

Comparison of Varsity Female Basketball Student-Athletes' Preferences for Coach's Leadership Behaviours and Coach's Gender between Malaysia and Iran

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to examine and compare the varsity female basketball student-athletes' preferences for coach's leadership behaviours and coach's gender between Malaysia and Iran. A demographic form and the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS) were employed in the current study. Descriptive statistics indicated that subjects preferred that their coaches have high DB, while the AB was the lowest value. Results of MANOVA indicated that there were significant differences [$F(6, 105) = 12.614, P < 0.05$; Wilks' Lambda = 0.581] for coach's leadership behaviours between Malaysia and Iran. Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes had significantly higher preference scores in Positive Feedback [$F(1, 110) = 17.59, P < 0.05$], Training & Instruction [$F(1, 110) = 13.37, P < 0.05$], and Social Support [$F(1, 110) = 17.28, P < 0.05$] than Malaysian athletes, while Malaysian varsity female basketball student-athletes had significant differences higher for Situational Consideration [$F(1, 110) = 7.89, P < 0.05$]. Chi-Square statistic was computed that there were significant differences [$\chi^2(1, 112) = 14.29, P < 0.05$] in a preferences for male coaches. Since, these findings exhibited that varsity female basketball student-athletes between both countries preferred different leadership behaviours and had a preference for male coaches; it suggests that coaches be aware of their athletes' preferences of leadership behaviour and also using various leadership methods according to the female athletes' needs and cultural differences that may force significant changes to their normal coaching.

Keywords: *preferred leadership behaviour, preferred coach's gender, cross-cultural*

Introduction

The effective coach can lead to individual and team success (Jacob, 2006; McClain, 2006). The Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MML: Chelladurai & Carron, 1978) was utilized as a sport-specific theoretical framework for this study in an athletic environment. It will be important for coaches that be effective in their roles and understand player's needs and wants to improve athlete's satisfaction, as a satisfied athlete attempt to increase performance (Howard, 2005). Otherwise, lack of a positive team atmosphere and stress environment will effect on performance (Howard, 2005; Reimer & Chelladurai, 1995). Also lack of compatible leadership behaviours when the athletes wish another manner may make an unsatisfied athlete and athlete abandons the sport (McClain, 2006; Molinero, Salguero, Tuero, Alvarez, & Marquez, 2006; Wilson, 2007). To achieve enhancement in athletic

performance and satisfaction, it might be the necessity for a coach to commit in leadership behaviours to which the athlete is interested (Sherman, Fuller, & Speed, 2000).

Years of research have shown that a coach for female athletes in university-level has to play a more strong and positive role than male athletes. Collegiate coaches have very high responsibilities and not only should be coach, also act as a teacher, parent, or counsellor (Short & Short, 2005). Then experiences of collegiate coaches must share and support female athletes (Short & Short, 2005). This is the responsibility of coaches to understand how they should work with the female athlete population. Two psychologically characteristics of female athletes are include question their own abilities and have a lower threshold for adapting frustration when not reaching their goals (Miller et al., 2008). Athletes expect motivated coaches with the purpose of have a positive effect on performance. To reach this aim, coaches must have a comprehensive understanding of the female athlete. An understanding of the physical, emotional, social and mental needs of their athletes can aid coaches in getting their athletes to perform more effectively (Miller, Ogilvie, & Branch, 2008).

