

**Original Research Article****SUPPORTIVE AND THWARTING FACTORS IN
SPORT LEADERSHIP TO YOUTH ATHLETES: A
SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW**Alexander Minnaert¹ Sarah Lemstra-Brink²**Received: 29.05.2024****Accepted: 05.06.2024****Published: 22.07.2024****Abstract**

Good leadership is necessary for athletes to develop and perform in their sport. Crucial components of leadership are communication, motivating athletes and unleashing their potential for personal growth and well-being. Sport leaders define and shape the environment that influences the need fulfillment of youth athletes to feel safe, to learn and to perform. However, inappropriate or devaluating communication may thwart youth athlete's needs. Due to various supporting and thwarting factors, good sports leadership of youth athletes is not yet framed in a specific leadership style. Therefore, a systematic review was conducted to examine supportive and thwarting factors in leadership in youth sport leadership, i.e., for teenage athletes aged 10-18 years. The final selection included 14 studies that focused on various supporting and thwarting factors in leadership in youth sport leadership. The different factors were summarized and compared with different leadership styles. Most studies show the need for autonomy-supportive behavior and aversion to controlling behavior of the sport leader. Besides, the results indicate that a transformational leadership style followed by a transactional leadership style covered most needs of youth athletes. The review unfolds, however, a lack of input from non-Western countries. Implications for practice, policy and future research are discussed.

Keywords: Sports Leadership, Youth Athletes, Motivation, Need Support, Need Thwarting Factors.

Theoretical and empirical background

Leading and coaching adolescents can be a challenging task, both inside and outside school. Leadership is a key component when it comes to performance (Xie, 2019). Another important component of leadership is communication and the art of making people see their value and potential (Smith & Riley, 2012). There are several competences good leaders should possess, like the excellent communication skills, decision-making skills, creative thinking, demonstrating empathy, being flexible, intuitively optimistic and persistent (Smith & Riley, 2012). Leaders should also put the sense of safety of others first when providing leadership (Brion, 2021). These competences and skills of leadership are common to different settings and different ages, but when it comes to adolescents playing sports, less is known about how to properly lead them according to their needs (Storm & Svendsen, 2023).

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The average adolescent often faces many changes physically, psychologically and socio-emotionally. Adolescents' needs are often described as risk factors, which vary enormously between adolescents (Arbeit et al., 2021). Adolescents who play sports have very specific needs in addition to the needs of an average adolescent. For example, a specific need is to run so fast that victory is theirs. The goals are physically higher while their bodies change a lot. Adolescents often put their trust into leaders when it comes to special youth programs such as sports (Griffith et al., 2018). At the beginning of a program, sports leaders often start with a low base of trust and gradually gaining trust from the adolescent. Confidence in the leader and gaining the leader's trust increases as time passes between the adolescent athlete and the sport leader (Griffith, 2016). This category of 'coaching youth' means providing help with a specific performance or skill development that can cover risk factors (Arbeit et al., 2021). This kind of leadership offers encouragement to support emotional development, provides positive feedback for growth of confidence and practical help. However, the lack of positive encouragement and the lack of structure and future-time perspective in leadership may thwart the needs of youth athletes (Ryan & Deci, 2018). For reasons of clarity, youth athletes are defined as young people who play sport for their hobby and are trained by a designated leader.

Not only the kind of leadership influences youth athletes, but also the sport environment has an impact on the development of youth who plays sports. Leaders define and shape the environment and this influences youth both in their learning and well-being (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2019; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). The sports environment is an important predictor of the developmental benefits like identity reflection of youth athletes (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2009). In line with self-determination theory, a supportive coach and sport environment is likely to support the (psychological) needs of the individual, but a suppressive coach and environment might thwart the athlete's needs, hence jeopardizing athlete's engagement (Curran et al., 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2018).

