

# The Impact of Coaching Style on Basketball Players' Performance Satisfaction in Hunan, China

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**Abstract:** This study examines the impact of coaching style on basketball players' performance satisfaction at Hunan Normal University, Hunan University of Technology, Hunan University of Science and Technology, and Hunan First Normal University. Employing a descriptive comparative correlational research design, the study involved 483 basketball athletes from these universities. Utilizing a purposive sampling technique, the research targeted athletes based on their participation and experience in basketball. Data was collected through a questionnaire adapted from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and scales derived from Self-Determination Theory. The questionnaire assessed demographic profiles, coaching styles, and athletes' performance satisfaction. Findings reveal that the majority of respondents are male and predominantly 17 years old with 3-4 years of basketball experience. Coaches were generally effective in inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation but showed gaps in individualized consideration, role modeling, and effective communication. Gender differences significantly influenced perceptions of coaching styles, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive coaching approaches. Performance satisfaction showed general dissatisfaction with skill development and mixed feelings about autonomy and team cohesion. Psychological well-being was moderately positive, but stress management and mental readiness required more focus. The study found a strong positive correlation between various coaching styles and performance satisfaction dimensions. Effective coaching in inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, role modeling, and communication positively impacted athletes' satisfaction in skill development, autonomy, team cohesion, psychological well-being, and overall satisfaction. The study concludes that tailored coaching strategies, enhanced communication skills, gender-sensitive approaches, and a focus on mental readiness are crucial for improving basketball players' performance satisfaction in Hunan, China.

**Keywords:** Coaching Style, Basketball Players, Performance Satisfaction, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualized Consideration.

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## 1. Introduction

Basketball holds an extraordinary position in the hearts and lives of an estimated 300 million participants in China, a figure comparable to the population of the United States. This widespread engagement is paralleled by an equally robust viewership that follows NBA games, solidifying basketball as a staple of both recreational and professional spheres within Chinese society. The sport's minimal requirements for equipment and space have fostered its dominance among Chinese youth, positioning it as the premier school sport and a primary physical activity across diverse urban and rural locales.

Despite such pervasive enthusiasm, Chinese basketball's international performance has been markedly inconsistent. While the national team excels within Asia, it often underperforms against global powerhouses such as the USA and top European teams. This inconsistency in performance highlights potential deficiencies in training, development, and, critically, the coaching methodologies applied. The historic achievements of players like Yao Ming, who demonstrated that Chinese athletes could compete at the highest levels, underscore the potential for international success and have fueled national pride. Yet, there persists a significant discrepancy between the potential and actual performance on the world stage, indicative of deeper systemic and methodological issues.

The core of the research gap lies in the interaction between Western coaching methodologies and the traditional Chinese

cultural context. The existing literature has not adequately explored how Western approaches to coaching, which often emphasize individual achievement and competitive success, align with or contradict the values of collectivism, respect, and communal harmony that are prevalent in Chinese culture. This misalignment may impact the effectiveness of these coaching styles in nurturing athlete performance and satisfaction.

Both the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Transformational Leadership Theory suggest that the style and approach of coaching can significantly affect athletes' intrinsic motivation and fulfillment of basic psychological needs—factors critical for optimizing performance and overall satisfaction. However, the specific application and outcomes of these coaching theories in the Chinese sporting environment remain under-researched, particularly concerning how they influence athletes' perceptions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in a culture that traditionally values conformity and group success over individual accolades.

Moreover, the structure of Chinese sports, with its emphasis on health, skill mastery, and performance rather than the Western focus on competition and entertainment, calls for a coaching approach that resonates with these cultural and systemic preferences. Despite rapid modernization and development within the sport, the Chinese Basketball Association (CBA) still faces challenges related to competition levels, promotional strategies, and a professional framework that does not yet fully reflect the more established

Western models.

This study is positioned to bridge this critical research gap by evaluating the impacts of diverse coaching styles, informed by SDT and Transformational Leadership Theory, on athlete performance satisfaction in the context of Chinese cultural and systemic realities.