Before 1972, women were made to believe that athletic completion could harm them physically and psychologically and diminish their femininity. Title IX is the 1972 amendment which was created to prohibit discrimination against women in educational institutions and sports on the basis of sex, receiving federal funds, as participation in, and guarantee girls and women the same opportunities as boys and men (Porto, 2008). The increasing participation of female athletes and sports that has occurred since Title IX, there has been a decrease in the number of female coaches over these years (Freeman, 2001). 90% of collegiate teams in 1972 were coached by females while in 1990 only 47.3% of teams were coached by women (Acosta & Carpenter, 1991). As male coach may not be able to fully understand the internal motives of female athletic and as well female athletes may be motivated by different stimuli (Gill, 1992; Griffin, 2009), it would be valuable realizing preference of coach's gender. Since male outnumber female in coaching and administrative positions that would lead the female student-athletes prefer male coaches (Swaton, 2010; Mawson, 2006). Many men were hired as administrators and head coaches. Males have traditionally been viewed as the realm owners of sport, (Rhode & Kellerman, 2007; Carpenter & Acosta, 2004; Wilson, 2007). According to Whisenant, Miller, and Pedersen (2005) that shortage of women in coaching and leadership positions could have been the result of the fundamental belief relating manliness with adeptness in sport and the predominance of males with leadership. Whilst, amount of female coach's salary as well compare to men could highlight existence of hegemonic masculinity (Massengale & Lough, 2010). The qualifications and the number of positions, as well as the conditions of coaching differ between countries. One may conclude that the profession of coaching at a high level across cultures still seems to be very male-dominated (Fasting & Pfister, 2000).

A cross-cultural study on explaining differences in leadership behaviours between countries could be shortly expanding. According to the House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta (2004), it is emphasized the powerful relationship between cultural values and concepts of leadership like an effective leader. The group of researchers explained that leadership behaviour is different from culture to culture because of the dissimilarity in

cultures as well (Lok & Crawford, 2004). Koopman, Den Hartog, Konrad, and al (1999) also found that “preferred leadership behaviour varies by cultures” (p. 514). According to Chelladurai and Saleh (2007) could be noted that preferred leader behavior is affected by situational characteristics such as the type of sport (closed-skill sport or open-skilled sport), level of player’s independence (interdependent sport or independent sport), degree of task attributes (task-variability or task-interdependence), the nature of the group, and cultural background (the athletes’ nationality, ethnicity etc.). Hence, culture is considered as situational factor that lead to affecting leader behaviour. If coach become aware of the leadership preferences of their athletes, can improve athletic performance and satisfaction (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978). According to Chelladurai and Carron (1978) while the preferred leadership behaviour is applied, the athletes have a propensity to do better in their sport as a response to the leadership used on them.

The significant differences between Malaysian and Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes were consistent with the proposal Chelladurai et al. (1988) that cultural differences are an important situational variable in the leadership process and should be considered carefully in future cross-cultural or different nationality investigations. Malaysia in the South-East Asian as Islamic Country and Iran also is an Islamic Republic and located in the Middle East. Despite Malaysia is the country that has a multi-racial population and as a secular State with Islam as the official religion and the fact that most of the female athletes in this country have experienced playing for coaches of both genders but Iran is an Islamic country that sporting structures has built in Islamic requirements. For example in Iran, sex segregation in sport is compulsory while, Malaysia is entirely different from Iran. In Malaysia, female athletes can play along with male athletes or watch the mixed competitions in stadiums. They can select their coach freely and legally if they are interested male coaches or female coaches, whereas female athletes in Iran are not allowed to participate or see contests of each other. It may be the sake of religiosity, superstitions, and legislation that female athletes cannot choose the opposite gender coaches lawfully as legislation has banned it in Iran. Chelladurai (1979) proposed that member characteristics of ability, experience, knowledge, or personality traits influenced on preferred behaviour. Athlete’s behaviour preferences reflected personal needs and desires, and judgments concerning what coaches’ behaviour would be appropriate in their situation. However, Chelladurai (1990) assigned when the student-athlete were deficient of the ability, experience, knowledge, or personality traits, could not make valid judgments about situational requirements. As regards female athletes in Iran were embedded and the compulsory segregation of male and females, they could have only male coaches’ experience informally than Malaysian athletes, it will be remarkable comparing between these two countries for their preferences of leadership behaviour that if athletes with different nationality and condition require different or similar types of leadership behaviours and prefer a male or female coach.

