

Implementation of Leadership Values in Football Players at Talenta FA Football School

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Implementation of Leadership Values in Football Players at Talenta FA Football School

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Abstract.

Background

Leadership is a vital component in sports, shaping team dynamics, communication, and performance. In football, effective leadership may come from coaches, team captains, or informal leaders among players. Strengthening leadership skills in young athletes fosters responsibility, mutual respect, and better decision-making both on and off the field.

Objectives

This study aimed to implement leadership education for football players at Talenta FA Football School, Aceh, to enhance their understanding, practice, and application of leadership values during training and competition.

Methods

The program was conducted as a community service activity involving all players and coaches. It employed a lecture-based approach combined with interactive discussions, focusing on leadership principles and real-world sports scenarios. Practical sessions during training allowed players to assume leadership roles and apply the concepts learned, with feedback provided by coaches and facilitators.

Results

Participants demonstrated increased awareness of leadership as a shared responsibility, improved decision-making, better communication, and stronger mutual respect among teammates. Coaches observed positive changes in players' initiative, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities.

Conclusion

Integrating leadership education into football training effectively strengthened players' interpersonal and leadership skills. This model can be replicated in other sports schools to promote both athletic excellence and character development.

Keywords: Leadership, Football, Athlete Development, Sports Education.

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing team performance, cohesion, and motivation in sports contexts (Silva, 2016; Cotterill & Fransen, 2016). It is not merely an inherent personal trait but rather a complex, dynamic process involving interaction between leaders and team members, shaped by situational and cultural contexts. According to Northouse (2018), leadership entails influencing individuals within a group to achieve shared objectives, emphasizing both interpersonal relationships and strategic decision-making.

In the domain of sports, leadership may emerge from formal roles such as coaches and team captains, or from informal athlete leaders who inspire and influence peers through their actions, communication, and work ethic (Loughead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006). These athlete leaders contribute positively to team identity, satisfaction, trust, and the motivational climate (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016). However, the leadership demands of competitive sports often exceed the capacity of a single individual, making it

necessary to adopt a distributed leadership model, where multiple members share leadership responsibilities in and out of competition (Fransen et al., 2014; Duguay, Loughead, & Cook, 2019).

Research also emphasizes the importance of mentorship in sports leadership development. Jarrett et al. (2020) note that connecting current leaders with former athlete leaders through mentor-mentee programs strengthens leadership skills, fosters a sense of ownership, and enhances understanding of practical leadership strategies. Such initiatives are valuable in football, where quick decision-making, strategic adaptability, and mutual respect are critical for success both on and off the pitch (Cotterill & Barker, 2013).

In Indonesia, football is not only a popular sport but also a medium for instilling values such as discipline, teamwork, and leadership among young athletes. Football schools (Sekolah Sepak Bola or SSB) provide structured environments for nurturing these qualities, yet leadership education is often overlooked in favor of technical and tactical training. Addressing this gap, the present community service program at Talenta FA Football School aimed to integrate leadership education into regular football training. The goal was to enhance players' leadership awareness, interpersonal skills, and ability to contribute positively to team dynamics, thereby preparing them to be effective leaders both on and off the field.

METHOD

Participant

The participants in this program were football players and coaches from Talenta FA Football School, Aceh. The players represented various age categories within the school, ensuring that leadership education was delivered across multiple developmental stages. Coaches were included to reinforce leadership principles during training and matches. All participants were actively engaged in the program from the lecture phase through to the practical implementation sessions.

Research Design

This study adopted a community service-based educational intervention design. The intervention consisted of three main phases:

1. Lecture Sessions – Delivery of structured materials on leadership theory, athlete leadership roles, and team dynamics, supported by case studies from professional football (Silva, 2016; Northouse, 2018).
2. Interactive Discussions – Guided Q&A sessions that allowed participants to share leadership challenges and collaboratively explore solutions (Cotterill & Barker, 2013; Jarrett et al., 2020).
3. Practical Application – On-field implementation of leadership roles during regular training sessions, where players practiced decision-making, communication, and conflict resolution under coach supervision.