It aims to discern how these coaching styles can be adapted to not only enhance athletic performance but also align with the intrinsic cultural values and psychological needs of Chinese athletes. By exploring these relationships, this research intends to offer valuable insights into developing a more effective and culturally coherent coaching framework, thereby supporting the sustained growth and international competitiveness of Chinese basketball.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Self-Determination Theory (SDT).

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT), formulated by psychologists Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, offers a valuable conceptual framework for comprehending the psychological processes underlying player motivation and pleasure within the realm of basketball coaching in China.

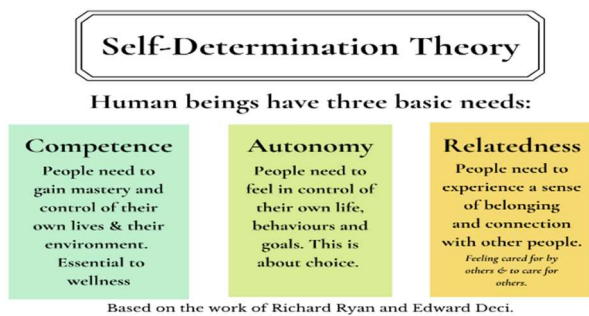


Figure 1. Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), pioneered by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, provides a robust framework for understanding the psychological factors that drive motivation and satisfaction in basketball coaching in China. This theory emphasizes three core psychological needs—competence, autonomy, and relatedness—and their role in enhancing motivation and well-being. The unique coaching styles employed in basketball influence these psychological needs significantly due to the sport's competitive and team-oriented nature.

For instance, coaching strategies that focus on inspirational motivation and effective communication can enhance players' competence by fostering skill development and providing constructive feedback. Coaches who promote intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration support players' autonomy by involving them in decision-making processes and acknowledging their specific needs. This is particularly relevant in China's collectivist society, where the emphasis on group harmony might overshadow individual autonomy. Furthermore, coaching styles that include role modeling and cultivate a supportive team environment address the need for relatedness, reinforcing interpersonal bonds and team cohesion, which are culturally valued in China.

This research aims to explore the complex interplay between various coaching styles and their impact on athletes' performance and satisfaction. By integrating SDT, the study

seeks to offer culturally nuanced insights into the dynamics of basketball coaching in China, evaluating how different coaching methodologies fulfill fundamental psychological needs and contribute to overall athlete well-being.

Transformational Leadership Theory.

Transformational Leadership Theory posits that effective leaders can significantly influence their team's performance and satisfaction by providing a compelling vision, fostering an environment that encourages intellectual growth, and paying personalized attention to their team members. In the sports domain, a coach employing a transformational leadership style could notably enhance athlete satisfaction and performance outcomes.

The study assessed the impact of specific transformational leadership traits—such as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, role modeling, and effective communication—on athlete performance satisfaction. This included dimensions like skill development, autonomy satisfaction, team cohesion, psychological well-being, and overall satisfaction. Employing surveys and interviews, the research gathered athletes' perceptions of their coaches' transformational leadership qualities.

Given the distinct cultural characteristics within Chinese society, where group harmony and respect for authority are paramount, this study also explored how transformational leadership is manifested and perceived within this cultural context. The comprehensive nature of transformational leadership theory allows for an in-depth analysis of coaching styles, examining their capacity to inspire, stimulate intellectually, and influence athletes ideally.

This research not only investigated the correlation between transformational leadership traits and psychological well-being indicators such as self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and team commitment but also the quality of the coach-player relationship. It aims to uncover how coaches can adapt their leadership styles to meet the diverse needs of their athletes, ultimately enhancing performance and satisfaction in the competitive arena of basketball in China.

## 3. Statement of the Problem

This research is determined to find the impact of coaching style on the performance satisfaction of Basketball athletes in several universities in Hunan, China.