The pedagogical relevance of (cultural) leadership in physical education and youth sport has been highlighted, as well as the bid for more research in this area (Storm & Svendsen, 2023). The added value of youth sport leaders as a role model for young athletes, in the creation of a motivational climate unleashing well-being, learning and performance, in managing inclusion, equity and diversity, in fostering resilience, and in showing respect for everyone's autonomy have been emphasized in recent articles aiming at youth athletes (Riffi Acharki et al., 2023; Storm & Svendsen, 2023). However, although leadership has often been the subject of systematic reviews covering professional and organizational contexts, a state of the art regarding the supportive and thwarting characteristic in youth sports leadership is lacking. Youth sport participation primarily focused on the age of 5 to 12 years (Emmonds et al., 2024), though shifting towards 13 to 18 years because of the growing need for a greater understanding around the key issues relevant to sport during the teenage years. Hence, the focus on teenage athletes is at the core of this review to safeguard participation in sport and to decrease barriers for sport engagement and early dropout. Sport participation during the teenage years has been found to be a protective factor against sedentary behaviour, risk for depression and body evaluation issues (Alberga et al., 2012).

Therefore, this systematic literature review will focus on the supportive and thwarting characteristics of leadership targeting at the needs of youth athletes. Besides the different factors of leadership for youth athletes, there are also different styles of leadership. According to Judge and Piccolo (2004), three leadership styles can be distinguished: a transformational, a transactional and a laissez-faire style. In transformational leadership, four dimensions can be identified: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. This type of leader needs the trust of staff. He sees what problems are coming, but also knows the requirements. This leader shows and models, and then steps down to train those who have to do it, like a football trainer. The transactional leader comprises three dimensions: contingent reward, active and passive management by exception. This type of leader clarifies expectations and sets rewards. He may actively monitor behavior or passively wait for behavior to cause problems interfering. This leader does not need much experience with the content of the work; he is more or less in charge of the technical process. The last leadership style is laissez-faire. This leader is not really a leader because the leader in person is generally absent. This means that there is an absence of leadership. This leadership is based upon trust and can be exemplified in a self-managing team. When programs, methods, or training schedules run as they should, leaders will step back, relying on the expertise and agency of the team (Fixsen et al., 2005).

Consequently, different supportive and thwarting characteristics of sport leadership on youth athletes' needs fulfillment will be examined by means of a systematic literature review. Correspondingly, the research question is: What are the supportive and thwarting factors in different styles of youth sport leadership in relation to youth athletes' needs?

The aim of this review, therefore, is to systematically map the existing data on the supporting and thwarting factors in leadership in youth sports by identifying the key qualities of leadership for teenage athletes, age 10-18 years, in regular sport environments.

