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Influence of Coach Behavior on Achievement Motivation of Student-Athletes at College Level

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Abstract
A Coach has paramount role in the field of sports in developing the skill, techniques, self-confidence, discipline and motivation of athletes. This study has debated the effects of coach behavior on the achievement motivation of student-athletes at college level in the field of sports. A cross-sectional research design has facilitated this study. A total of 200 student-athletes (male: 100 & female: 100), with the age group of 16-20 have completed the coach behavior and achievement motivation questionnaires through stratified sample method. The finding of the study reported that coach behavior correlated to achievement motivation ($r = 0.652$, $p < 0.05$). While the regression analysis reported that coach behavior caused 43% variances in achievement motivation. The finding also revealed that there is significant difference between gender in respect of coach behavior and achievement motivation $F(1,196) = 12.43$, $p = .001$. It means that female have higher concept of coach and motivation than male The locality in respect of coach behavior have significant mean difference $F(1,196) = 8.85$, $p = .004$. It demonstrate that urban athlete showed higher concept of coach behavior than rural area student-athletes. The results of

the study indicate the productive and supportive behavior of a coach enhance motivation of the student-athletes toward achievement of their goal in sports competition. This study will help in providing real data to the policy makers, sports departments and colleges in order to make a required measurement for providing efficient and productive coaches for the wellbeing of players in the field of sports.

Keywords; *Coach Behavior, achievement motivation, student-athletes, Gender, Locality*

Background of the Study

Sport at collegiate level occupies a crucial position in the athletic development pathway, as student-athletes are required to balance academic responsibilities alongside increasingly competitive training and performance demands. During this stage, coaches play a central role not only in enhancing technical and tactical skills but also in shaping the psychological characteristics of athletes. Among these psychological characteristics, achievement motivation is considered one of the most influential determinants of athletes' persistence, effort, and success in sport (Albert, Petrie, & Moore, 2024). Consequently, understanding how coach behavior influences achievement motivation among college student-athletes has become a significant area of interest within sports psychology and coaching science.

Coach behavior refers to the observable actions, attitudes, and interpersonal styles demonstrated by coaches during training, competition, and informal interactions. These behaviors include leadership style, communication patterns, feedback provision, emotional support, decision-making involvement, and disciplinary practices. According to Chelladurai's Multidimensional Model of Leadership, coaching effectiveness is largely determined by the congruence between required, preferred, and actual coach behaviors, which subsequently influences athlete satisfaction, performance, and motivation (Chelladurai, 2007). When athletes perceive their coach's behavior as supportive and fair, they are more likely to develop positive motivational orientations toward sport.

Achievement motivation in sport is defined as the internal drive that directs athletes to strive for success, overcome challenges, and demonstrate competence (Jordalen, Lemyre, & Durand-Bush, 2020). It is commonly explained through Achievement Goal Theory, which distinguishes between mastery-oriented (task-focused) and performance-oriented (ego-focused) motivation. Coaches who emphasize learning, effort, and personal improvement tend to foster mastery goals, whereas coaches who focus excessively on winning, comparison, and external rewards may promote performance goals, which can increase anxiety and fear of failure (Nicholls, 1989). Thus, coach behavior plays a decisive role in shaping the motivational climate within sports teams.

Self-Determination Theory further explains the mechanism through which coach behavior affects achievement motivation. This theory posits that athletes' motivation is increased when their primary psychological requirements are facilitated for competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & gersen-Ntoumani, 2009). Coaches who adopt autonomy-supportive behaviors such as encouraging athlete input, providing rationale for decisions, and acknowledging athletes' feelings are more likely to enhance intrinsic motivation and sustained engagement (Mossman et al., 2024). In contrast, controlling behaviors, including excessive criticism, punishment, or favoritism, may undermine motivation and lead to burnout or dropout from sport (Benish, 2024).

Empirical evidence consistently supports the relationship between the achievement motivation and behavior of a coach. Studies have shown that positive coaching behaviors such as democratic leadership, social support, and positive feedback are significantly associated with higher levels of achievement motivation, confidence, and commitment among student-athletes (Vallerand & Losier, 1999; Amorose & Horn, 2001). Conversely, negative coaching behaviors such as verbal aggression, unfair treatment, and lack of emotional support have been linked with reduced motivation, increased stress, and diminished performance outcomes, particularly among young and developing athletes (Martin, 2024).

At the college level, student-athletes are particularly sensitive to coaching behaviors due to increased performance pressure, academic stress, and career uncertainty. The coach often acts as a mentor and authority figure whose behavior can either enhance athletes' psychological resilience or contribute to motivational decline. Despite growing international literature on coach behavior and motivation, limited empirical research has explored this relationship specifically among college-level student-athletes in developing or non-Western contexts, where cultural norms, institutional support, and coaching education may differ significantly.