Specifically, it sought answer to the following questions:

(1) What is the Profile of the athlete respondents in terms of:

- 1) Age
- 2) Sex
- 3) Years of Playing Basketball

(2) What is the assessment of athlete respondents of their Coaches' Coaching Style in terms of:

- 1) Inspirational Motivation
- 2) Intellectual Stimulation
- 3) Individualized Consideration
- 4) Role Modeling
- 5) Effective Communication?

(3) Is there a significant difference in the assessment of athlete respondents on the coaching style when their profile is taken as a test factor?

(4) What is the assessment of athlete respondents on their Performance Satisfaction in terms of:

- 1) Skill Development
- 2) Autonomy Satisfaction
- 3) Team Cohesion

4) Psychological Well-being

5) Overall Satisfaction?

(5) Is there a significant difference in the assessment of athlete respondents on their performance satisfaction when their profile is taken as a test factor?

(6) Is there a significant relationship between the coaching style and performance satisfaction as assessed by basketball athlete respondents?

(7) Based on the findings of the study, what coaching style and athlete satisfaction enhancement program can be proposed?

## 4. Hypotheses

The following are the hypothesis that will be followed in the study:

Ho1 There is no significant difference in the assessment of athlete respondents on the coaching style when their profile is taken as a test factor.

Ho2 There is no significant difference in the assessment of athlete respondents on their performance satisfaction when their profile is taken as a test factor.

Ho3 There is no significant relationship between the coaching style and performance satisfaction as assessed by basketball athlete respondents.

## 5. Significance of the Study

The study will be significant to the following:

Basketball Athletes.

Gaining insight into the impact of various coaching approaches on performance and satisfaction levels can contribute to the creation of more effective training settings, ultimately enhancing player well-being and competitiveness. Given the growing significance of mental health and job satisfaction within the field of sports science, conducting a study of this nature has the potential to equip athletes with the necessary understanding and resources to effectively advocate for coaching environments that have a positive impact on their psychological well-being. Consequently, such an environment can subsequently enhance their performance on the court.

Basketball Coaches.

The primary objective of coaches is to optimize the performance of their players. Therefore, comprehending the impact of their coaching style on player happiness can be a highly valuable asset in attaining this objective. Understanding the methods to cultivate competence, autonomy, and relatedness among athletes could empower coaches to construct more robust, cohesive, and efficient teams, potentially augmenting their career longevity and rate of accomplishment.

Basketball Organizations.

The findings of this research have the potential to contribute to the development of training programs for coaches and the formulation of team policies aimed at improving player contentment and performance.

Future Researchers.

The data and insights obtained from this study will be of great use to future scholars, as they contribute to the expansion of the current knowledge base. This study aims to examine the cultural and athletic backdrop of basketball in China, with the intention of generating a distinctive dataset that may be utilized for comparative analysis with other studies conducted in alternative cultural environments or

sporting domains.

Scope and Delimitations.

This study aims to determine the impact of coaching style on the Basketball athletes' performance satisfaction in Hunan Normal University, Hunan University of Technology, Hunan University of Science and Technology and Hunan First Normal University. The researcher conducted quantitative research with a descriptive comparative correlational research design in line for this study.

This research was delimited to Hunan Normal University's 131 basketball athletes, Hunan University of Technology's 120 Basketball Athletes, Hunan University of Science and Technology's 125 athletes and Hunan First Normal University's 107 athletes, a total of 483 Basketball athletes as target respondents.

Definition of Terms.

The following terms used in this study are defined operationally:

**Basketball Players' Performance Satisfaction.** This refers to the athletes' sense of contentment and fulfillment regarding their athletic performance and experiences within the team context.

**Coaching Styles.**

It refers to the various approaches and methods employed by basketball coaches in guiding, instructing, and motivating players.

**Communication Effectiveness.**

This refers to the frequency and quality with which a coach relays instructions, feedback, or encouragement to players. This variable examines the communicative rapport between coaches and athletes, focusing on clarity, timeliness, and the effectiveness of both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies.