Methodology

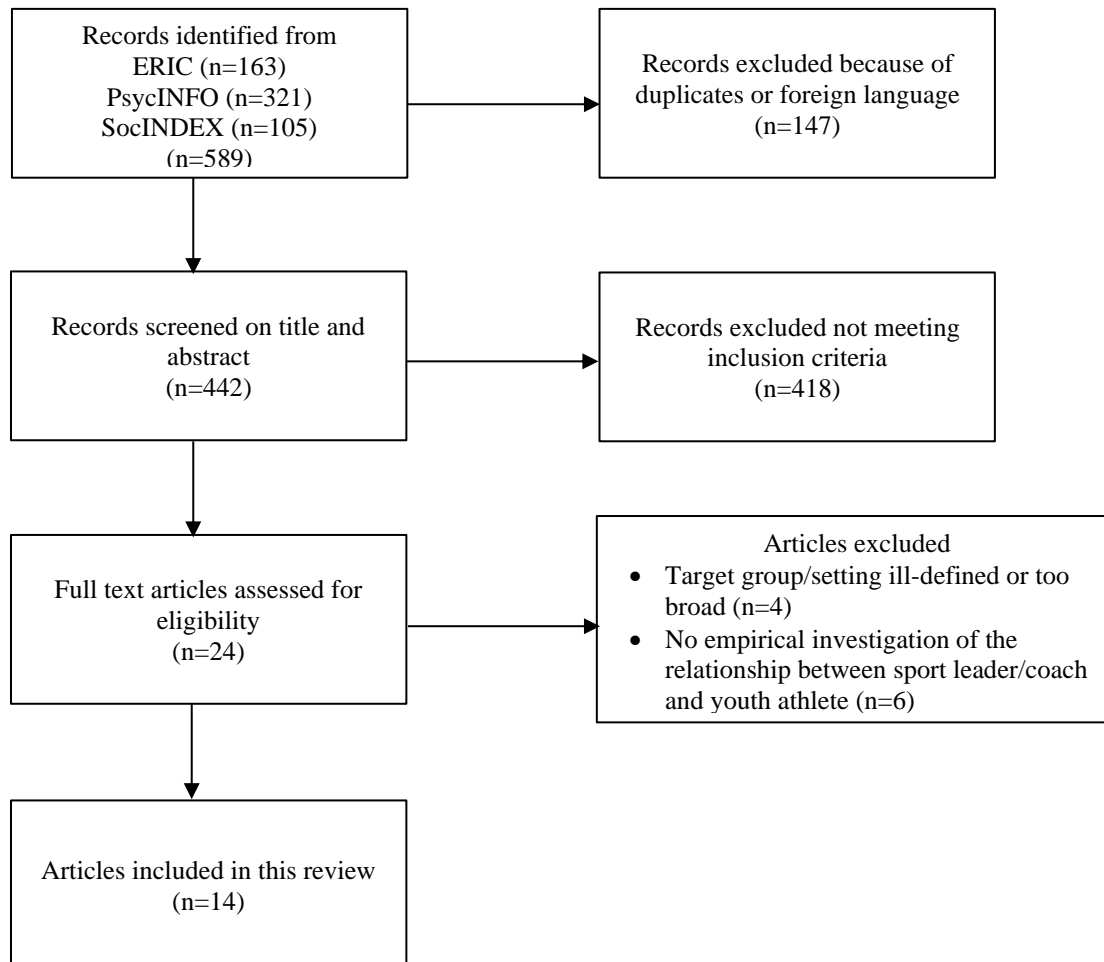
Literature search

This study consists of a systematic review of scientific literature. The PRISMA protocol for systematic reviews (see Page et al., 2021) was used to select the studies and to evaluate the inclusion and exclusion of articles that focused on the qualities of leadership for coaching youth athletes. Since many different styles of leadership are defined in the literature, Judge and Piccolo's (2004) styles were used (transformational, transactional and laissez-faire) as reference points.

Data were collected on February 29, 2024, using three databases, ERIC, PsycINFO and SocINDEX, to select relevant literature published in English. The databases contain research articles focusing on the domains of education, psychology and sociology and are therefore relevant to this systematic review. Different keywords were used: (adolescent OR youth OR puberty OR young athletes) AND (leadership in sports OR coaching OR coaching qualities). Articles had to be explicitly related to leadership or coaching to (where possible: individual) youth athletes, i.e., adolescents aged 10-18 years playing sports. In addition, the articles should not be older than January 2003 to avoid outdated research. Besides, the full texts must be available in English. If only the abstract was in English and the main article was written in another language, it was not included. 589 records were found. ERIC counted 163 records, PsycINFO 321, and SocINDEX 105.

Literature selection

The first step was to check the 589 records for duplicates and articles not written entirely in English. Hence, 147 records were eliminated. The 442 remaining records were screened for title and abstract. Based on the inclusion criterion that the study should explicitly contain information related to leadership or coaching of youth athletes, 418 records were removed from further participation. The eligibility of the remaining 24 articles was assessed by full text reading. The articles were checked for the appropriateness of the target population in the study and for the empirical focus of the study on the relationship between sport leaders/coaches and youth athletes. Four studies targeted, however, solely on youth care workers, adult athletes, broad (outdoor) coaching programs, or therapy-based coaching in sport settings (for adolescents with special educational needs and/or health problems). Furthermore, six articles were excluded due to the missing empirical relationships between leadership and youth athletes (e.g., interesting theoretical reflections on the relevance of cultural leadership on physical education). The steps in line with the PRISMA protocol are depicted in a flow chart (see Figure 1), which illustrates the process that led to the included studies in this systematic review. So, the final number of eligible articles was 14.