The working on cross-cultural settings will prove to be a beneficial reference for the field of Sport Psychology. Malaysia and Iran are Asian countries with a common point for main religion that is called Islam, but sport freedom is different between two countries since Malaysia is known as a multi-racial country. There are no published the psychological investigations for Malaysian and Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes as

comparative studies between Malaysia and other countries rarely have done. A few research's studies have done to compare leadership preference by culture (Bolkiah & Terry, 2001; Chelladurai, Malloy, Imamura, & Yamaguchi, 1987; Chelladurai, Imamura, Yamaguchi, & Oinuma, 1988; Numata, 2011). When making decision to investigate preferences of leadership behavior and coach's gender, culture may be one of the most important factors and noticeable value in the leadership process to consider (Numata, 2011). As coaches and their leadership behaviours are popular issues to study, researchers have investigated preferences for the leadership behaviours and coach's gender, but conducting on a female-only population is rare, while research regarding male athletes is plentiful, (Beam, Serwatka, & Wilson, 2004; McClain, 2006). The main purpose of this study was to examine and compare the varsity female basketball student-athletes' preferences for coach's leadership behaviours and coach's gender between Malaysia and Iran with two different nationalities addresses the gap identified in this field of work that would be novel.

Methods

Participants

A total of 112 varsity female basketball student-athletes were recruited randomly from four universities in Malaysia and five universities in Iran. The authors obtained the approval of the research from Ethic Committee of University of Malaya before the research conducted and data collection. Malaysian University Sports Council (MASUM) organized the MASUM Games from 18 Jun 2011 until 30 Jun 2011 in Malaysia that Basketball is one of MASUM games and the Iran University Sports Federation (IUSF) also structured the IUSF sports to compete from 1 December 2010 to 5 December 2010. The participants were 112 the varsity female basketball student-athletes in Malaysia and Iran aged 18 to 26 years (Mean Age: $M = 21.5$, $SD = 1.95$).

For ethnic/racial groups yielded a sufficient number of participants to be included in this study; as Malaysia is a multicultural society, Malay consisted of 40.48% ($n=17$), Chinese were 35.71% ($n=15$), and Indian comprised 23.81% ($n=10$), while Iranian included only one ethnic/racial group ($n=70$). 89% of varsity female basketball student-athletes in Malaysia had the working experience with male coach whereas, 46% of Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes had the working experience with private male coaches.

Instrumentation

The varsity female basketball student-athletes were asked to complete demographical information for initial section of the instrument such as age; nationality; name of university, and a special question regarding preference in coach's gender based on selecting male coach or female coach. In the second part of the questionnaire, the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS: Zhang et al., 1997) was used in present study. It measured the preferences of coach's leadership behaviours by their athletes. The RLSS has a total of 60 items, measuring

six sub-scales: decision style factors comprise Democratic Behaviour (12 items), and Autocratic Behaviour (8 items); motivational factors consist of Social Support (8 items), and Positive Feedback (12 items); a direct task factor includes Training and Instruction (10 items); and a situational factor known as Situational Consideration (10 items). The RLSS is scored on a 5-point Likert scale (*always* with 5 points, *often* with 4 points, *occasionally* with 3 points, *seldom* with 2 points, and *never* with 1 point).

Procedures

An approval was obtained from the tournament administrator of both countries competitions. After confirming approval, a program was scheduled for the researcher to meet the varsity female basketball student-athletes prior to competition or at the end of the game. Initial state was started in Esfahan central city of Iran during the competition season 2010-2011 from female basketball championship of Isfahan's fourth region universities that participants were briefed on the nature and purpose of study and then filled out questionnaire during this period. The varsity female basketball student-athletes in Malaysia also asked to complete a questionnaire indicating their preferences of their coach's leadership behaviours during MASUM games 2011-2012. The completion of questionnaires takes approximately 10-15 minutes.

