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A Cross Cultural Study of Emotional Intelligence and Preferred Coaching Leadership in Collegiate Student-Athletes

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Abstract

Background-Emotional intelligence competency is perceived as an essential need in developing leadership which not only plays a critical role in intrapersonal connotations but also provides interpersonal negotiating skills with an understanding of emotions. As more interuniversity athletics management involve global teamwork, emotional intelligence (EI) becomes more popular to be used to evaluate leadership behaviors and to predict the ability to build a positive coach-athlete relationship. **Purpose**- The study aimed to investigate current student-athletes EI between Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) and University of Taipei (UT), and to compare their preferred multifactor leadership styles. Also, the present study focused on the analysis to evaluate culturally specific perceptions regarding the EI competencies as well as the preferences for coaching behaviors. **Methods**- All student-athletes above 18 years old were invited to participate in the online survey. The study examined the participants' preferred leadership styles by Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 6S and examined the individual EI competencies scores from a 41-item of modified Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intel-

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ligence Test. **Results**- A total of 218 student-athletes completed the whole questionnaire. The outcomes showed that significant differences existed in the EI scores (p <.01) and the preferences of leadership (p <.05) between IUP and UT groups. A positive association was found that the participants with higher EI tended to prefer transformational leadership styles. **Conclusions**- This cross-cultural study indicated that IUP participants collectively preferred transformational leadership, whereas the UT participants preferred transactional leadership instead of transformational leadership. As a result, the suggestions of optimal coaching behaviors for sports leadership in the USA and Taiwan were different.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, transformational leadership, coaching behavior, collegiate athletes, cultural differences

1.Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) is regarded as a personal soft skill interrelated between emotion and cognition, and it involves mixed psychological competencies to observe, identify, understand, and successfully manage emotions in oneself and others. Bar-On (1997) defined emotional intelligence as "an array of noncognitive (emotional and social) capabilities, competencies and skills which influence one's ability to success in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (p.14). EI competency also plays an important role in individual psychological development which includes intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, mediating conflict skills, adaptability, stress management, and general mood regulation (Bar-On, 2010; Gardner et al., 2020; Schneider, 2013).

As the sports industry has grown all around the world, more and more international coaches and athletes have had an opportunity to collaborate in sports teams, so it is important to build an emotional connection and a positive coach-athlete relationship in a friendly environment. In the past, the discipline of sports leadership used to emphasize traditional strategies like a leader-centered approach to coaching and focusing on team commitment (Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996). Nevertheless, based on the updated model of EI, recognizing cultural differences in the evaluation of emotions was a new subcomponent that was added to the area of understanding emotions (Mayer et al., 2016). Hence, emotional and social intelligence competencies had the benefit of building up a healthy coach-athlete interaction in diverse cultures because a better understanding of perceived behavioral patterns was a trait driver of the competencies (Emmerling & Boyatzis, 2012).

1.1 Purpose

Early empirical research indicated that transformational coaching could build a supportive relationship in situational approaches to empowering athletes and enforcing intrinsic motivation (Charbonneau et al., 2001; Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996). The other research by Stenling and Tafvelin (2014) supported coaching with the transformational leadership process could fulfill the individual psychological needs of well-being. However, few cross-cultural comparison research revealed the relationship between collegiate student-athletes' EI competencies and their preferences for multifactor leadership styles.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate current collegiate student-athletes preferred multifactor leadership styles and to compare emotional intelligence between the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) and the University of Taipei (UT). Also, this study was to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1. What kind of leadership style is the most preferred by collegiate student-athletes?

RQ2. Is there any difference or similarity in athletes' preferred leadership style between IUP and UT?

RQ3. Do the emotional intelligence scores influence student-athletes' preferred

coaching behaviors?

RQ4. Which factors of emotional intelligence competency dominate the student-athlete's total EI score, mood regulation, utilization of emotions, or appraisal of emotions?

The research assumed that all participants could respond honestly and understand the coaching behaviors through their training experience with their head coaches. However, the responses might be affected by their previous unhealthy coach-athlete relationships or unhappy experiences, such as physical penalties or psychological injury that keeps athletes from trusting their coaches again, and also the participants might not have prior experience with both male and female coaches, their preferences of coach behaviors represent only gender-specific information.

1.2 Significance

At the point of sports leadership and psychology, EI has become a popular issue. The significance of this topic involves three reasons, firstly, the emergence of international cooperation makes interpersonal communication not only verbal but emotional caring, so transformational coaches are expected to advance interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence to know how to inspire followers and concerned individual needs (Price & Weiss, 2013). Secondly, transformational leaders would encourage collective efficacy for task cohesion by enhancing individual self-confidence as well as self-efficacy. Moreover, coaching with transformational behaviors had positive outcomes in the motivation to achieve the extraordinary goals of athletic performance. Therefore, the study focused on the analysis of evaluating specific perceptions regarding athletes' expectations for coaching behaviors.

However, there was a limited number of cross-cultural studies to explore emotional intelligence in sports leadership and investigate the relationships between emotional intelligence and the preferred coaching behaviors of multifactor leadership styles. Therefore, this present study was predominant because it highlighted the comfortable coach-athlete relationship and collegiate varsity athletes' emotional intelligence competencies in different cultural practices.

