makes his authority so visible that nobody dares to challenge him, as he believes in “hit them hard principles”. He is uncompromising in his resolve to inflict any type of punishment to the athlete who disobeys him. He is strict, ensuring that athletes carry out assignment given to them, and that they are regular and punctual to training.

Athletes under the autocratic coach are usually unhappy and unable to assert their feelings, lack initiative and creativity. They are under strict control and surveillance and lack the freedom of free expression and demonstration of skills, for doing otherwise will lead to forced detention and possible removal from the team/club. In this type of situation they are under fear, tension and absolute lack of ease. Tannenbaum & Schmidt (2003), state that this style of leadership often leads to riots and incessant strikes.

The Democratic Management Style

A democratic coach/leader is also called a “participative leader”. He is the type of coach that tries to do what the

majority desires; he involves his athletes in decision making, but may retain the final authority. He consults his athletes on proposed actions and decision and encourages participation of everybody. The democratic coach makes each individual feels that he is an important member of the group. According to Surota (2004), such coach seeks the athletes cooperation and allows them make contributions and suggestions on issues affecting them, and he takes their suggestions quite seriously in decision making.

The democratic coach uses kind and friendly words on them. E.g “yes Peter, you are doing well, go on and answer the question”. “That’s very good Ada”, this is beautiful attempt, thank you. “I have not heard from you today Paul, what is the matter” Come on; give us your opinion on this. He uses such nice words to encourage and stimulate them, to make them feel at home and have a sense of belonging. The athletes in turn take interest in their activities and get actively involved in all coaching events.

Under the leadership of a democratic coach, athletes feel happy, relaxed and think positive. They have ample freedom of speech and associate with one another without hindrance. They engage in group activities and are happy to try their hands on experiments. They exercise initiative and creativity. They show regard for one

another and exhibit self control and respect for rules and regulations.

Laissar-Faire Management Style

This type of coach is care-free, never worried coach. They care less for booth workers, and the accomplishment of pre-determined objectives, the Laissar-Faire coach is a person who is practically uninvolved in the work of the unit, and uses his power very little, if at all. He gives the subordinate a high degree of independence to operate the way they like. Such coach through their care-free disposition, forces subordinates to set their own goals and means of achieving them.

Laisser-Faire is characterized by a “hands-off policy” in which individual within an organization assumes greater responsibilities in decision making. As (Gatzels, 2004) aptly notes there is a complete non-participation of the coach in determining tasks and accomplishments.

In any sports institution with Laissar-Faire coach, it is not likely that worthwhile progress or change would be accomplished. Subordinates under this type of leadership show loose attitude and at times, could be grossly indisciplined. He has no time for long time process of decision making coordinating or welcoming ideas of his

athletes. Lack of interest in one’s duty and lack of personnel sense of accomplishment. He believes that athletes are capable of learning from their mistakes on their own. He does see the checking of mistakes as necessary. In terms of motivating his athletes, he believes that those who want to learn will do so, while those who do not want to learn should be left alone. Under the Laissar-Faire coach, athletes behave the way they want; some may be active in their activity while others may not. Due to lack of team spirit in this type of leadership the objectives of the group are usually not achieved.

Conclusion:

It must be said that no one leadership style is good for all the situations as various situations demands various style. However it has been generally accepted that the democratic management style is favoured by many organizations and people, based on the fact the style has more positive effects on the people; nevertheless, it is advisable for coaches to adopt the style flexibility in their management approach. Certain situations in the field may require the autocratic styles other may call for the application of the democratic or the Laissar-Faire type. It is for the coach to study the situation and decide on the best

management style to apply in order to achieve the required results.

Recommendations:

Based on the above discussions, the following recommendations were made;

1. Sports Coaches (men/women) should have good skills and be well experience in sports so as to deliver good sporting activities to the system.
2. Sport managers should always adopt democratic approach while training their student/athletes. This will give room for individual participation in sporting activities.
3. laissez- fairism should be avoided in the field of sports since it will give room for indolence and lack of acquisition of skills in sports.
4. Government should provide incentives to sports men/ women especially coaches, sports organizers in order to boost their morals in sports administration.
5. Enabling environment should be created by government, institutions and other stakeholders in sports should enhance and harness the hidden potentials in our youth.

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