Data Analysis

Data analysis employed a qualitative descriptive approach. Observations were recorded by coaches and facilitators to assess behavioral changes in communication, initiative, collaboration, and decision-making among players. Informal participant feedback was collected to capture perceptions of program relevance and personal impact. The data were then compared against leadership principles discussed in the lectures to evaluate the degree of knowledge transfer and practical application.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The leadership education program was successfully implemented at Talenta FA Football School, Aceh, engaging both players and coaches in all stages of the intervention. Following the lecture sessions, participants demonstrated increased engagement, actively responding to questions and contributing personal experiences related to leadership in football. Many players reported gaining new insights into the role of respect, communication, and shared responsibility within a team context.

During the interactive discussions, players were able to identify common leadership challenges they faced during training and matches, such as lack of coordination, limited communication, and decision-making under pressure. These sessions allowed them to explore collaborative solutions, with coaches noting a more open exchange of ideas among team members.

In the practical application phase, players showed marked improvement in assuming leadership responsibilities. Selected participants took initiative in organizing warm-up drills, guiding tactical plays, and resolving minor conflicts during training. Coaches observed that these leadership behaviors were distributed across multiple players, reflecting the program's emphasis on shared leadership rather than reliance on a single captain.

Overall, qualitative observations indicated the following positive changes:

1. Improved communication between players during training sessions.
2. Greater initiative in organizing and leading practice activities.
3. Enhanced decision-making during tactical exercises.
4. Increased mutual respect among teammates.

These outcomes suggest that integrating structured leadership education into football training can effectively strengthen leadership skills, promote teamwork, and foster a more cohesive team environment.

Discussion

The findings of this program demonstrate that structured leadership education, when embedded within football training, can significantly enhance players' interpersonal skills, decision-making abilities, and sense of shared responsibility. These results align with previous research indicating that leadership in sports is a multifaceted process involving both formal and informal roles (Loughead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006; Cotterill & Fransen, 2016).

One notable outcome of this program was the shift from a captain-centric view of leadership toward a distributed leadership model, wherein multiple players actively engaged in guiding team activities. This reflects the conclusions of Fransen et al. (2014) and Duguay, Loughead, and Cook (2019), who found that effective teams often rely on multiple leaders to meet the diverse demands of training and competition.

The practical application sessions played a pivotal role in translating theoretical knowledge into actionable behaviors. Consistent with the recommendations of Cotterill and Barker (2013), hands-on leadership experiences during training allowed players to develop competencies such as empathy, resilience, and communication under real-time pressure. Furthermore, the integration of mentorship-like interactions between university lecturers, coaches, and players mirrors the benefits identified by Jarrett et al. (2020), where sustained guidance enhances leadership confidence and competence.

This program also holds broader implications for sports education in Indonesia. Football schools (SSB) often prioritize technical and tactical skills, while leadership development remains an underexplored component of training. By integrating leadership education into regular practice sessions, sports institutions can foster athletes who excel not only in performance but also in teamwork, discipline, and community engagement.

However, this initiative also faced limitations. The absence of quantitative measurement tools restricted the ability to statistically assess leadership skill development. Future programs could integrate pre- and post-intervention surveys, behavioral checklists, or performance metrics to provide more robust evidence of impact. Additionally, longitudinal follow-up could determine whether these leadership behaviors persist beyond the immediate intervention period.

Overall, the positive outcomes observed in this program reinforce the value of intentional leadership training in sports contexts, offering a replicable model for similar initiatives in other football schools and community sports organizations.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of leadership education at Talenta FA Football School successfully enhanced players' understanding and practice of leadership as a shared responsibility. Through a combination of theoretical instruction, interactive discussions, and practical application during training sessions, participants demonstrated improved communication, initiative, decision-making, and mutual respect. These outcomes affirm that integrating structured leadership training into football programs can foster not only athletic performance but also character development, aligning with the broader objectives of sports education and community service. The approach used in this program offers a practical model for other sports schools and community-based organizations seeking to cultivate future leaders both on and off the field. Future initiatives

should consider incorporating quantitative evaluation tools to measure leadership skill progression, as well as conducting longitudinal follow-up to assess the sustainability of behavioral changes. Expanding the program to include parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders could further strengthen the social impact of leadership education in sports.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND FUNDING

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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