2.Review of Literature

2.1 Emotional Intelligence

A sense of emotional intelligence is set up on an understanding of individual psychological needs, as well as recognizing people's emotional status to manage interpersonal relationships. The definition of emotional intelligence from the earliest description was based on Salovey and Mayer's (1990) definition, "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (p.189). Besides, Mayer and Salovey (1997) grouped emotional intelligence into four branches: perceiving emotions, using motion to facilitate thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions in oneself and others. Also, EI was regarded as a broad intelligence which referred to a mental ability to facilitate thought by using emotions to solve problems and regulate behavior (Mayer et al., 2016; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

It was important for leaders to know how to

communicate with their subordinates' emotional information respectfully, so the role of emotional intelligence has gained extensive attention in a variety of research. According to the theoretical study, the Bar-On model referred to a subset of social intelligence which represents an integral part of positive psychology in improving mental health (Bar-On, 2010). It not only increased a sense of awareness of social interaction or human behavior but also stimulated self-possessed traits. Another model by Goleman (1995) identified five core competencies of EI: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Both EI models were attributed to trait-based approaches to combine personality characteristics and mental abilities (VanSickle, 2010).

By the interpretation of the trait-based factors, the self-report EI test was found in accordance with personality measures and their objective life outcomes in Canadian undergraduate students (Saklofske et al., 2007). Because the emotional intelligence score was positively correlated with pleasant emotions, the student-athletes with self-efficacy in regulating their emotions to keep a positive mood could have optimal performances (Lane et al., 2010). It stated high EI also had a beneficial influence on successful psychological skill usage, physiological stress responses, and more successful athletic performance (Laborde et al., 2016).

As a cornerstone of emotional intelligence, self-awareness was necessary for a sports manager to monitor feelings in psychological insight (Goleman, 1995; Schneider, 2013). The greater sense of self-awareness created a positive impact on building the long-term development of coaching behaviors (Goleman et al., 2013). The advantages of utilizing emotional intelligence were not only for building a supportive relationship between managers and their subordinates but also for maintaining a balanced concern for the needs of the organization and the demand of members (Soucie, 1994). Previous studies supported that emotionally intelligent leaders could manage effectively in interpersonal relationships and have creative thoughts on decision-making and problem-solving ability (Goleman, 1995; Goleman, 2015; Pastor, 2014). Additionally, emotional management promoted positive effects by encouraging followers in expressing their needs to overcome communication obstacles and enhance self-confidence (Sosik & Megarian, 1999). Consequently, EI played a critical factor in distinguishing the best leaders from merely good ones, also featured characteristics of highly effective leaders were detected in the initiative and strategic vision (Goleman et al., 2015).

2.2 Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership

The identification of transforming leadership prompted was by Bass's framework (1985) which was named transformational leadership. According to Avolio and Bass (1995) transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership were attributed to three styles in the multifactorial leadership model. It supported these personal characteristics that could navigate leaders through perceiving and recognizing the people's emotions, regulating an understanding of thoughts, reacting to expressions, and then responding to feedback. The current review demonstrated that

transformational leadership theory provides a sound framework for the focal leadership theories and supports more productive leadership practice by receiving considerable attention for decades (Gardner et al., 2020). It has been supported to predict the ability to lead with a higher level of transformational leadership behaviors by intellectual stimulation (Barling et al., 2000).

Mayer et al. (2016) supported that the utilization of emotional intelligence could facilitate interpersonal relationships with better performances. Transformational leaders inspired and motivated their followers to go beyond expectations, and they could serve as mentors to their followers by encouraging learning, achievement, and individual development (Harms & Crede, 2010, Shamir, 1991). A competent leader typically should have a sense of responsibility to drive followers to reach the organizational goals meanwhile concerned with followers' moods. Particularly, if a leader focused on the long-term development of an organization, it would be possible to hire the best people who possess professional skills as well as emotional intelligence traits to maintain organizational discipline in a good workplace.

Mathew and Gupta (2015) supported that emotional intelligence was an important factor in transformational leadership that was attributed to self-awareness emotions, managing emotions, self-motivation, and empathy. With the conceptual framework of EI as a multidimensional construct, a study of the psychometric properties measure supported a positive association between personality traits with extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness in Canadian undergraduate students (Saklofske et al., 2007). Then, a meta-analysis by Bono and Judge (2004) also revealed a positive correlation between these same four personalities and transformational leadership, particularly extraversion was the strongest factor related to transformational leadership behaviors. As a result, it is generally believed that EI is considered an essential factor in transformational leadership.

In addition, transformational coaching behaviors were supported to develop effective leadership for optimizing strategies as a facilitator to connect coach-athlete interactions and reflect interpersonal considerations (Turnnidge & Côté, 2017). Peer and coach transformational leadership have a potential motivator and positively influence task cohesion, whilst coach transformational leadership was more influential than peer leadership for athletes' perceived competence, individual outcomes, and collective efficacy (Price & Weiss, 2013). Therefore, developing transformational behaviors of both coach and athlete is important to exchange their standpoints (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016). For a general overview, transformational leadership styles have been thought to be a predominant behavioral pattern for leaders to deliver on their objectives and gain respect from their peers as well.