**Goal Achievement.**

It refers to the accomplishment of predetermined individual or team objectives set at the beginning or during the season. This variable explores the extent to which players feel they have successfully met their performance-related goals.

**Individualized Consideration.**

This measures the degree to which the coach tailors their approach to meet the unique needs and abilities of each player. It examines how a coach's ability to understand and act upon individual differences within the team impacts the players' experience.

**Inspirational Motivation.**

This refers to the ability of the coach to inspire players toward higher levels of effort and performance. It focuses on how a coach's motivational techniques, such as articulating a vision or inspiring confidence, affect the team's enthusiasm and commitment.

**Intellectual Stimulation.**

This is the extent to which a coach encourages players to engage in problem-solving, critical thinking, and independent decision-making. It deals with how the coaching style fosters an environment conducive to intellectual growth and tactical understanding of the game.

## 6. Scope and Delimitations

The research utilized a descriptive comparative correlational research design in determining the impact of coaching style on the basketball athletes' performance satisfaction. This study was conducted in 4 universities in Hunan, China which are Hunan Normal University, Hunan University of Technology, Hunan University of Science and

## 7. Methodology

### 7.1. Research Design

The quantitative research design embodies the positivism philosophy of empiricism philosophy and adopts the research paradigm of scientism (Zheng Hangsheng, 2019). Quantitative research is designed to enable researchers to make effective explanations by comparing and analyzing these data.

The research utilized a descriptive comparative correlational research design in determining the impact of coaching style on the basketball athletes' performance satisfaction.

The descriptive comparative correlational approach is highly suitable for the study on the impact of coaching styles on basketball players' performance satisfaction in Chinese universities, as it offers a multifaceted understanding of the research topic. This methodology enables the research to first describe the prevailing coaching styles and levels of player satisfaction (descriptive aspect), and then compare these variables across different groups or settings, such as varying teams or coaching methods (comparative aspect). Finally, it assesses the nature and strength of the relationships between coaching styles and player satisfaction (correlational aspect). This comprehensive approach is particularly beneficial in the Chinese cultural context, as it allows for an in-depth examination of how specific coaching practices correlate with player performance satisfaction, providing valuable insights that can inform coaching strategies and sports management practices within the region.

### 7.2. Sampling Method (Locale, Population, Technique)

The researcher utilized a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a non-probability sampling method where researchers select specific individuals or groups for their study based on their knowledge about the population and the purpose of the study. It is characterized by the use of judgment and a deliberate effort to obtain representative samples by including typical areas or groups in the sample. (Neuman, W. L.,2014).

This study was conducted in 4 universities in Hunan, China which are Hunan Normal University, Hunan University of Technology, Hunan University of Science and Technology and Hunan First Normal University.

**Table 1.** Object of study (Locale, Population)

Universities	No. of Respondents
Hunan Normal University	131
Hunan University of Technology	120
Hunan University of Science and Technology	125
Hunan First Normal University	107
<b>Total</b>	<b>483</b>

### 7.3. Research Instrument (Validation)

The questionnaire that was utilized in this research was adapted from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 1995) to evaluate coaching style in accordance with Transformational Leadership Theory. Additionally, scales

derived from Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vallerand & Blssonnette, 1992) were employed to assess player performance satisfaction. There are 3 parts of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire employed a four-point Likert scale to evaluate the coaching style and performance satisfaction of basketball athletes. Specifically, the scale ranged from Strongly Disagree (SD = 1) to Disagree (D = 2), Agree (A = 3), and finally Strongly Agree (SA = 4). Subsequent to data collection, the results were interpreted as follows:

**Table 2.** Research Instrument (Validation)

Weight	Scale/Range	Description/Interpretation
4	3.51-4.00	Strongly Agree/ Very Effective
3	2.51-3.50	Agree/ Effective
2	1.51-2.50	Disagree/ Less Effective
1	1.00-1.50	Strongly Disagree/ Not Effective

### 7.4. Data Gathering Procedure

**Pre-Gathering:** Before the questionnaire was distributed, consent was obtained from the school, and the participants gave their informed consent. Participants were thoroughly briefed on the requirements and instructions, with a strong emphasis on the principle of confidentiality. They only commenced the questionnaire after confirming their clear understanding of these details.

