

The Impact of Coach Leadership Style and the Arousal of West Java Karate Athletes

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ABSTRACT

This The role of a coach in modern sports is not only focused on developing technical skills, but also includes managing the psychological aspects of athletes, including the level of arousal that influences performance. This study aims to analyze the relationship between coach leadership style and the level of arousal in West Javanese karate athletes. The method used is descriptive correlational with a population of 32 athletes from the Karate Student Activity Unit (UKM) of the Indonesian Education University who have participated in West Java-level championships. Purposive sampling technique was used to determine the sample, while the research instruments included a Leadership Sport Scale questionnaire (38 items) and an arousal questionnaire (46 items). Data analysis was performed using SPSS 26. The results showed an average arousal score of 91.34 (SD = 14.277) and a coach leadership style score of 74.06 (SD = 31.444). The Pearson correlation test produced a value of $r = 0.767$ with $p < 0.05$, which indicates a positive and significant relationship between coach leadership style and athlete arousal levels. These findings indicate that an appropriate leadership style plays a crucial role in regulating arousal balance, which in turn can influence athletes' mental readiness and performance. This study recommends that coaches adopt an adaptive leadership style that considers athletes' psychological aspects during training and competition.

Keywords: coach leadership style; arousal; karate; sports psychology; athlete performance

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INTRODUCTION

The role of the coach in modern sports has evolved from simply teaching techniques and strategies to becoming a leader with a significant influence on the psychological aspects of athletes. The leadership style adopted by coaches influences motivation, satisfaction, and interpersonal relationships with athletes. Each coach has a different approach, ranging from authoritarian to democratic, each of which has a distinct psychological impact on athletes. Coaches' leadership styles have been shown to be closely related to athletes' emotional well-being, motivation, and mental and physical readiness for competition.

In karate, coaches are responsible not only for developing athletes' technical skills but also for maintaining psychological stability for optimal performance. Previous research has shown that coaches' communication and leadership styles significantly influence athlete performance and achievement. The application of controlling, friendly, and structuring communication styles by karate coaches creates a structured training environment, increases motivation, and helps athletes understand goals more clearly (Nurul et al., 2024). Furthermore, authoritarian leadership style has a positive and significant relationship with taekwondo athlete performance, indicating that discipline and firm direction from coaches



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can significantly support athlete performance (Gerald Novian & Ira Purnamasari Mochamad Noors, 2020). Adapting this leadership style is important to create a training climate that supports balanced athlete arousal.

Arousal is a physiological and psychological response that reflects an individual's level of preparedness in facing a situation. In the world of sports, arousal is a crucial element influencing athlete performance. Too low arousal can cause athletes to lose focus, while too high arousal can lead to stress, anxiety, and excessive tension (Rohmansyah, 2017). Therefore, balancing arousal is a crucial aspect that needs to be considered, not only by athletes but also by coaches in the coaching process. Coaches with an effective leadership style are required to understand the various factors that influence athlete success and performance, and are able to provide timely guidance to help athletes face challenges (Adem et al., 2023). Furthermore, (Reynders et al., 2019) emphasize that coaches play a crucial role in meeting athletes' basic psychological needs, such as autonomy, structure, and interpersonal relationships, through a supportive leadership approach. This aligns with findings (Howland, 2007), which state that coaches and other professionals need to be trained to understand arousal, given its significant influence on athlete focus and performance.

High arousal in martial arts rituals has been shown to have significant psychological impacts, including increased group cohesion and prosocial behavior, although its direct link to athlete performance has not been widely studied (Kavanagh et al., 2019). Schöne et al., 2019 also found that emotional responses in the form of amygdala activation contribute to increased preparedness in martial arts athletes in facing aggressive situations. Furthermore, (Hoogeboom et al., 2021) emphasized that fluctuations in arousal that occur in the context of relational leadership are closely related to leadership effectiveness, implicitly indicating the importance of the coach's role in managing the psychological dimensions of athletes, including their arousal levels.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive correlational method because there was no treatment for the subjects. This study aimed to determine the relationship between coach leadership style and arousal in West Javanese karate athletes. The population in this study was 32 athletes from the Karate Student Activity Unit (UKM) at the Indonesian Education University (UPI). To determine the sample, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique, which is a sampling technique based on specific criteria or considerations. In this case, the criteria used were athletes who had participated in West Java-level championships. This sample selection technique was carried out to ensure data collection was more relevant and in accordance with the research objectives, as the selected subjects were considered to have adequate competitive experience in the context being studied.