Therefore, this study aims to debate about the impact of coach behavior on achievement motivation of student-athletes at the college level. By examining athletes' perceptions of their coaches' behaviors and their corresponding motivational outcomes, this research seeks to contribute valuable insights for coaches, sports administrators, and policymakers. The findings may assist in promoting positive coaching practices that enhance achievement motivation, improve athlete well-being, and support sustainable athletic development at the collegiate level.

Objective of the study

1. There is significant relationship between coach behavior and achievement motivation of student-athletes at college level.
2. To determine the influence of coach behavior on achievement motivation of student-athletes at college level.
3. To assess the mean difference between demographic variables (gender & locality) in respect of coach behavior and achievement motivation.

Literature

Coach behavior has been widely recognized as a crucial psychosocial factor influencing athletes' motivation, performance, and overall development, particularly at the collegiate level where athletes face simultaneous academic and competitive demands. Coaches serve not only as instructors but also as role models, mentors, and authority figures whose behaviors shape the motivational climate of sports teams. Achievement motivation, defined as the inner drive to strive for success, mastery, and excellence in performance, is strongly affected by the interpersonal environment created by coaches. Previous research suggests that positive coaching behaviors foster persistence, confidence, and goal commitment among student-athletes, while negative or controlling behaviors may undermine motivation and psychological well-being (Horn, 2008).

Leadership style is another important dimension of coach behavior affecting achievement motivation. Transformational leadership, which includes behaviors such as inspiring a shared vision, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation, has been found to be particularly effective in motivating

student-athletes. Research suggests that transformational coaches enhance athletes' confidence, goal orientation, and achievement motivation by fostering a sense of purpose and personal growth (Alvarez et al., 2016). Conversely, autocratic or authoritarian coaching styles have been associated with lower motivation, increased anxiety, and reduced enjoyment in sport, especially among young and developing athletes (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980).

The motivational climate created by coaches also plays a critical role in shaping achievement motivation. A mastery-oriented climate, which emphasizes effort, learning, and personal improvement, is positively associated with task-oriented goals and sustained motivation. Studies indicate that when coaches focus on individual progress rather than solely on winning, athletes demonstrate higher levels of persistence and achievement motivation (Ames, 1992; Pulido et al., 2023). In contrast, a performance-oriented climate that emphasizes comparison and outcomes can increase fear of failure and reduce intrinsic motivation among student-athletes.

Despite extensive research highlighting the importance of coach behavior, gaps remain in the literature, particularly in developing countries and localized collegiate contexts. Limited research has explored how cultural, gender, and institutional factors moderate the relationship between coach behavior and achievement motivation. Moreover, most studies employ cross-sectional designs, suggesting a need for longitudinal research to better understand long-term motivational effects. Addressing these gaps is essential for developing evidence-based coaching practices that enhance motivation and performance among college-level student-athletes.

Method and Material

Research Design

For this study, a cross-sectional research design was utilized to assess the influence of coach behavior on the achievement motivation of student-athletes at colleges. For data collection from the participants, questionnaires were employed.

Population and Sampling

Student-athletes (male & female), enrolled in government colleges in Peshawar have constituted the population of the current research work. A total of 400 student-athletes (100 male & 100 female) were taken as sample. A stratified sampling method has facilitated to collect data from both gender (male & female) student-athletes in order to make more representative sample of the study.

Research Instrument

In this study, two self-made questionnaire were used to collect data from the targeted participants. A coach behavior scale build to analyze the impacts of coaching behaviors on (performance, skill & techniques, commitment, motivation & achievements) of student-athletes. Whereas, achievement motivation questionnaire was employed to measure the achievement motivation among student-athletes. Both scale were validated by the experts in the field of psychology and sports sciences & physical education. Cronbach-alpha was employed to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaires. The Cronbach-alpha for coach behavior and achievement motivation is 0.79 and 0.81, respectively.

A pilot study was conducted to assess the reliability of the instrument. The pilot test was assessed through test-retest method of reliability for internal consistency of the items of instrument on 20 student players. The finding shows that the instrument is stable and feasible.

Statistical Analysis

In this study, SPSS-26 version has facilitated to analyze the data. Descriptive statistic (mean, percentage, frequency & standard deviation) was used to describe each and every participants of the study. While, inferential statistic (correlation, regression, & t-test) was employed to make inferences from the obtained data sample.

Descriptive Result

This part shows the description of the population.

Table.1

Demographic	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	100	50%
	Female	100	50%
	Total	200	100%

There were total 200 student-athletes taken as sample from boy and girls degree colleges of district Peshawar. Male student-athletes are 100 (50%) and female student-athletes are 100 (50%) and total are 200.

Testing of Hypothesis

H_1 There is significant relationship between coach behavior and achievement motivation of student-athletes at college level.