Internal Consistency and Reliability

The questionnaire was translated into Persian Language for data collection in Iran. The questionnaire was translated back to English by an independent translator to ensure that it was correctly translated while Malaysian athletes were able to complete questionnaires with original version that was English. Analysis of the leader behaviour sub-scale over the preferred version (female student-athlete preference) revealed acceptable overall internal consistency for six sub-scales. The ranges of alpha coefficients for six sub-scales respectively for Malaysia and Iran Democratic Behaviour ($\alpha= 0.88$; $\alpha= 0.84$), Autocratic Behaviour ($\alpha= 0.74$; $\alpha= 0.71$), Social Support ($\alpha= 0.92$; $\alpha= 0.83$), Positive Feedback ($\alpha= 0.91$; $\alpha= 0.80$), Training and Instruction ($\alpha= 0.94$; $\alpha= 0.86$), and Situational Consideration ($\alpha= 0.86$; $\alpha= 0.86$) were found to be acceptable levels of internal consistency. As the results supported previous researches, then the MML can be tested with acceptable reliability.

Results

The descriptive statistics for six leadership sub-scales Democratic Behaviour (DB), Autocratic Behaviour (AB), Social Support (SS), Positive Feedback (PF), Training and Instruction (TI), Situational Consideration (SC) provided that show Mean and Standard Deviation. Multivariate of Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) were computed to indicate if

there were significant differences between varsity female basketball student-athletes' preferences for six sub-scales of coach's leadership behaviours between Malaysia and Iran.

Table 1 on all six sub-scales of RLSS Questionnaire indicated that varsity female basketball student-athletes preferred DB (Malaysia: M= 48.31; SD= 5.85; Iran: M= 50.50; SD= 6.12) from their coaches as highest level if compared to other sub-scales, while the AB was the lowest value. Means scores of the five sub-scales in RLSS were higher for Iranian athletes, exception the SC that revealed lower scores (Malaysia: M= 43.21; SD= 2.95; Iran: M= 41.16; SD= 4.15). The Malaysian athletes rated respectively: DB, SC, PF, TI, SS, and then AB while Iranian athletes scored correspondingly: DB, PF, TI, SC, SS, and at the end AB. It indicated in the same manner be revealed concerning the athlete's preference for DB, SS, and AB for both the Malaysian and Iranian athletes.

Table 1: Multivariate Analysis of Variance for Six Sub-Scales of Leadership Behaviour between Malaysia and Iran

Behavioural Sub-Scales	Country				df	F	Sig.
	Malaysia		Iran				
	M	SD	M	SD			
Positive Feedback (PF)	41.98	6.76	47.90	7.51	1, 110	17.59	0.001
Democratic Behaviour (DB)	48.31	7.85	50.50	6.12	1, 110	2.71	0.102
Training & Instruction (TI)	37.93	7.10	41.94	4.53	1, 110	13.37	0.001
Situational Consideration (SC)	43.21	2.95	41.16	4.16	1, 110	7.89	0.006
Social Support (SS)	29.90	3.63	32.63	3.19	1, 110	17.28	0.001
Autocratic Behaviour (AB)	20.79	5.70	20.83	2.65	1, 110	0.003	0.957

Results of MANOVA analysis indicated that there were significant differences [$F(6, 105) = 12.614, P < 0.05$; Wilks' Lambda = 0.581] in the preference of leadership behaviours between Malaysia and Iran. The findings of MANOVA indicated a significant difference among varsity female basketball student-athletes that preferred significantly more PF [$F(1, 110) = 17.59, P < 0.05$], TI [$F(1, 110) = 13.37, P < 0.05$], SS [$F(1, 110) = 17.28, P < 0.05$], and SC [$F(1, 110) = 7.89, P < 0.05$]. Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes had significant higher preference scores in PF, TI, and SS than Malaysian athletes while Malaysian varsity female basketball student-athletes had higher significant differences for SC.

