

Being an effective leader: Relationship between Philosophy, Practice and Leadership Indicators



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INTRODUCTION

Leaders need to be able to communicate effectively in order to influence their followers and to transmit their ideas (philosophy). Even though the importance of leadership philosophy is well established, not much attention has been given to how leaders implement that philosophy in daily work, particularly in a sport context.

The Leadership Effectiveness Model (Gomes, 2014a) highlight three aspects that can influence leadership efficacy: leadership philosophy (coaches' ideas, beliefs), leadership practice (action plans to execute the leadership philosophy), and leadership indicators (to assess whether leadership philosophy has been effectively implemented). These three dimensions occur at a conceptual level (mental representations about the three dimensions) and at a practical level (how these dimensions are operationalized daily) (Gomes, 2014b). The model argues that more linear the relationship between leadership philosophy, practice and indicators, and the closer the conceptual and practical cycles are, the more effective the leadership (coach) will be.

Study aims: (1) to compare athletes and coaches perceptions on leadership philosophy, practice and indicators; (2) to test the idea that the higher the congruency between the two cycles, the higher the coaches' leadership effectiveness. **Leadership effectiveness** was measured by athletes' satisfaction with coach and by their perceived sport performance.

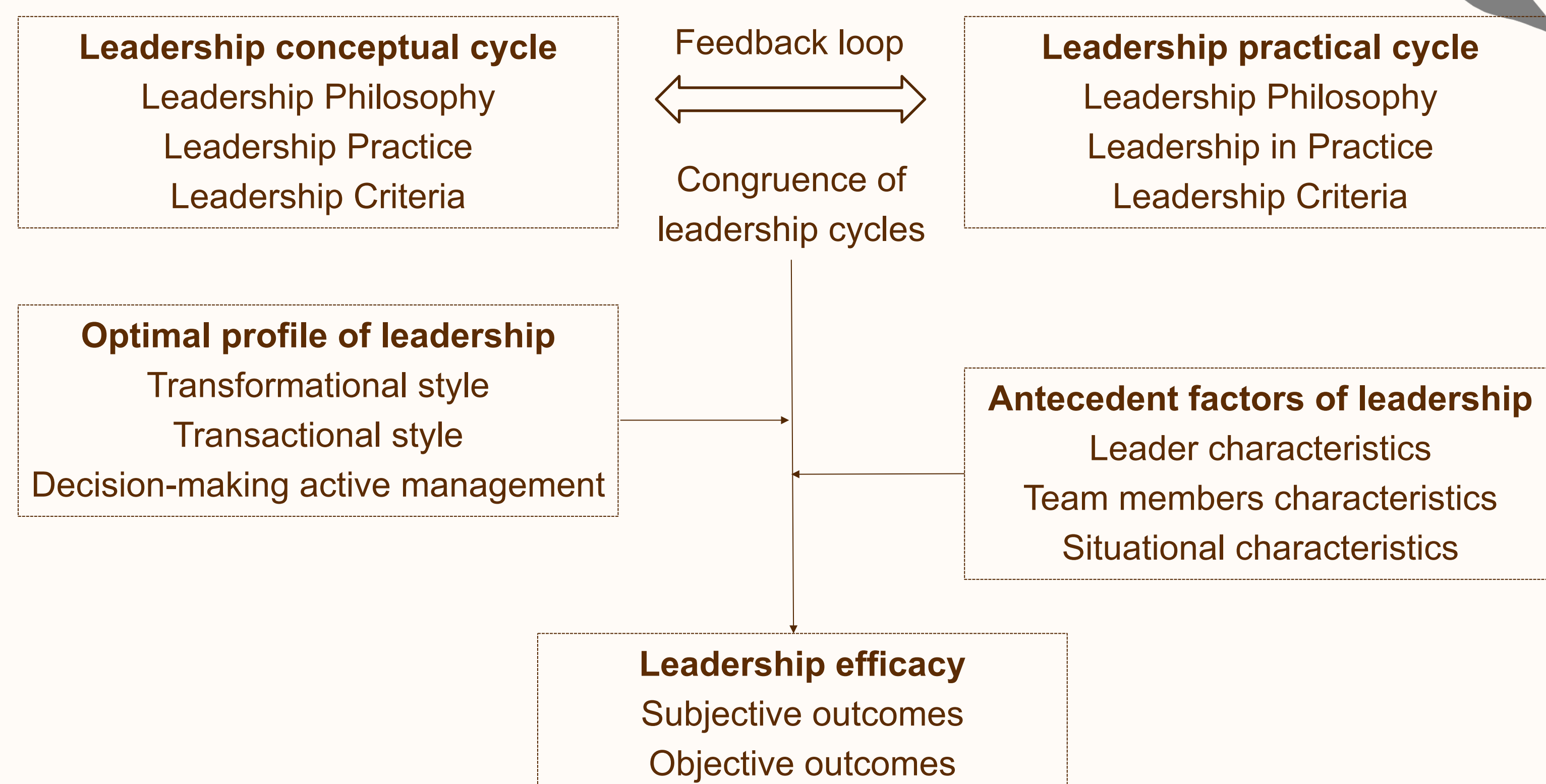


Figure 1. Leadership Effectiveness Model (adapted from Gomes, 2018)

Method & Results

Participants. 157 volleyball athletes (76% women) playing at junior (41%) and senior (59%) levels ($M_{age} = 19.41$, $SD = 3.84$). Also, 43% of athletes were working with the current coach for over a year.

The sample also included 14 coaches (93% men) aged between 20 and 54 years old ($M = 40$, $SD = 10.59$) and with professional experience varying from 2 to 30 years ($M = 15.93$, $SD = 8.13$).

Results: Athletes vs. Coaches. Both athletes and coaches perceived that coaches need to communicate their ideas better on a daily basis (philosophy), need to increase their behaviors that aim to implement that philosophy (practice), and also need to evaluate more effectively the success of their philosophy and practice behaviors (indicators).

| | Leadership Philosophy | | Leadership Practice | | Leadership Indicators | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| | Athletes | Coaches | Athletes | Coaches | Athletes | Coaches |