Table.2 Correlation Analysis

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig (tailed)
Coach Behavior	200	4.12	0.760	0.652**	0.000
Achievement Motivation	200	4.08	0.81		

This table shows the correlation between independent and dependent variable. The relationship between coach behavior and achievement motivation of student-athletes is r = 0.652. It indicate that there is significant and positive relationship correlation between coach behavior and achievement motivation of student-athletes and $p < 0.05$. This suggests that improvements in a coach's behavior are

probably going to improve the achievement inspiration for student-players.

H_2 To determine the influence of coach behavior on achievement motivation of student-athletes at college level.

Table.3a Model Summary

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.652	0.426	0.423	0.618

a. Predictors: (Constant), Coach behavior

The output of this table shows linear relationship between the model and dependent variable. The value "R" in the table shows the relationship between the observed and predicted value of outcome variable. The value of r = 0.652, indicate positive correlation between coach behavior and achievement motivation of student-athletes. While, the R square demonstrate that how much changes caused in dependent variable. The value of R-square 0.426 indicate that 43% variation occurred in achievement motivation of student-athletes due to coach behavior.

Table.3b ANOVA table

Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig (p-value)
Regression	55.813	1	55.813	146.351	0.000**
Residual	75.287	198	0.380		
Total	131.100	199			

a. Dependent variable Achievement Motivation

b. Predictor (Constant) Coach Behavior

This table's outcome indicates weather the independent variable's estimated effect is statistically significant. The F-value is 146.351 at $p < 0.05$ indicate that the estimated effects of independent variable on outcome variable is significant.

Table.3c Coefficient Table

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig (p-value)
(Constant)	1.524	0.196		7.776	0.000**
Coach Behavior	0.624	0.052	0. 652	12.103	0.000**

Note: $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed), N = 200

The table shows the beta value. The coefficient of predictor variable (coach behavior) is 0.624, is positive and significant, which indicate that coach behavior has positive impact on achievement motivation of student-athletes. It means, if coach behavior is increased by 1 unit, it will cause 0.62% increase in achievement motivation of student-athletes.

H3 To assess the mean difference between demographic variables (gender & locality) in regard of coach behavior and achievement motivation.

Table.4 *Two-Way ANOVA Results*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig (p-value)	Partial Eta. Square
Gender	465.32	1	465.32	12.43	0.001**	0.105
Locality	320.45	1	320.4	8.85	0.004**	0.085
Gender * Locality	145.70	1	145.70	3.65	0.085	0.039
Error	7842.90	196	40.02			
Total	18954.30	200				

The results show that gender has a statistically significant effect on coach behavior and achievement motivation, $F(1,196) = 12.43$, $p = .001$, with a moderate effect size (Partial $\eta^2 = .105$). Similarly, locality also shows a significant difference, $F(1,196) = 8.85$, $p = .004$, indicating that students from different localities differ significantly in their perceptions of coach behavior and achievement motivation (Partial $\eta^2 = .085$). However, the interaction effect of gender and locality is not statistically significant, $F(1,196) = 3.65$, $p = .085$, suggesting that the combined effect of gender and locality does not significantly influence the outcome.

Table.5 *Pairwise Comparisons (Post Hoc Test - Tukey HSD)*

Variable	Comparison	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig (p-value)
Gender	Male vs Female	-2.80	0.85	0.001**
Locality	Urban vs Rural	-2.15	0.90	0.004**

Female players report significantly higher leadership perception and achievement motivation than male players ($p = 0.001$). Compared to rural players, urban players exhibit considerably greater levels of motivation and leadership perception ($p = 0.004$). Gender and geography substantially impact leadership perception and accomplishment motivation. Compared to male and rural players, female and urban players exhibit greater drive and a better sense of leadership. Gender and locale individually affect

leadership perception and accomplishment motivation without supporting one another, as seen by the lack of a substantial interaction effect between the two.

Discussion

This study has documented an investigation about the impacts of coach behavior on the achievement motivation of student-athletes at college level. In sports, a positive coach behavior play a key role in increasing motivation and promoting the performance, skill, techniques, confidence building, and spirit of healthy competition among athletes. The output of the study indicates that there is significant and positive association between coach behavior and achievement motivation of student-athletes. The correlation between coach behavior and achievement motivation is (r = 0.652**), it means that supportive behavior of a coach significantly upsurge motivation in athletes. This output of the study corroborate with the previous study of Horn (2008), positive coaching behaviors foster persistence, confidence, and goal commitment among student-athletes, while negative or controlling behaviors may undermine motivation and psychological well-being. Moreover, According to a study, players' mental and emotional health as well as their athletic performance may both increase when coach leadership and player motivation are in line (Ruan & Liu, 2021).