The table 2 demonstrated that according to the Chi-Square statistic 69% Malaysian varsity female basketball student-athletes versus 67.1% Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes preferred to have male coaches. On the other hand, 31% Malaysian varsity

female basketball student- athletes preferred to choose female coaches in comparison with 32.9% Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes. There were significant differences [$\chi^2(1, 112) = 14.29, P < 0.05$] in a preferences for male coaches among the participants who preferred male coaches or those who preferred female coaches. Although, the current study found no significant differences [$\chi^2(1, 112) = .044, P > 0.05$] between Malaysia and Iran.

Table 2: Distributions of Preference in Coach’s Gender between Malaysia and Iran

Country	Preferred Coach’s Gender			
	Female		Male	
	N	%	N	%
Malaysia	13	31	29	69
Iran	23	32.9	47	67.1
Total	36	32.1	76	67.9

Discussion

Generally, the findings of MANOVA analysis that there were significant differences [$F(6, 105) = 12.614, P < 0.05$; Wilks’ Lambda = 0.581] in the preference of leadership behaviours between Malaysia and Iran. Although all previous studies (Bolkiah & Terry, 2001; Chelladurai, Malloy, Imamura, & Yamaguchi, 1987; Chelladurai, Imamura, Yamaguchi, & Oinuma, 1988; Numata, 2011) have investigated on both gender, not only for female and also by using Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) on just five sub-scales of leadership behaviour.

The current findings contradicted with Terry and Howe (1984) that published investigation of cross-cultural variations in leadership preferences and found no differences in preferred leadership behaviours among different nationalities. They noted that the three viable subject groups (Great Britain, Canada and the United States) all share similar cultural backgrounds and sporting ideologies. The present results confirmed studies of Chelladurai et al. (1987, and 1988); Chelladurai (1993); Bolkiah and Terry (2001); and Numata (2011) that have compared more disparate cultural settings and have shown significant cross-cultural variability. Chelladurai et al. (1987) also studied the differences between Japanese and Canadian physical education students in their perceptions and preferences for specific leadership behaviour. Their findings conclude that cultural background had an effect on leadership behaviour preferences. Chelladurai et al. (1988), again studied leadership in a cross-national setting and found differences in leadership behaviour and satisfaction among Canadian and Japanese athletes that arose from cultural differences. Chelladurai (1993) reported some differences in leadership preference by culture between Finland and Korea.

Numata (2011) also indicated that 101 student-athletes from Tokyo Gakugei University, Japanese athletes' preferences were significantly different in comparison with the American athletes, which means were higher than the American athletes. The other study on the northern part of Borneo as a Malay Islamic state (Bolkiah & Terry, 2001) comprised 159 the national sport team's athletes and 220 athletes from university teams in the London area. There was significant difference for culture that Bruneian athletes preferred more Training & Instruction, Democratic Behaviour, and Social Support than their British counterparts.

Positive Feedback (PF)

The preferences for PF indicated significant differences between Malaysian and Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes for coach's leadership style. The Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes means for PF were rated higher than means from Malaysian athletes. The present study supported results of Chelladurai (1993); Numata (2011) that found significant differences in preferences for PF based on cross-cultural. The current findings contradicted with previous studies by Terry and Howe (1984); and Chelladurai et al. (1987, 1988); they found no significantly higher preference for PF between Japanese and Canadian. Also Bolkiah and Terry (2001) indicated that there were no significant differences between Bruneian athletes and British counterparts for PF. The preference for PF might fulfil the student-athletes' need for recognition and reward by earning praise from the coach. Significant difference for PF in this study required the Iranian athletes' need to strengthen their performance and to maintain their motivational level. It also showed Iranian female athletes desire to have a greater feedback (e.g., compliment, appreciation, credit, and reward) from the coach in practice or competition in compare with their Malaysian counterparts, and Iranian coaches should struggle to compliment or encourage athletes for a good performance even if they performed by mistake.