2.3 The Multifactor Leadership Model

In the Multifactor Leadership Model, these four subcomponents, inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration comprise four transformational leadership styles. Leadership is regarded as a trainable skill instead of an intui-

tive talent (Chelladurai, 2014). Besides, transformational leadership styles were demonstrated to be more satisfying than transactional leaders, and transformational leaders would tend to be emotionally intelligent and feature psychological empowerment (Bass & Avolio, 1990).

Research by Doherty and Danylchuk (1996) observed that idealized influence and charismatic traits tended toward focused attention on leader-centered behaviors, while individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation of the coaches tended to develop subordinate-centered behaviors. Interuniversity athletic coaches reflected that a minimum-interference leadership style for individual respect and confidence in the leader was appropriate athletics management, furthermore, transformational leadership was shown to contribute significantly to satisfaction with leadership and the coaches' extra effort (Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996). For team cohesion, Sosik and Megarian (1999) suggested transformational leaders with individual consideration frequently manifest empathy towards their followers.

Therefore, an experienced sports manager often knew how to use emotional impulses to maintain a positive emotional status because optimism helps facilitate motivation and performance outcomes (Schneider, 2013). To realize emotional functioning, leaders should possess an understanding of cognitive models of emotion and then put both intelligence and personality traits to improve self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and relationship management techniques.

2.4 Coaching Behaviors

It is commonly acknowledged that coaches' personality traits are linked with their coaching behaviors. According to Goleman's (2000) six basic leadership styles, authoritative management style, affiliative style, coaching style, and democratic style were perceived as the indicator of satisfying relationships development with positive harmony, while coercive power style and pacesetting style would create tension and stress. It revealed that different situational approaches combined the respective key components as personal emotional intelligence characteristics, that is to say, the organizational climate can be affected by certain leadership styles.

Shapie et al. (2016) indicated that female athletes preferred a coaching style with democratic behavior more than male athletes. Gender comparison studies found that females have higher emotional intelligence scores than males and indicated that individuals' feminine characteristics like empathy can predict transformational leadership factors (Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012; Mandell & Pherwani, 2003). Especially, regulation of emotions showed a significant mediating effect on coaching efficacy of the EI subcomponents (Hwang et al., 2013). Despite natural emotional impulses, coaches should be aware of emotion-driven actions and keep conscious thought decision-making with self-regulation (Schneider, 2013).

Coaching style played an important role in facilitating subordinates' potential for goal achievement and further enhancing teamwork efficacy (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). It also influenced athletes' performance such that inspirational leaders attempted to enhance confidence and enjoyment

of playing games in female adolescent soccer players (Price & Weiss, 2013). Based on Stenling and Tafvelin (2014), need satisfaction played a mediating role in the development of athletes' well-being by providing expectations and relevant feedback. Transformational leaders are usually concerned about athletes' mental health, but on the contrary, the absence of emotional support would induce changing attitudes or even influence athletic performances due to individual suppressions feeling, uncaring, and unfairness (Gearity & Murray, 2011).

Consequently, Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) pointed out that democratic behavior, social support, and positive feedback were associated with athletes' satisfaction and performances. Establishing an appropriate coach-athlete relationship should take advantage of emotional intelligence with a combination of individual focus and coaches' commitment to improving interpersonal relationships, team functioning, as well as performance outcomes (Chan & Mallett, 2011). Moreover, emotional intelligence was proven to be an important factor that contributes to leadership quality such as high-performance coaching. As a result, coaching with inspirational support would be expected to have a beneficial influence on better athletic performance, particularly in stressful competitions.

2.5 Cross-Cultural Leadership Practice

Last several years, cross-cultural research has begun to explore multifactor leadership behaviors and approaches to the modern global workplace. The growing body of research on emotional and social intelligence competencies provided applied management and performance in international organizations (Emmerling & Boyatzis, 2012).

Leadership styles in different countries were related to the cultural dimensions of individualism-collectivism and tightness-looseness (Mittal, 2015). A concept of cross-cultural leadership argued that charismatic leadership would be the preferred leadership style in individualistic and loose societies, such as the USA and New Zealand, whereas transformational leadership style would be more acceptable in collectivistic and tight societies, such as Japan and China (Mittal, 2015). Within an understanding of impacts on charismatic and transformational leadership, individualistic and tight societies would practice an operation of mixed leadership of both charismatic and transformational features, such as are Germany and Norway (Mittal, 2015). It demonstrated that an understanding of cultural leadership preferences is a crucial issue for governors in different countries.

A cross-culture study showed there were no significant differences between US and Israeli employees' perceptions of their leaders' behaviors in technology corporations, and it explained the relationship between leader behavior and employee commitment was not different due to the nation of employment (Dunn et al., 2012). Research by Shao and Webber (2006) showed that lack of transformational leadership behaviors in China compared with individualist cultures like the U.S because the top-down command hierarchical structure in collectivistic cultures emphasizes a centralized authority and stability that causes obstacles for the transformational leaders. Another cross-cultural perspective demonstrated

transformational leaders would increase their followers' awareness of the importance and value of their work as well as develop followers' self-interest and confidence to assume more responsibilities (Mittal, 2015).