| Reduce | 30(20%) | 2(17%) | 22(15%) | 4(29%) | 15(10%) | 4(29%) |
| Maintain | 49(32%) | 3(25%) | 31(21%) | 0(0%) | 47(30%) | 2(14%) |
| Increase | 73 (48%) | 7(58%) | 97(64%) | 10(71%) | 93(60%) | 8(57%) |

Results: Leadership efficacy. The results are in accordance with the theory: when athletes' perceive their coaches to be highly congruent in terms of leadership philosophy, practice and indicators, they are more satisfied with their leadership and perceive higher performance (collective).

| | Lower congruency | Higher Congruency | df | F | p | η_p^2 |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------------|------------|
| Satisfaction with leadership | | | | | | |
| Ability utilization | | 4.81(1.13) | 1,152 | 2.29 | .132 | .02 |
| Strategy | | 4.90(1.34) | 1,152 | 12.53 | .001 | .08 |
| Personal treatment | | 4.88(1.26) | 1,152 | 3.22 | .075 | .02 |
| Training and instruction | | 4.92(1.30) | 1,152 | 9.52 | .002 | .06 |
| Sport performance perceptions | | | | | | |
| Individual | 2.73(0.91) | 2.83(0.89) | 1,154 | 0.44 | .506 | .01 |
| Collective | 2.64(0.95) | 2.96(0.97) | 1,154 | 4.48 | .036 | .03 |

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

- The results provide reinforce the idea that leadership cycles are important to explain the efficacy of coaches.
- Athletes and coaches perceive a need for coaches' to be more clear in their ideas, on how to put their ideas into practice and how they evaluate their ideas and behaviors of leadership. It means that coaches need to explain their ideas better, and to establish action plans to implement those ideas. These action plans are maximized when coaches' ideas are important to athletes. Coaches also need to rethink how they monitor the success and efficacy of those action plans.
- This study is one of the firsts to empirically test the Leadership Effectiveness Model, and to provide evidence to the assumption that higher congruency amongst leadership philosophy, practice and indicators, increase leadership efficacy. Indeed, athletes who perceive their coach to be highly congruent on their leadership cycles reported higher satisfaction with leadership (in terms of strategy, and training and instruction) and in terms of collective sport performance.
- Future studies should test the leadership cycles congruence in multiple contexts, as well as to broaden their design to include the test of other factors included in the model; specifically, to test the moderator role of leadership styles and antecedent factors (leader, member, and context characteristics).

FUNDING