Democratic Behaviour (DB)

The current results indicated no significant differences between Malaysian and Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes on their preferences for DB. The present study supported results of Terry and Howe (1984); Chelladurai et al. (1988); Numata (2011) that found no significant differences in preferences for DB based on cross-cultural. The current results were in contrast to Chelladurai et al. (1987); Chelladurai (1993); Bolkiah and Terry (2001) as they found significant differences for DB between different nationalities. The current findings indicated the highest level for DB that can support Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) also found that female athletes, as compared to males, showed a preference for DB in the high level. All varsity female basketball student-athletes included in this study expressed the need for DB from their coaches. Thus a coach should pay close attention to leadership decision-making styles when working with female athletes. These results show that Malaysia and Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes preferred coach who permits them to participate in decisions pertaining to goals, tactics, technique, and strategies. Thus, results revealed that varsity female basketball student-athletes in Malaysia and Iran preferred to develop their own

training and performance goals with limited involvement of the coach as it was scored the highest.

Training & Instruction (TI)

The present findings showed significant differences for preferences of TI between Malaysian and Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes. The Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes demonstrated higher mean score for TI than mean score their counterpart Malaysian athletes. The findings of this study supported Numata (2011); Bolkih and Terry (2001); and Chelladurai et al. (1988) that had significant differences based on cross-cultural variability to compare among different countries for TI. Findings of current results contradicted Terry and Howe (1984); Chelladurai et al. (1987); and Chelladurai (1993). Their findings showed a significant relationship between culture and student-athletes' preferences for TI while Iranian athletes wish more than Malaysian athletes this coach's behaviour. Zhang et al. (1997) explain that where the coach teaches the athlete the necessary skills in order to play the game better, the coach is said to be applying TI. Varsity female basketball student-athletes in Iran preferred the coaches with direct control to improve the athlete's performance level and pay attention specially to correct athlete's mistakes and as well utilizing a diversity of trainings for practice than Malaysian athletes.

Situational Consideration (SC)

The existing results demonstrated a significantly higher preference for SC among Malaysian varsity female basketball student-athletes in compare to their counterpart Iranian athletes. As previous researches (Bolkih & Terry, 2001; Chelladurai, Malloy, Imamura, & Yamaguchi, 1987; Chelladurai, Imamura, Yamaguchi, & Oinuma, 1988; Numata, 2011) utilized the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS), thus a comparison of this study based on cross-cultural with past findings is difficult. The Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS) investigates six sub-scales of leadership behaviours while LSS has only five sub-scales that no include SC. The degree to which a coach reflects situational factors in her or his behaviour is referred as Situational consideration. For instance Coaches who take into account factors such as the time, cultural background, environment, and individual members' competencies in setting goals and selecting methods to reach the goals can be deemed to be applying situational consideration. In particular the coaches who practice situational considerations use different behaviours depending on players' condition select suitable players to execute the perfect tasks in the game (Zhang, Jensen, & Mann, 1997). As regards, Malaysian varsity female basketball student-athletes comprised a multiracial population (Malay/ Chinese/ Indian) with different cultural background, findings of this research suggests which coaches in Malaysia should consider environment and individual athletes to achieve goals in sport settings.

Social Support (SS)

The results of this study indicated significantly preferences for SS behaviours of their coach among Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes in compare to Malaysian athletes. The current findings confirmed results of Bolkih and Terry (2001); Chelladurai et al. (1987, 1988); and Chelladurai (1993). The present results showed incongruence with previous investigation by Numata (2011) demonstrated that a similar pattern concerning the athlete's preference for SS. Their findings showed a significant relationship between culture and student-athletes' preferences for SS while Iranian athletes tend more than Malaysian athletes this coach's behaviour. This study suggests that Iranian coaches must involve themselves in satisfying interpersonal needs of varsity female basketball student-athletes and provide a warm atmosphere that athletes confide in coaches for solving their personal problems.