According to Tang et al. (2010) cross-cultural study of emotional intelligence in the academic leaders of Taiwan and the USA, they revealed there was a strong positive correlation between overall EI skill and overall leadership effectiveness in both cultures. Besides, USA academic leaders scored higher on task-oriented leadership behaviors, whereas Taiwanese academic leaders scored higher on relationship-oriented leadership behaviors. Therefore, a great emotionally intelligent leader must know postural change and situational appraisals with cultural expectations of their organizations and environment.

3.Method

3.1 Participants

The research recruited student-athletes in all kinds of sports at both Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) and University of Taipei (UT). All 13 varsity sports at IUP and 33 varsity sports at UT were invited, including track and field, basketball teams, baseball teams, volleyball teams, softball teams, soccer teams, golf, swimming, tennis, etc. Totally 330 responses were collected from 109 IUP participants and 221 UT participants. All student-athletes were above 18 years old and should have training experience with at least one head coach as inclusion criteria. Only current student-athletes could be recruited, whereas students in club sports were excluded from this study.

3.2 Procedures

The research procedures began work after receiving IRB approval from these two universities. The researcher contacted the respective coaches and athletic directors of all athletic teams through an email for their approval to conduct this study with student-athletes. With their approval, each student-athlete received an email from the university email address asking for participation in this online survey. The research survey consisted of the Qualtrics survey and informed consent form and was sent out in September 2021. Qualtrics platform from IUP is a trusted source of electronically secure survey where data will be safeguarded in a protected system. The Qualtrics survey contains ten background questions and sixty-two questions on the Likert Scale. The collegiate athletes at each institution were asked to determine their preferences for specific leader behavior from their current head coaches.

3.3 Instruments

The study used an online Qualtrics survey platform in which data was stored and guaranteed in a protected system. The online survey was divided into three parts: participants' background information collection, a modified version of Schutte Self-report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 6S (MLQ-6S). These questionnaires were distributed to investigate the student-athletes' emotional intelligence competencies and their preferences for coaching leadership styles. Independent variables consisted of age, gender, school, individual or team sports, player's training years, coach's age, coach's gender, and prac-

ticing frequency. Dependent variables included the subjects' self-report EI scores and their ideal leadership styles. All survey answers were collected by the Qualtrics platform and remain all responses anonymous.

Modified Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) has been used for surveys to measure general emotional intelligence (Austin et al.,2004; Schutte et al., 1998). The modified SSEIT uses a five-point Likert scale set up from 1 to 5 describing strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. This present study will use Austin's (2004) 41-item modified version of SSEIT which is attributed to corresponding to the three categories by Salovey and Mayer's (1990) emotional intelligence model: (a) optimism/mood regulation, (b) utilisation of emotions, and (c) appraisal of emotions (Bester et al., 2013).

Also, the 41-item SSEIT involves a larger proportion of reverse-keyed 21 items, while the original 33-item version covers only 3 reverse-score questions. The original version might not reflect what people think in real society. The modified version is seen as a balanced scale to explore emotional intelligence factors objectively (Saklofske et al., 2007). Also, the internal reliability of the 41-item SSEIT was demonstrated to be similar to the original version. A validity study by Ng et al. (2010) supported the use of 41-item SSEIT for international students in the United States due to concurrent criterion-related validities and reliability of the modified model.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 6S (MLQ-6S) measures student-athletes' preferences of styles of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. The underlying structure of the MLQ-6S includes 21 items that reflect four types of transformational leadership, two transactional leaderships, and one laissez-faire leadership style (3 items per factor). According to Bass and Avolio (1990), transformational leadership is comprised of idealized influence (II), inspirational motivation (IM), intellectual stimulation (IS), and individual consideration (IC). Contingent reward (CR) and management-by-exception (ME) are classified as transactional leadership. Laissez-faire (LF) leadership is attributed to a passive leadership style. This questionnaire describes seven leadership styles. Each question has a five-point rating Likert scale setting from not at all (0 point), once in a while (1 point), sometimes (2 points), fairly often (3 points), and frequently/always (4 points). Total MLQ-6S scores are divided into three ranges: high (9-12), moderate (5-8), and low (0-4). These instruments can investigate collegiate student-athletes ideal leadership styles and the EI outcomes in IUP and UT comparisons.

3.4 Research Design

A cross-sectional survey study was applied as a quantitative research design. The IUP group and UT group were investigated as the two sample groups to draw cross-cultural comparisons. All participant is based on their voluntary and responded whole questions as valid data. There were ten basic questions about the participants' background information as to their demographic data collection. The 41 items of the modified SSEIT were used to evaluate student-athletes' emotional intelligence scores and competencies

between IUP and UT. MLQ-6S was used to measure student-athletes' preferences for leadership styles and compare the differences or similarities at both target universities between eastern and western cultures.

3.5 Statistical Analysis

Only fully completed questionnaires were accepted for data analysis. The quantitative data were collected to calculate the collegiate athletes' ideal leadership style in a cross-cultural study. Descriptive statistics of demographic information summarized all categories and individual characteristics. Data distribution was displayed of the most preferred leadership style, the emotional intelligence scores, and the scores of three EI factors in the modified self-reported EI test. An independent samples t-test was used to analyze the difference in the multifactor leadership style and the emotional intelligence scores between IUP and UT in cultural comparison. It also compared the difference in individual EI scores between those who preferred transformational leadership the most and the others who did not. A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to analyze if there was an interaction between gender and schools on their emotional intelligence scores among collegiate student-athletes. Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to determine if relationships existed between overall EI and the other three EI competency subscales.