**Actual Gathering:** The main survey was conducted by the trained personnel. It took about 10-15 minutes to answer the questionnaire. Participants completed the questionnaire in a setting that ensured privacy and adherence to the established protocols.

**Post-Gathering:** Upon completion of the questionnaire, each participant received a small gift as a token of appreciation for their participation. All data collected were subsequently organized, tabulated, and analyzed according to approved statistical methods.

**Data Analysis Procedure.** To analyze and interpret the data that was obtained from respondents, the following statistical techniques and procedures were applied:

Frequency, percentage, and ranking. These were used to describe the basketball athlete's grouping by profile variables and determine the values needed to identify the position.

Weighted average. This was used to assess and interpret the basketball athlete respondents' overall responses to key research variables, including coaching style and performance satisfaction.

T-test/ANOVA. The T-test and/or Analysis of Variance or F-test was used by the researcher to determine if there are significant differences as well as relationships of variables as assessed by the basketball athlete respondents.

ANOVA. This treatment was used to compare the responses of more than two groups of respondents based on their profile variables and to identify significant differences that exist.

Decision Criteria. The data was statistically treated using the following statistical tools: frequency and percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and t-test. The data is set at a 0.05 level of significance. Furthermore, the null hypotheses were accepted if the computed is greater than the set value of 0.05 level of significance; otherwise, they were

rejected.

## 8. Results and Analysis

**Table 3a.** Profile of the Respondents in terms of Sex

Sex	f	%
Male	378	78.3
Female	105	21.7
Total	483	100

**Table 3b.** Profile of the Respondents in terms of Age

Age	f	%
17 years old	385	79.7
18 years old	98	20.3
Total	483	100

**Table 3c.** Profile of the Respondents in terms of Years in Playing

College	f	%
Below 1 year	116	24.0
1 – 2 years	138	28.6
3 – 4 years	229	47.4
Total	483	100

The table above shows the profile of the respondents in terms of Sex, Age and Years in playing. In terms of sex, results revealed that most of the respondents are Male with frequency of three hundred seventy eight (378) and percentage of 78.3. The remaining ninety one hundred five (105) respondents are female.

The data predominantly features male respondents, who constitute 78.3% of the sample. This pronounced male representation indicates a higher participation rate of males in basketball within the studied region. Conversely, female participants, making up 21.7% of the sample, are significantly less represented. This gender disparity should be taken into account when extrapolating the study's findings to the broader population.

For the profile of the respondents in terms of Age, results revealed that most of the respondents are seventeen (17) years old with frequency of three hundred eighty five (385) percentage of 79.7. The remaining ninety eight (98) respondents are eighteen (18) years old.

The bulk of the respondents, 79.7%, are 17 years old, emphasizing the study's focus on younger athletes, specifically those in late adolescence. Only 20.3% of the participants are 18 years old, indicating a narrow age range. This concentration on a specific developmental stage is pertinent when considering the athletes' responses and experiences in relation to coaching styles.

For the profile of the respondents in terms of Years of Playing, results revealed that in terms of years of playing basketball, at least two hundred twenty nine (229) respondents are already playing for three (3) – four (4) years with percentage of 47.4.

A substantial portion of the respondents (47.4%) have been actively playing basketball for 3 to 4 years, suggesting a level of familiarity and skill development with the sport. The sample also includes less experienced players, with 24.0% having played for less than a year and 28.6% for 1 to 2 years. This variety in playing experience allows for a broader understanding of how different levels of exposure to the sport might influence the perception of coaching styles and satisfaction with performance.

## 9. Conclusion

1) The demographic makeup of the study predominantly consists of late adolescent athletes, primarily 17-year-olds, with a notable gender disparity showing a higher participation of male athletes. Most athletes possess an intermediate level of experience, having played basketball for 3-4 years, which indicates a balance between developing skills and some degree of sport familiarity.