Autocratic Behavior (AB)

The current results confirmed differences were not significant between Malaysian and Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes on their preferences for AB. The current findings confirmed studies of Bolkih and Terry (2001); Chelladurai et al. (1987); Terry and Howe (1984); and Numata (2011) based on cross-cultural. The present results were in contrast to Chelladurai et al. (1988); and Chelladurai (1993). They found significant differences between different nationalities. Also Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) found that male athletes had a significantly higher preference for AB than female. The lowest level for AB in comparison with other five sub- scales exhibited Malaysian and Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes do not like the coaches who employ independent decision-making and authority to the coach to provide structured environment and refuse to comprise on matters surrounding practice, and also coaches who keep aloof the athletes. Thus a coach should pay close attention to leadership decision-making styles when working with female teams.

Preferred Coach's Gender

When comparing this information about female coaches with data from other countries must take into consideration to get a more general overview of female coaches in each country like Malaysia and Iran that was difficult. The female athletes in the current study indicated a greater preference for male coaches, 67.9% preferred to be coached by a male, 32.1% preferred female coaches. Chi-Square statistic was computed that there were significant differences [$\chi^2 (1, 112) = 14.29, P < 0.05$] in a preferences for male coaches among the participants who preferred male coaches or those who preferred female coaches. Although, the current study found no significant differences [$\chi^2 (1, 112) = .044, P > 0.05$] between two countries.

The present study supported previous research findings that indicated female athletes show a greater preference for male coaches (George, 1989; Le Drew & Zimmerman, 1994). The current study was in contrast with Fasting and Pfister (2000) that investigated female and male coaches by 38 elite female soccer players from Germany, Norway, Sweden and the USA. The results showed that the following gender-related trends emerged cross-culturally. Female soccer players had a trend for female coaches. Also Martin, Dale, and Jackson (2001)

indicated a different report of preference for a female coach by female athletes. Since the majority of coaches are male, this could assist to explain the female athletes' preference toward male coaches.

Conclusion

Differences in cultural norms in the sport setting may influence preferred coach's behaviour. Teams consisting of female student-athletes from one cultural group or race may possess different norms than teams of mixed cultures or races. The current findings demonstrated that cultural background had an effect on leadership behaviour preferences as the Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes demonstrated higher mean score for PF, TI, SS than mean score their counterpart Malaysian athletes. The differences in the manner varsity female basketball student-athletes respond to these three sub-scales refer to amount of positive feedback (e.g., compliment, appreciation, credit, and reward); the extent of teaching the necessity skills and using the various training; the degree of providing a warm atmosphere and solving interpersonal athlete's needs respectively that they could be highly influenced by social or cultural expectations. All preference scores for varsity female basketball student-athletes in Iran were higher than Malaysian basketball scores exception SC and differences were significant for this sub-scale. As the existing results merely demonstrated a significantly higher preference for SC among Malaysian varsity female basketball student-athletes in compare to their counterpart Iranian athletes, it can be based on having multiracial teams (Malay/ Chinese/ Indian) with different cultural background, findings of this research suggests which coaches in Malaysia should consider environment and individual athletes to achieve goals in sport settings as regards to situational requirements. On the other hand, a coach is applying SC when focuses on respecting the individual athlete's skill level or health and on being aware of obstacles within the environment that may hinder the athlete's positive performance or success.

There was no significant difference between two different nationality Malaysia and Iran; the results was exhibited significantly a preference for male coaches between the subjects who preferred male coaches and female coaches regardless nationality; although Iranian varsity female basketball student-athletes had no any opportunity who play under male coaching thus, preferences of coach's leadership behaviour could be based on experiences of only their female coaches, while for the varsity female basketball student-athletes in Malaysia, coach's leadership behaviour preferences was according to experience of coaches among both gender, since they can have either male or female coaches. Results revealed that coaches should be aware of preferred leadership behaviour and preferred coach's gender by their female athlete that can employ suitable leadership behaviours based on the culture norms and also using various leadership methods according to the female athletes' needs and different environments.

Consequently, this study will help coaches understand better the positive insight they have and also coaches know more about their players' preferences and can match their preferred behavior with own actual behaviours. Although findings of this study explain that

awareness of the Malaysian coaches can be more on varsity female basketball student-athletes needs in comparison to their counterpart Iranian.

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