4.Results

For all prospective participants, there were totally 330 returned responses from IUP (n = 109) and UT (n = 221) student-athletes. Except for the 112 incomplete answers excluded, 74 responses in the IUP group and 144 responses in the UT group were accepted samples. Therefore, the usable response rate in the IUP group was approximately 67.9% and in the UT group was 65.2%. Overall, the valid response rate was 66.1%.

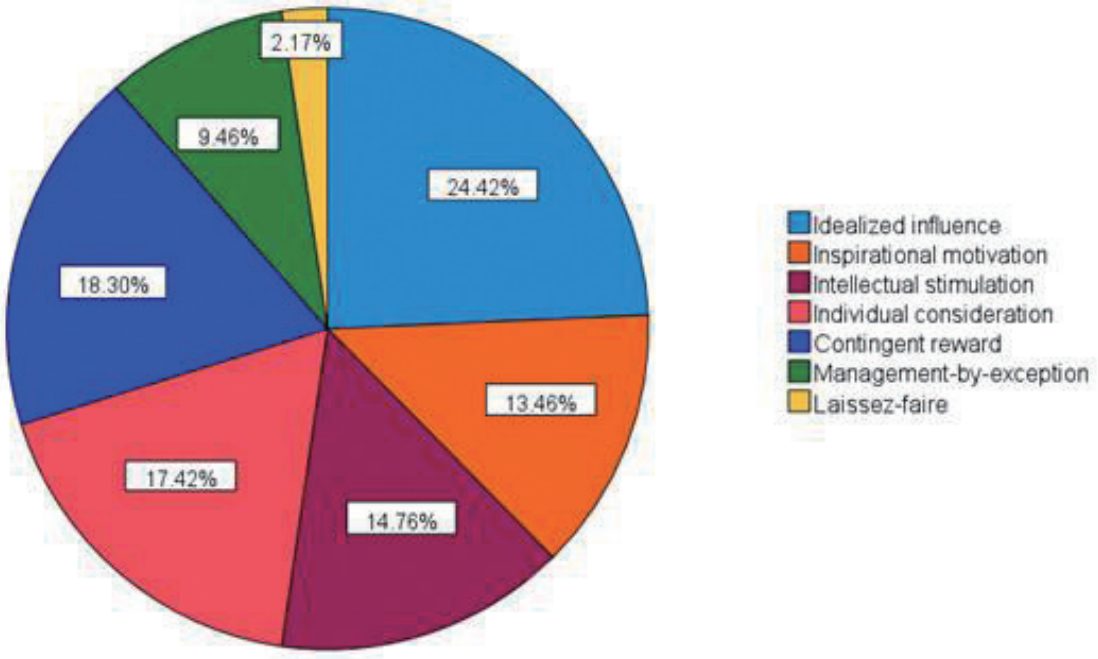
4.1 Demographics

According to the population descriptive statistics, the mean of the 218 participants' ages was 20.24 (SD = 1.6), the IUP group was 19.8 (SD = 1.6), and the UT group was 20.44 (SD = 1.6). Of the 218 participants in the study, there are 112 males (IUP =21, UT = 91), 104 females (IUP = 51, UT = 53) females, and 2 unspecified gender (IUP = 2) attended.

4.2 Preferences for Leadership Styles

The results of the 218 useful responses of MLQ-6S (see Figure 1) showed that up to the 24.42% (n = 53.23) participants chose idealized influence (II), contingent reward (CR) accounted for 18.30% (n = 39.90), individual consideration (IC) for 17.42% (n = 37.98), intellectual stimulation (IS) for 14.76% (n = 32.18), inspirational motivation (IM) for 13.46% (n = 29.33), management-by-exception (ME) for 9.46% (n = 20.63), and laissez-faire (LF) for 2.17% (n = 4.73). Therefore, to answer RQ1, investigating the most preferred leadership style, the idealized influence gained the highest frequencies among all collegiate student-athletes in this present study. The least preferred leadership style was laissez-faire leadership.

Figure 1. *Distribution of Overall Participants' Preferences for Leadership Styles*