The instruments in this study used two questionnaires: a questionnaire for coach leadership style (Leadership Sport Scale) and a questionnaire for arousal. The Leadership Sport Scale (LSS) consists of 38 questions with five indicators (Training and Instruction, Autocratic Behavior, Democratic Behavior, Social Support, Positive Feedback) (Burke et al., 1980). Meanwhile, the arousal questionnaire consisted of 46 questions with 2 indicators (psychological and physiological) (James & Apta, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The data obtained is raw and therefore requires prior processing and analysis. The data processing and analysis were assisted by Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) 26 software, and then presented in tabular form.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistic

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Arousal	32	71	133	91.34	14.277
Coach Leadership Style	32	46	139	74.06	31.444
Valid N (listwise)	32				

Source: Processed using SPSS 26

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the number of samples analyzed is 32. The minimum value found for the arousal variable is 71, while the maximum value recorded is 133. The average (mean) arousal is 91.34 with a standard deviation value of 14,277. Meanwhile, the minimum value found for the trainer leadership style variable is 46, then the maximum value is 139. The average (mean) trainer leadership style is 74.06 with a standard deviation of 31,444.

Table 2. Normality Test Results

	Statistic	df	Sig.
Arousal	.921	32	.022
Coach Leadership Style	.762	32	.000

Source: Processed using SPSS 26

The normality test above uses Shapiro-Wilk. Based on the normality test table, a significant value for the arousal variable was obtained at $.022 > 0.05$, so H_0 was accepted and declared "normally distributed." Then, a significant value for the trainer's leadership style variable was obtained at $.000 < 0.05$, so H_0 was rejected, so the data was declared not normally distributed.

Table 3. Homogeneity Test Results

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on mean	8.743	7	10	.001
Based on median	.902	7	10	.540
Based on median and with adjusted df	.902	7	2.269	.610
Based on trimmed mean	7.82	7	10	.003

Source: Processed using SPSS 26

Based on the homogeneity test, Lavene's test for equality of variances obtained a significant value of $.001$ which means < 0.05 , so H_0 is rejected, so the values of the two variables are interpreted as not homogeneous.

Table 4. Corellation Test Results

Variabel	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Coach Leadership Style - Arousal	.767	.000

Source: Processed using SPSS 20 (2025)

Based on the correlation test, a significant value was obtained for both variables of .000, which means <0.05 , so H_0 is rejected, so it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the trainer's leadership style and arousal variables.

CONCLUSION

Athletes are expected to always follow their coaches' instructions, but unfortunately, many coaches have high egos and leave their athletes unattended. Communication between coaches and athletes will strengthen the relationship so that they can achieve shared goals. "Functional relationships between coaches and athletes are found to be crucial in order to cultivate and grow athlete's potential in sport" (Jones, 2006; Jowett, 2007; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Lyle & Cushion, 2010 in Moen, 2014). The correlation between coaches and athletes is a common part of sport, based on athletes' experiences shows evidence that this relationship is very important to support the best results and performance (Vealey et al., 1998).

An athlete's achievements are the result of training. There are four aspects that support training to achieve goals. According to Geraldi Novian & Ira Purnamasari, in their research, four aspects or pillars support achievement: technique, physical, tactical, and psychological. If any one aspect is neglected, achieving success will be very difficult, and the coach is the most influential figure in implementing these four aspects to achieve achievement goals (Purnamasari & Novian, 2021). The aspect that coaches often ignore is mental, which actually plays a crucial role in athletes being able to perform the other three aspects of training. Some coaches underestimate this mental aspect, prioritizing mental training and paying attention to their athletes' current mental state.

Coaches have a heavy duty and responsibility to guide their athletes to peak performance. The demands and pressure experienced by coaches are unconsciously transmitted to their athletes. Athletes will feel the pressure and demands the coach feels and gives, and without realizing it, this can disrupt the athlete's mental state. The coach's pressure burden can be transferred to the athlete, triggering a depressed mental state and increasing, namely a neutral level of physical and psychological readiness—can support or harm performance depending on the intensity (Rohmansyah, 2017). Arousal is a mental state that can be said to be frequently experienced by athletes. On the other hand, it is a negative emotional response in the form of anxiety and fear that arises when arousal is not managed properly, and generally has a negative impact on athlete performance.

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