Figure 1: Results of literature search based on PRISMA statement**Table 1 Key characteristics of the studies included.**

Type study	Number of articles	Focus point	Author(s) of the study	Country	Age range of athletes (in years)	Number of youth athletes	Number of sports leaders
Quantitative Method	12	Effects of perceived coach support on the behavior of youth athletes: youth perspective	Coatsworth & Conroy (2009)	USA	10-17	119	
			Bolter & Weiss (2012)	USA	13-18	418	
			Amorose & Anderson-Butcher (2015)	USA	14-18	301	
			Cho & Baek (2020)	Republic of Korea	14-18	255	
			Lee et al. (2017)	USA	*	204	
			Moore et al. (2021)	USA	7-11	145	23
			Newman et al. (2020)	USA	9-15	438	70
		Effects of perceived coach support on the behavior of youth athletes: sports leader and youth perspective					

		Effects of perceived coach support/behavior on youth athletes' well-being	Conroy & Coatsworth (2007)	USA	7-18	165	
			Into et al. (2020)	Finland	16-18	490	
			Reinboth et al. (2004)	England	**	265	
			Lemelin et al. (2022)	Canada	Study 1: 14-24	143	18
					Study 2: 12-21	109	5
			Mellano & Pacewicz (2023)	USA	13-19	176	
		Youth athletes' preferences for coach' behavior	Turman (2003)	USA	13-18	84	17
Qualitative Method	1	Youth need shaping relationships with coaches	Arbeit et al. (2021)	USA	11-17	27	11 sport coaches

* Mean age is 16.10 years (SD=0.89); ** Mean age is 16.44 years (SD=1.32)

Analyses

The 14 articles in this systematic review were analyzed individually. The focus of the analysis of all studies was the point of departure in the qualitative analysis. Important information that helped answer the research question was recorded in a digital logbook. Other important and relevant findings and conclusions of the articles were also noted in the logbook so that they could contribute to answering the research question in an organized manner. All available information was summarized into the core findings of the study. Similarities and differences between the studies (also within the same focus point) were specifically highlighted. All these findings were used to answer the main question of this systematic review.

Results

14 studies were included that focused on sport leaders' behaviors in leading youth athletes. A focus point analysis of the selected studies revealed that the studies varied in the perspective from which the relationship between sport leaders and youth athletes was viewed: from the perspective of the youth athletes, from the perspective of the leader and the youth athletes, focusing on the behavior or the well-being of youth, or aiming at the preferences or needs of youth athletes in the relationship between leader and youth athletes. Using the focus point of the study as a building block, Table 1 shows the main characteristics of the different studies used in this systematic review, such as the type of study (quantitative and/or qualitative), the country of origin, and some key descriptives such as the age range of the youth athletes as well as the number of youth athletes and sport leaders involved in the study.

Participants

One study included age seven (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007) and one study included age twenty-four (Lemelin et al., 2022). The smallest sample size was 27 youth athletes (Arbeit et al., 2021) and the largest was 438 youth athletes (Newman et al., 2020). One study included only male youth athletes (Turman, 2003). One study included several important adult roles in young people's lives, therefore only sports coaches were examined for this review (Arbeit et al., 2021).

Supportive factors in youth sports leadership

The studies used in this systematic review found several supportive factors in sport leadership behaviors that positively influenced youth athletes' behavior. Sports leadership behaviors that were emotionally and autonomy supportive positively influenced the outcomes of self-control, teamwork,

effort, social responsibility, competence, learning, connectedness and athletic performance of youth athletes (Reinboth et al., 2004; Coatsworth & Conroy, 2009; Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2015; Newman et al., 2020; Cho & Baek, 2020; Lemelin et al., 2022). In addition to affecting behavior, autonomy support in sport leadership also has a positive impact on youth athlete's well-being (Reinboth et al., 2004; Coatsworth & Conroy, 2009; Lemelin et al., 2022). Autonomy-supportive behaviors include several types of behaviors, such as being empathetic (asking about and acknowledging athletes' feelings), being informative (explaining the reasons behind requirements and limits), and supporting athletes' autonomous, active participation (providing choices) (Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2015; Lemelin et al., 2022). When the leader is less controlling, the environment will have less controlling characteristics and a person will feel like an original human being, authentic and valued (Reinboth et al., 2004). Autonomy-supportive leadership increases youth athlete's motivation for sport (Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2015).