The present study has reported that coach behavior has paramount influence on the achievement motivation of the players, especially at college level. This conclusion is supported by Smoll et al. (1993), which shows that effective coaching practices have an impact on players' motivation, self-esteem, and overall pleasure with sports in addition to their playing level. Some previous research studies also demonstrated that according to Self-determination Theory players who experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their sporting environment are more likely to be intrinsically motivated. Coaches, through their leadership styles and behaviors, create the motivational climate that influences how players perceive their abilities and, consequently, how motivated they feel to perform (Keatlholetswe & Malete, 2019). A positive and supportive coach behavior not only promote physical and psychological well-being of player, but also enhance team cohesion, discipline, self-confidence and motivation among players that could lead them towards achievements in sports competitions.

According to a research, there is broad recognition of the significance of achievement motivation in athletics. It encourages athletes to endure despite defeats, challenge themselves to develop, and pursue competitive success. However, a player's motivation to perform can be boosted or inhibited by the motivating environment that coaches create. Autocratic coaches, for instance, might foster a competitive atmosphere but run the danger of undermining their players' innate drive by instilling stress or anxiety. However, democratic coaches who include athletes in decision-making may encourage intrinsic motivation because they support both perceptions of competence and autonomy, which are two key components of self-determination theory (Weinberg, Freysinger & Mellano, 2018).

In Pakistan, gender differences in sports participation are a serious problem. There are little options for female players due to cultural conventions and societal expectations. According to the study's findings, female players perceive leadership and are more motivated to succeed than male players (p = 0.001). However, a survey found that Pakistani female athletes have several challenges. These include availability to training facilities, stereotypes about society, and parental support (Saleem, Khan, & Khan, 2025). Coaches that display collaborative leadership characteristics create an environment that enables

female athletes to tackle problems and emerge successful (Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2013). Furthermore, Research has shown that teenagers' self-determination of activities tends to differ mostly in sex stereotypical ways, with females having greater self-determined motivational profiles than boys in a variety of sports activities (Medic et al., 2007; Recours et al., 2004). In the context of sports, researchers have discovered that women are often more intrinsically driven whereas men are typically more extrinsically motivated (Beaudoin, 2006). Athletes that are intrinsically driven participate more for enjoyment, delight, and fulfillment. Extrinsically motivated athletes, on the other hand, compete more for the thrill of victory (Hellandsig, 1998). According to other research, female athletes who are intrinsically driven prioritize enjoyment and task mastery, whereas male athletes who are extrinsically motivated typically concentrate on prizes and recognition (Tuffey, 2000).

Similarly, the study's findings showed that urban athletes are more motivated and have a better understanding of coaches than players in rural areas. Probably because metropolitan settings offer easier access to facilities, contests, and training possibilities. There aren't many empirical research that use the theory of achievement goals and the notion of self-determination to compare the motivation of urban and rural adolescents for sports. Sports participation has a favorable impact on social competence and self-esteem, according to a research by McHale et al. (2005) on urban schoolchildren. Due to their remote location, socioeconomic disadvantage, and lack of facilities, resources, and opportunity, many rural schools sometimes confront significant financial and resource limitations that put rural athletes at risk for poor motivation and failure (Hardre et al., 2007).

Despite the growing interest in sports psychology, little study has been done in Pakistan on the relationship between coach conduct and motivation, especially when it comes to college athletes. Which, due to cultural variations, social systems, and athletic facilities, might not be immediately applicable in Pakistan. This vacuum in the literature emphasizes how crucial it is to carry out localized studies that can provide context-specific insights into how coach actions affect Pakistani players' motivation.

Conclusion

The study's findings provide strong evidence of the relationship among college-level student gamers between coach conduct, coach leadership, and achievement drive. The investigated hypotheses demonstrated the importance of coaches in influencing players' motivation and emphasized the need for strong leadership in sports coaching. Results showed a high positive association with the first hypothesis, which examined the relationship between coach behavior and achievement motivation. This demonstrates that coaching practices including autonomy support, feedback, and positive reinforcement have a major impact on player motivation. Additionally, the study's findings showed that behavior of a coach significantly and favorably affects college players' drive to accomplish. The findings demonstrated that a player's motivation for success is directly and quantifiably impacted by particular coaching behaviors, such as encouragement, constructive criticism, and democratic coaching techniques. The results corroborate earlier research highlighting the critical role of a positive motivating atmosphere in encouraging players to be more dedicated and persistent. In addition, female athletes are more motivated and have a better understanding of coaches than male athletes. However, athletes

from rural colleges are less motivated and have a different perception of coaches than athletes from metropolitan institutions.

Author Contribution

UI developed the computational framework and involved in all facets of the current study. UI and AH wrote results, assessed data, and participated to the framework's development. MS and SS assists with literary and introduction writing. The article was written and submitted with input from each author.

Conflict of Interest

The researcher claimed no conflict of interest.

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