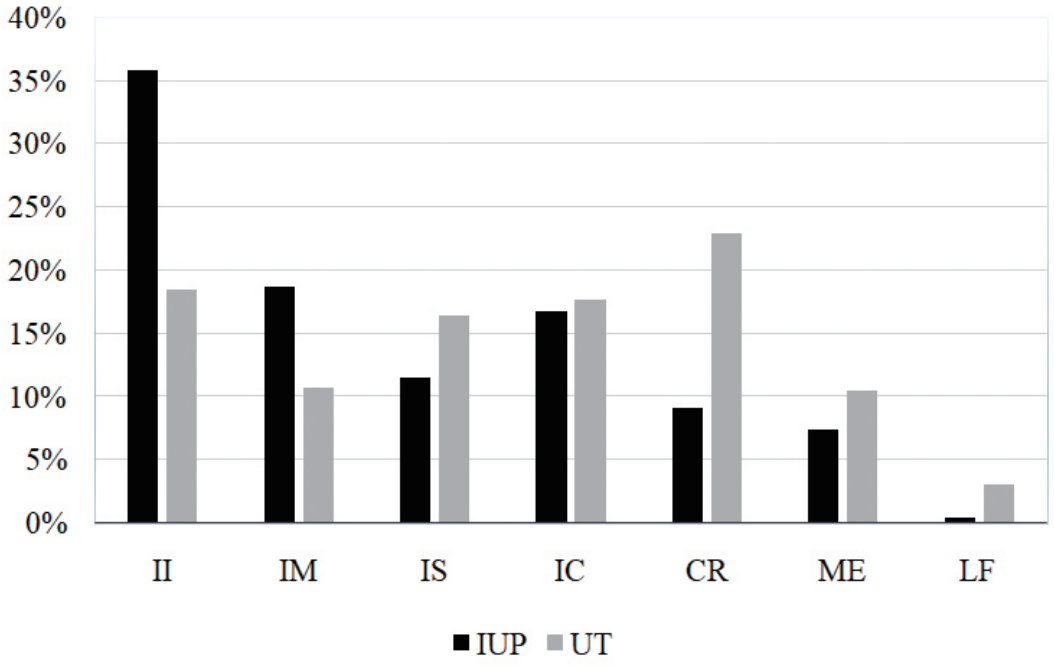


Note: The pie chart displayed the highest percentage (24.42 %) of preferences appeared in idealized influence among overall student-athletes.

4.3 Cultural Differences in Preferences for Leadership Styles

To answer RQ2, the study focused on any differences or similarities between IUP and UT. Firstly, the IUP group had the 35.86% II as the most preferred leadership style, while the UT group gained the 23.00% CR as the highest preference style (see Figure 2). Despite that II acquired the greatest percentage among four transformational leadership in both groups, the II scores of MLQ-6S showed a significant difference between IUP and UT ($p < .001$). The preference for CR gained a higher percentage than the other transactional leadership in both groups, but there was no statistical significance in the CR mean between IUP and UT groups ($p > .05$). Among the seven multifactor leadership styles, the preference for IC was the most similar percentage in both groups (IUP = 16.82%, UT = 17.73%).

Figure 2. *The percentage of preferred leadership styles among IUP and UT student-athletes*



Note: The bar chart showed the comparison of seven leaderships favors between IUP and UT. IUP athletes preferred II and IM more than the UT athletes. II = Idealized Influence; IM = Inspirational Motivation; IS = Intellectual Stimulation; IC = Individualized Consideration; CR = Contingent Reward; ME = Management-by-Exception; LF = Laissez-Faire.

The MLQ-6S raw scores of independent t-test are presented in Table 1. All types of transformational leaderships (II, IM, IS, IC) were observed at the high score range (9-12 scale) of the MLQ-6S in the IUP group, while all multifactor leaderships merely reached the moderate range (5-8 scale) within the UT group. Compared the IUP and UT participants' leaderships preferences, the significant difference ($p < .001$) existed at II ($t = 4.01$, $df = 120.8$), IM ($t = 4.82$, $df = 216$), IC ($t = 3.46$, $df = 172.6$), and LF ($\tau = -3.82$, $df = 115.5$). However, there was no significant difference ($p > .05$) between IUP and UT at IS (t = 1.25, df = 216), CR ($t = .14$, $df = 216$), and ME ($t = -.65$, $df = 107.6$).

Table 1 *Independent t-test for the MLQ-6S Raw Scoresbetween IUP and UT*

	Mean		*df*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
	IUP (*N*=74)	UT (*N*=144)				
II	9.69	8.42	120.8	4.01	<.001	.62
IM	9.72	8.33	216	4.82	<.001	.69
IS	8.99	8.60	216	1.25	>.05	.18
IC	9.61	8.63	172.6	3.46	<.001	.47
CR	9.00	8.96	216	.14	>.05	.02
ME	7.95	8.17	107.6	-.65	>.05	-.11
LF	5.38	6.61	115.5	-3.82	<.001	-.60

Note. The α level of statistical significance is defined at .05. Cohen's d used the pooled standard deviation.

4.4 Emotional Intelligence Score

Table 2 revealed an independent sample t-test output. Of all 218 student-athletes average EI score (M = 147.76, SD = 14.69), the IUP group had higher score (M = 151.77, SD = 14.07) than the UT group (M = 145.70, SD = 14.62). The difference between the two universities was statistically significant at the .05 level (p <.01, t = 2.94, df = 216). Additionally, the subtotal outcomes of the utilization of emotions and appraisal of emotions domains were shown significant differences between IUP and UT groups (p <.001).