Democratic behavior by leaders in sport also has a positive effect on behavioral outcomes of youth athletes (Cho & Baek, 2020; Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2015; Moore, et. al., 2021). It is an important part of the autonomous supportive leadership style. Giving youth a choice and knowing why things are done the way they are done increases athletes' competence and relatedness and fosters the relationship between athletic leaders and athletes (Reinboth et al., 2004; Cho & Baek, 2020; Arbeit, et al., 2021; Lemelin et al., 2022). Democratic behavior by sport leaders also increases the social responsibility of youth athletes (Lee et al., 2017). The idea of being given a choice gives youth a sense of understanding, but most importantly, it gives them a sense of trust from the leader. The latter increases the development of a positive and strong emotional bond between athlete and leader (Cho & Baek, 2020).

In addition to autonomy-supporting sports leadership behavior, other factors have a significant positive influence on youth athletes' behavior. The encouragement provided by the leader is important for youth. It has a positive effect on the need satisfaction of competence and relatedness (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2009; Bolter & Weiss, 2012; Cho & Baek, 2020). It is important to note that encouragement by leaders should value youth as a person and not just as an athlete performing (Reinboth et al., 2004; Moore et al., 2021; Mellano & Pacewicz, 2023). Encouragement creates a warm and supportive environment to pursue performance and reduces anxiety and self-blame (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007; Arbeit et al., 2021). Personal appreciation and encouragement from the leader increases feelings of being valued and relatedness to others in the same environment (Reinboth et al., 2009). When a leader praises the athlete's behavior, it predicts the athlete's competence and level of need satisfaction (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2009). Positive feedback also increases the youth athlete's self-confidence and their feelings of self-worth (Moore et al., 2021; Arbeit et al., 2021). In case youth athletes feel emotionally, motivationally, sports tactically and strategically supported by the coach, indicators of burn-out such as reduced accomplishment and devaluation are substantially counterbalanced (Mellano & Pacewicz, 2023). One study found that encouragement from the sports leader became relatively less important over time because it would be more efficient to receive specific guidance from the sports leader toward the end of the season (Turman, 2003).

Sports leaders also have a great influence through nonverbal communication. The way leaders involve in competition and during practice also affects the athlete (Bolter & Weiss, 2012; Cho & Baek, 2020). When leaders show respect, are encouraging to others and maintain self-control, it has a positive effect on athlete's prosocial behavior (Bolter & Weiss, 2012). Demonstrating movements and techniques for improvement and effort also makes athletes feel more competent (Reinboth et al., 2004). When leaders show enthusiasm about coaching and training youth athletes, athletes feel more competent (Newman et al., 2020; Moore et al., 2021). Leaders should also provide a fun learning environment to train and develop youth athletes' skills with proper preparation. This increases athlete autonomous motivation and feeling of competence (Moore et al., 2021).

In general, sport leaders must provide an environment where youth have opportunities to practice skills, learn new skills, and where the sports leader can act as a model, giving feedback and reinforcement to the athlete. Another important factor in leadership is the relational component. Sport leaders provide support in a specific area in which youth have specific needs. Sport leaders must invest in the relationship with the athlete as a person to increase autonomous motivation, the learning

process, and the performance (Newman et al., 2020; Arbeit et al., 2021), but over time the investment in the relationship becomes relatively less important to the youth athlete (Turman, 2003).

Thwarting factors in youth sports leadership

In addition to the lack of supportive factors in youth sports leadership, studies also reported several specific thwarting factors of youth sports leadership. When it comes to thwarting the needs of youth athletes, controlling behavior by the youth sports leader has a major negative impact (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007; Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2015; Into et al., 2020). An example of a thwarting condition is when sport leaders who use rewards to manipulate youth athlete's behavior and who are giving critical feedback to the athlete to extrinsically motivate them (preferably by making use of social comparison) and recognizing and encouraging good performance of athletes, though neglecting the youth athlete when they are struggling. Another example is when sports leaders provide low encouragement in combination with a high control over giving messages (Turman, 2003; Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007; Amorose & Butcher, 2015).

Sport leaders affect youth athlete's behavior and motivation (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007). Sports leaders who encourage intrateam competition and who punish athletes for mistakes made create an unsafe environment that leads to less autonomous motivation and lower feelings of safety and enjoyment, resulting in higher dropout rates (Lee et al., 2017; Cho & Baek, 2020; Into et al., 2021). Perceived blame from the leader increases self-criticism in youth athletes (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007). Harsh discipline and obeying without questioning also leads to higher athlete anxiety levels (Lee et al., 2017; Cho & Baek, 2020). Youth athletes who feel not emotionally, motivationally, sports tactically and strategically supported by their coach are significantly more vulnerable for a burnout (Mellano & Pacewicz, 2023).