2) Coaches generally excel in Inspirational Motivation, successfully motivating athletes, though there is room for improvement in recognizing smaller achievements to further boost motivation. While they promote innovative thinking under Intellectual Stimulation, they could better foster open dialogue and acceptance of new ideas. In Individualized Consideration, while personal development needs are understood, coaches could enhance their provision of personalized feedback and recognition of individual talents. In Role Modeling, while positive traits are exhibited, areas such as professionalism and ethical behavior need strengthening. For Effective Communication, coaches effectively outline expectations and goals but must improve their overall communication skills, especially in verbal and non-verbal expressions.

3) There are significant gender differences in the perception of coaching styles, particularly in Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration, highlighting the necessity for gender-sensitive coaching strategies. However, no significant age-related differences in coaching style perception were found between 17 and 18-year-olds, suggesting consistent coaching effects across this age bracket.

4) In terms of performance satisfaction, there is a general dissatisfaction with Skill Development, underscoring the need for more effective and varied skill training approaches. Mixed feelings about Autonomy Satisfaction emphasize the importance of boosting athlete involvement in decision-making. Disparities in Team Cohesion satisfaction indicate issues in team dynamics that require robust team-building efforts. Although there is general contentment with Psychological Well-being, areas like mental readiness and stress management necessitate greater attention. Overall Satisfaction reveals that while athletes are generally content, improvements are crucial in areas like performance impact and playing time allocation.

5) Gender differences significantly impact total satisfaction, with variations in how male and female athletes perceive their overall basketball experience, suggesting the necessity for gender-specific coaching adaptations. The lack of significant differences based on age or playing duration in key performance satisfaction areas indicates a consistent experience across varying ages and levels of exposure.

## 10. Recommendations

1) Enhancing Recognition of Minor Achievements:

Coaches should develop a systematic approach to acknowledge and celebrate minor victories, both individual and team-related. This can involve regular feedback sessions where small improvements and achievements are highlighted. Additionally, implementing a peer recognition program can promote a supportive team environment. Such practices will foster a culture of recognition and positive reinforcement, crucial for athlete motivation and team morale.

2) Improving Open Dialogue and Receptiveness in

## Coaching:

It is recommended that coaches undergo training in effective communication skills, with a focus on active listening and openness to athletes' ideas. Regular team meetings and individual sessions should be established, allowing athletes to express thoughts and contribute to strategy discussions. Implementing an anonymous feedback system could further enhance the communication flow, ensuring athletes feel comfortable sharing their suggestions and concerns.

### 3) Tailoring Feedback and Acknowledging Individual Talents:

Coaches should implement personalized development plans for each athlete, catering to their unique skills and improvement areas. Training for coaches to better identify and nurture individual talents is vital. Regular assessments of athletes' progress against their personal goals, with tailored feedback and adjustments to training programs, are essential to address individual development needs effectively.

### 4) Strengthening Role Modeling Aspects of Coaching:

Ethics and professionalism workshops for coaches are crucial to reinforce the importance of integrity, respect, and exemplary behavior. Coaches should lead by example in all aspects, including discipline and sportsmanship, and share their experiences to build deeper connections with athletes. Such practices would enhance the role modeling aspects of coaching, crucial for athlete development and team culture.

### 5) Enhancing Overall Communication Skills:

Investing in comprehensive communication skills training for coaches is recommended. This training should cover both verbal and non-verbal communication techniques and emphasize the importance of active listening. Utilizing technology and visual aids can also supplement coaching strategies and cater to different learning styles among athletes.

### 6) Gender-Sensitive Coaching Approaches:

Coaches should receive training that highlights the different needs and perceptions of male and female athletes. Regular reviews of coaching strategies are necessary to ensure they are inclusive and responsive to gender-specific preferences, enhancing effectiveness and athlete satisfaction.

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