To answer RQ3, student-athletes' emotional intelligence scores had an influence on their preferred coaching behaviors or not. Among the 218 valid responses, the 57.3 % (n = 125) athletes preferred transformational leaderships (TFL group) as their ideal coaching behaviors and the other 42.7 % (n = 93) athletes chose non-transformational leaderships (non-TFL group). According to the independent t-test (see Table 3), the TFL group had the higher mean score (M = 149.52, SD = 14.87) than the non-TFL group (M = 145.40, SD = 14.17). The result found a significant difference at the .05 level between the TFL group and non-TFL group (p <.05, t = -2.07, df = 216). To estimate the hypothetical cultural comparisons, the value of chi-square analysis ($\chi 2(1, N = 218) = 13.21$, $p < .001$) revealed there was a statistical significance of leadership differ-

Table 2 *Independent t-test for Emotional Intelligence Scores and Subscales between IUP and UT*

	Mean (SD)		*df*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
	IUP (*N*=74)	UT (*N*=144)				
Emotional Intelligence Score	151.77 (14.07)	145.70 (14.62)	216	2.94	.004	.42
Mood Regulation	45.96 (5.71)	47.32 (5.59)	216	-1.69	.093	-.24
Utilization of Emotions	21.65 (2.89)	20.10 (2.73)	216	3.88	<.001	.55
Appraisal of Emotions	37.82 (4.88)	35.11 (5.53)	216	3.57	<.001	.51

Note. The α level of statistical significance is defined at .05. Cohen's d used the pooled standard deviation.

ences between IUP and UT. It demonstrated that IUP athletes preferred transformational leadership while UT athletes preferred non-transformational leadership, and the relationship between preferences and eastern or western schools existed significantly.

Table 3 *Independent t-test for Emotional Intelligence Scores in the Transformational Leadership Preferred Group and Non-transformational Leadership Preferred Group*

	Mean (SD)		*df*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
	TFL (*N*=125)	non-TFL (*N*=93)				
Emotional Intelligence Score	149.52 (14.87)	145.40 (14.17)	216	-2.07	.04	-0.28

Note. The α level of statistical significance is defined at .05.Cohen's d used the pooled standard deviation.

4.5 Emotional Intelligence Competencies

Of 218 IUP and UT student-athletes, the average EI score was found progressively increased by their academic levels (see Table 4). Among the three EI factors, the appraisal of emotions section score was also found incremental by participants' academic levels.

Table 4 *Descriptive Statistics of EI Scales by Participants' School Years*

Mean (SD)	Freshman (*N*=64)	Sophomore (*N*=52)	Junior (*N*=52)	Senior (*N*=47)	Graduate (*N*=17)
Emotional Intelligence Score	145.47 (15.85)	146.13 (14.39)	147.37 (11.19)	149.34 (15.04)	157.88 (13.77)
Mood Regulation	46.84 (5.63)	47.04 (5.19)	46.34 (5.11)	46.26 (6.51)	49.18 (5.75)
Utilization of Emotions	20.22 (2.77)	19.94 (3.16)	20.74 (1.96)	21.60 (2.85)	21.35 (3.52)
Appraisal of Emotions	34.91 (5.22)	35.52 (5.07)	36.18 (4.89)	36.68 (6.16)	39.71 (5.42)

Note. The table displayed the emotional intelligence scales scores with overall participants' academic levels, and the mean of EI increased gradually with higher academic levels.

To answer RQ4: which factors of emotional intelligence competencies dominate the student-athlete's total EI score? Pearson correlation coefficients of the relationship between the total SSEIT scores and their competency subscales were presented in Table 5.

The results found collegiate student-athletes EI scores positively and strongly correlated with appraisal of emotions ($r = 0.84$, $p < .001$), mood regulation ($r = 0.81$, $p < .001$), utilization of emotions ($r = 0.53$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, appraisal of emotions had the greatest magnitude of impact over other branch competencies. In the other words, the greater emotional intelligence scores the student-athletes got the better their abilities for appraisal of emotions, mood regulation, and utilization of emotions they had.

Table 5 *Pearson'sCorrelations between EI Scores and Competencies*

		Emotional Intelligence score	Mood regulation	Utilization of emotions	Appraisal of emotions
Emotional Intelligence Score	*r*	1			
	p (2-tailed)				
Mood Regulation	*r*	.81	1		
	p (2-tailed)	<.001			
Utilization of Emotions	*r*	.53	.21	1	
	p (2-tailed)	<.001	<.01		
Appraisal of Emotions	*r*	.84	.53	.33	1
	p (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	

Note. The α level of statistical significance is defined at .05.

5.Conclusion/Discussion

As more interuniversity athletics management involves global teamwork with cultural diversity, managing a positive and respectful coach-athlete relationship is important for leaders to improve team cohesion and take advantage of emotional connections. Past research supported the notion that coaching with the transformational leadership model could fulfill the athlete's psychological needs and inspire the followers to achieve better performances beyond original expectations (Barling et al., 2000; Bass & Avolio, 1990, Lane et al., 2010; Charbonneau et al., 2001; Schneider, 2013). With concerning the relation between personal emotional intelligence scores and preferred coaching behaviors, high EI was demonstrated to link to a greater preference for transformational leadership in athletes. Besides, it was believed that life experience played a role in the development of transformational leadership to be able to exchange each other's standpoints in coach-athlete relationships.

5.1 Emotional Intelligence and Multifactor Leadership Styles

According to the frequency outcomes of the MLQ-6S, only IUP student-athletes preferred transformational leadership the most, while UT participants preferred contingent reward coaching behavior the most, which was classified as one type of transactional leadership characteristic. In Taiwan, most athletes expect to obtain a valuable return after their accomplishments have been done. They look forward to satisfying themselves with the degree to be rewarded, such as a mutually beneficial exchange. The impact of transactional leadership is effective but within limits. This differs from the USA individualist culture; the coach-athlete relationship was established by encouraging and exchanging mentors because people usually emphasized individual development. It revealed the preferences for certain factors of leadership styles were different in eastern and western cultures.