Making decisions without acknowledging youth athletes' opinions or preferences and continuing to monitor youth athletes' performance can negatively affect youth athletes' social responsibility and may increase youth athletes' self-blame (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007; Lee et al., 2017). This mode of communication also increases feelings of external control, feelings of powerlessness and may even lead to lower energy and commitment to athlete's participation (Reinboth et al., 2004).

Another important factor is boundaries. Youth athletes did not want the sport leader to influence their behavior outside the sport setting. Youth athletes do not need this kind of closeness from their sport leader (Amorose & Butcher, 2015; Arbeit et al., 2021). Youth athletes thus want a personal connection with the sport leader, but they do not need intrusive involvement and guidance from the sport leader (Moore et al., 2021).

As mentioned earlier, the leader's role model behavior has a significant impact on young people's behavior. This is also true when it comes to bad examples from youth leaders. If leaders display behaviors such as disrespecting rules, officials and opponents, criticizing others, prioritizing winning over good behavior and losing self-control, youth athletes will also engage in more of these behaviors (Bolter & Weiss, 2012).

In summary, several limiting, thwarting factors have been found when it comes to youth sports leaders. First, modelling is an important element of training, bad example makes bad followers. Other thwarting factors of sports leadership include control and selectivity in encouragement, neglecting the psychological needs of athletes, imposing harsh discipline and blaming, and overstepping athletes' boundaries. In addition, the absence of supporting factors in sports leadership reduces athletes' engagement, well-being and competence development.

Discussion

This systematic review identified 14 studies that examined the supportive and thwarting factors of leadership in youth sports leadership. The main aim of this systematic review was to systematically map the existing data on qualities of youth sports leaders by identifying the best

leadership qualities for coaching youth athletes and describing the best leadership style for leading youth athletes.

The results show that there are several supporting factors when it comes to sports leadership of youth athletes. These supporting factors can be framed into the different styles of leadership described in Judge and Piccolo (2004). The majority of the supporting factors fit into the transformational leadership style, which also excludes many of the oppressive, thwarting factors of sport leadership for youth athletes (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Ogwumike, et al., 2022). The other factors can be framed into the transactional leadership style, but need the awareness of the sport leader to be always encouraging and not only when the athletes' skills are good, as this is a thwarting factor.

Judge and Piccolo's (2004) transformational and transactional leadership styles best cover the needs of youth athletes when it comes to sports leadership. The transformational leader sees what problems or goals lie ahead and knows the requirements, models and then steps down to train (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). In transactional leadership, the leader clarifies expectations and sets rewards. This leader may actively follow or passively wait until behavior causes problems or when skills are not developed enough to cause a problem (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). The transformational leadership style included several dimensions, one of which was idealized influence. This can be described as a leader serving as a role model for followers, in this case youth athletes. This is one of the supporting factors. Other factors of this leadership style are inspirational motivation (providing a vision and working with it), individual attention (being genuinely concerned about the athletes' needs and feelings) and intellectual stimulation (challenging the athlete to perform to the best of their ability) (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). These factors are all very important when it comes to sports leadership for youth athletes.

The other important leadership style, which includes many of the supporting factors but also some of the thwarting factors, is the transactional leadership style. This style includes the conditional reward factor: i.e. positive reinforcement and rewards when goals are achieved. It also means encouragement of positive behavior (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Encouragement is important for youth athletes, but only encouragement for positive behavior or for showing good skills is more thwarting rather than supportive. It is important to know the difference in encouragement for sports leaders. Another factor of this leadership style was management by exception, this can be in an active way, meaning the leader supervises and corrects when the youth athlete goes wrong; or it can be in a passive way, meaning the leader does not supervise but waits for things to go wrong before taking action (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

The transactional style of leadership is not necessarily a bad style; it does meet different needs of athletes. During the sports season, a change of leadership style can occur from transformational to transactional. This can be explained by the fact that athletes' trust in the sport leader grows the more time they spend in training with the leader (Griffith, 2016). Athletes get to know the intentions of the leader and therefore earn or lose trust that he has their best interests at heart. This is also true through the youth athlete's competence growth, which reduces the involvement of the sport leader needed to achieve good performance. This is also reflected in Turman's (2003) study that shows different needs of leadership style during the same season.