Besides, our investigation revealed specific differences and similarities and unique insights into sports leadership of the preferences for leadership styles. Based on a set of data analyses and comparisons, on the one hand, the t-test results revealed the EI scores were significantly different between IUP and UT. On the other hand, the result of the chi-square analysis indicated there was a statistical significance of the preference for transformational leadership between these two universities as well. In consequence, the cultural differences had an obvious direct effect on the preferences of leadership because cultural moderators would make leaders reflect on how to engage in the athletes' particular ideal coaching behaviors.

5.2 Emotional Intelligence Competencies

In addition to emotional intelligence competencies, the utilization of emotions and appraisal of emotions between cultural groups also showed extremely significant differences (p <.001). The results revealed that IUP athletes had a higher level of emotional competency than the UT participants. Despite those differences, mood regulation appeared no significant difference between both groups (p >.05) that reported optimal emotional regulation was thought as an influential effect on positive psychological functioning and not different for athletes in general.

The results of the independent t-test revealed those athletes who preferred transformational behaviors the most had a significantly higher EI score than other participants (p <.05). It stated transformational leader was developed with a high level of emotional and social competency. Therefore, EI has a significantly high contribution to transformational leadership. Based on the above interpretation in perspective, the athletes who have higher EI tend to show a higher preference for transformational leadership.

According to the intercorrelation values, the outcomes showed the appraisal of emotions was the most influential factor (r =

.842) than other factors. The mood regulation competency was a little less strongly associated with EI as the second influential factor (r = .806). The least influential variable was the utilization of emotions (r = .526) which only had a moderate relationship with total self-report EI scores. Consequently, EI competency is greatly related to beliefs concerning the personal ability of appraisal of emotions. In other words, appraisal of emotions is the most dominant factor in emotional intelligence competencies in this study instead of the utilization of emotions.

5.3 Conclusion

This present cross-cultural study discovered the different preferences of leadership styles between eastern and western cultures among the collegiate student-athletes. The IUP student-athletes preferred more transformational leaderships (II, IM, IS, and IC) than transactional leadership and the passive leadership style. The UT student-athletes preferred contingent reward (CR) leadership the most rather than intellectual stimulation (IS) and individual consideration (IC) leadership. Although there was a cultural difference respectively, the most disfavored styles, laissez-faire leadership, were quite similar among athletes across these two universities. It turned out that the passive coaching behavior was not current mainstream leadership.

As for the three emotional intelligence competencies, the outcomes found that appraisal of emotions correlated to the greatest effect of total EI scores over mood regulation and utilization of emotions. Regarding assessing EI scores, the important findings indicated that the higher EI scores the collegiate student-athletes got, the more preferences for transformational leadership they showed. It was entirely a matter of preference.

The study indicated that current collegiate student-athletes with higher trait emotional intelligence tended to prefer transformational leaders, but the preferences for transformational leadership in the eastern cultures were not as much as in the western cultures. IUP athletes collectively preferred transformational leadership more, whereas the UT athletes preferred transactional leadership more than transformational leadership. In order words, if a coach can instruct the leadership athletes prefer, it mutually benefits both parties by establishing a comfortable coach-athlete relationship.

To sum up, the present study drew shaping the direction of leadership in sport and highlighted a practicable suggestion of the optimal coaching behaviors and styles for coaches within athletic teams at colleges. Based on different cultural backgrounds, the mainstream coaching behaviors and ideal leadership styles in the USA and Taiwan were different. The study pointed out what kind of leadership styles were more acceptable in current athletic management.

5.4 Limitations and Future Direction

However, a limitation of the study was the uneven sample sizes of male and female athletes which might cause sample bias to compare EI score outcomes. Secondly, this comparative cross-cultural study only focused on collegiate student-athletes of two specific collegiate institutions: IUP and UT. That is not adequate to cover the general comparison between western and eastern environments. These two aspects of the study may generate sample bias to illustrate cultural differences with a lack of comprehensiveness. In any future research in this area, it could present the specific gender or sports to exclude the other non-cultural factors collection. Nevertheless, our research still provided lots of important information about athletes' leadership preferences for coaching behavior guidelines.

Even if the transformational approach has become the mainstream ideal coaching behavior, the value of this cross-cultural research revealed the degree of associations between leadership behaviors and EI in Taiwan and the USA from culture to culture. This study signified that coaching with better EI as a behavioral approach could satisfy the practical needs of collegiate student-athletes with different preferences for leadership.

As the sports industry has grown all around the world, greater attention to the manifestation of global leadership is needed. This study suggests that future research should explore the mix-model approach to cross-cultural leadership. It is worthwhile to examine foreign athletes and how they adapt to a new way of performing, as well as foreign coaches and how to change behaviors. With the concern of team unity development, sports leaders should consider how to gain respect and trust from their followers in diverse cultures. Therefore, it turned out to be a future direction for sports leadership in international cooperation. Emotional intelligence and individual satisfaction are necessary for a better understanding of the mental constructions of coaches and athletes.

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