The key factors of sports leadership for youth athletes are being democratic, encouraging, enthusiastic and aware of being a role model for youth. Leaders should provide an environment that provides opportunities for youth to practice their skills, give feedback and structure to learn new skills, and invest in personal relationships to increase autonomous motivation and performance (Ryan & Deci, 2018; Newman et al., 2020; Arbeit et al., 2021; Storm & Svendsen, 2023; Serki & Bolkan, 2024). The youth sports leader has a current role best covered by transformational leadership style (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Nevertheless, sport leaders need to be aware of personal needs at all times. They need to know when to occupy which space. Over time, the competence of the youth athlete will grow, and the sport leader should gradually step back and give feedback only when necessary.

Implications for practice and policy

The review outlines the importance of good sports leadership for youth athletes. Several studies gave several important supporting factors of sport leadership, such as supporting autonomy in coaching, providing encouragement and feedback for improving athletes' skills. The studies also gave several thwarting factors of sport leadership, such as being controlling and negative in feedback on athletes' skills or neglecting their needs. This systematic review found that the best mode of athletic leadership is determined by the transformational leadership style as described in Judge and Piccolo (2004), followed by the transactional leadership style over time, in which the athletic leader knows his responsibility and is sensitive to his place at a given time.

These findings are important for not only practice, but also policy for sports program developers and trainer training courses and others involved in co-constructing leadership in youth sports. Policymakers should focus on the supporting factors in their youth training and courses. When selecting youth sport leaders, recruiters should pay attention to sport leaders' abilities to possess both supportive and thwarting factors. They should know how to question or observe these factors, as well as how to train them or unlearn and relearn them.

Although performance in sport is of huge importance when it comes to prove one's abilities, most often in comparison with others. However, policymakers and youth coaches should also be aware of the performance anxiety toll on young athletes' mental and physical health due to the high pressure and expectations innate to performing goals and, therefore, also create enough room for developmental, learning goals in order to improve one's abilities and to remain engaged and intrinsically motivated (Merkel, 2013; Minnaert, 2013; Mellano & Pacewicz, 2023).

Limitations and future directions

This systematic review included zero studies on this topic from non-Western cultural contexts. Most of the studies were from the United States. It is likely that conclusions from studies conducted in the United States are not directly transferable to other countries around the world. In addition, few studies included specific needs of youth athletes combined with long-term sports leadership. This needs further investigation in order to make policy recommendations for long-term sports leadership programs. Another limitation is the relatively large variation in age of youth athletes, and it is not defined whether adolescents at all developmental stages have the same needs from their sport leader or coach.

In terms of the systematic review itself, it is limited due to the relatively small number of studies included in this systematic review. While this review covers supportive and thwarting factors in youth sport leadership, the outcomes are not generalizable to every sport environment that includes youth athletes. This is due to the differences in culture that influences the needs of youth athletes. Besides, it is likely that not every factor has the same amount of influence when it comes to good sports leadership. By means of outlining the supportive and suppressive factors of sports leadership to youth athletes, this review might add to frame good sports leadership to youth athletes in a leadership style.

As for further research, there is a lack of longitudinal data to understand the complexity and dynamics of supportive and thwarting factors of sport leadership over time. This review illustrates the need for different supporting factors but does not show the different (gender-specific) needs of athletes over the course of a sports season or year. These needs and goals may highly fluctuate over time (Turman, 2003; Minnaert, 2023). Future research should shed light on the different needs of youth athletes during a long training project led by the same sport leader, in order to provide good sports leadership tailored to youth athletes' needs. There is also a lack of research data on the youth athlete needs of the youth sport leader in different settings of sport, individual sport or group sport. These settings may make a difference in supportive and thwarting factors in youth sport leadership. Another topic is the (changing) differences in needs between ages during adolescence. A lot of development takes place in these few years of being an adolescent. It is likely that a person has different needs from sports leaders each year. So, further research is needed to understand the dynamics of (gender-specific) supportive and thwarting factors over time, and to address the

differences in the needs and goals of youth athletes playing individual sports and those of youth playing group sports.

Disclosure Statement

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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