

DEMOGRAPHIC AND BEHAVIOURAL TRAITS OF COACHES PREFERRED BY FEMALE ATHLETES IN TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES IN CENTRAL REGION OF KENYA.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to establish demographic and behavioural traits of coaches preferred by female athletes in teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya. This study investigated female athletes' preference for male or female coaches, youthful or elderly coaches, coach leadership behaviour, coaching experience, personal relationship with the coach, the coach ability to motivate, and feedback and encouragement from the coach. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The target population for the study comprised female athletes in certificate and diploma teacher training colleges. Stratified random sampling technique was used to obtain the sample size. The teacher training colleges were stratified into two strata; certificate teacher training colleges and diploma teacher training college. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 50% certificate teacher training colleges. Since there was only one diploma teacher training college, it was purposively selected. The study selected 444 (21.6%) respondents from the two randomly selected certificate teacher colleges and the one diploma training college. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to code and analyze the data. The data were summarized into descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages. The results were presented in the form of tables. The hypotheses were tested using Wilcoxon signed ranks test at significance level of 0.05. The study results revealed that female athletes differ in their preference for male or female coaches and also youthful or elderly coaches. The coach leadership behaviour, coaching experience, personal relationship with the coach, the coach ability to motivate, feedback and encouragement of the coach were all found to be behavioural traits of coaches preferred by female athletes. As a result, the researcher has recommended having an assistant female coach when a male coach is coaching female athletes, coaches engaging in coaching behaviours to which female athlete is receptive, and the management of teacher training colleges addressing the demographic and behavioural traits of coaches preferred by female athletes.

Key words: *Demographic characteristics, behavioural traits, coaches and Female Athlete*

INTRODUCTION

Research generally indicates that females participate in sports for different reasons as compared to males and may respond to coaching techniques differently as well (Stewart & Taylor, 2000; Sherman & Hume, 2002). Coaching behaviour that has been traditionally acceptable, permissible or seen as possible with all athletes in the past may seem rude, unfair, or not encouraging enough by female athletes today (Sherman & Hume, 2002). As noted by Hoiness, Weathington and Cotrell (2008), Weinberg & Gould, 1995 and Pendleton (2001), there are some demographic and behavioural traits of coaches that are preferred by female athletes.

The type of leadership behaviour displayed by the coach can have a significant effect on the performance and psychological wellbeing of female athlete (Woods, 2001; Wooldridge, 2001). As noted by Woods (2001), female athletes prefer a democratic coaching style which includes participation in decision-making. Female athletes are unwilling to follow a directive without knowing the reasons behind the directive (Selders, 2010). According to Stewart and Taylor (2000), other factors affecting female athlete's performances in sports are the athlete's perception of coaching competence and coaching behaviours. Researchers argue that female athletes who are not provided with clear positive feedback regarding their performance lack self-confidence (Cox, 1990; Wooldridge, 2001). Research generally indicates that over-bearing displays of emotions turn off majority of female athletes (Woodridge, 2001; Frey, Czech, Kent & Johnson 2006). Pendleton (2001) argues that coaches who believe in yelling should do it sparingly and should direct it at the group rather than the individual.

According to Hoiness et al., (2008), the age difference between the female athlete and the coach is an important determinant of coaching effectiveness. As noted by Justis (2010), female athletes prefer young coaches since they are athletic, fit and smart. According to Suinn (1994), an elderly sport coach is loved by female athletes and is seen as an extended father figure.

Research generally indicates that coaching of female athletes is influenced by the coach-athlete relationship. Female athletes' preferences for same -sex or opposite -sex coaches have been examined and factors taken into consideration include the level of athlete's comfort in disclosure (Frey, Czech, Kent & Johnson, 2006; Weinberg & Gould, 1995), capability of being a role model (Lyle, 2007; Coakley, 2009; Laker, 2002) and the level of knowledge and ability to motivate (Frey et al., 2006). Weinberg and Gould (1995) argue that female athletes need to establish personal relationships with coaches. Indeed, female athletes need to nurture a family- like camaraderie with teammates, coaches and prefer a friendly and more respectful atmosphere in which to train (Pendleton, 2001). According to Lavalley, Kremer, Moran and Williams (2004), a coach's influence will vary by such variables as age, gender, physical maturity and sporting experience.

In Kenya, female athletes in teacher training colleges are coached by teachers drawn from Physical Education Departments in their respective colleges and talented teachers in sports from other departments. In addition, some teacher training colleges hire external coaches. However, scholars and researchers have highlighted some demographic and behavioural traits preferred by female athletes such as preference for male or female coaches, preference for youthful or elderly coaches, coach leadership behaviour, coaching experience, personal relationship with the coach, ability to motivate of the coach, feedback from the coach and encouragement from the coach (Krotee & Butcher, 2007; Stewart & Taylor, 2000; Lavelley et al., 2004; Wuest & Butcher, 1995). It is in the light of this situation that this study was designed to assess the

demographic and behavioural traits preferred by female athletes in the teachers training colleges in the central region of Kenya. This paper therefore, discusses the demographic and behavioural traits preferred by female athletes in teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

- i. To determine the female athletes' extent of preference for;
 - (a) Male or female coaches
 - (b) Youthful or elderly coaches
- ii. To determine the female athletes' most preferred coach-leadership behaviour.
- iii. To find out the extent to which female athletes preferred the following coach behaviours: coach leadership behaviour, coaching experience, personal relationship with the athlete, the coach ability to motivate, feedback and encouragement from the coach.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

Ho₁ – There would be no significant difference in female athletes' preference for female or male sports coaches.

Ho₂ – There would be no significant difference in female athletes' preference for youthful or elderly sports coaches in teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya.

Methodology

The research adopted the descriptive survey research design. The variables were studied without manipulation or introducing any control group. The location of the study was central region of Kenya. Central region was chosen as the area of study because it has a cross-section of various levels of teacher training colleges. These colleges include both certificate and diploma teacher training colleges. The population for the study comprised female athletes in public teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya. There are five public teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya. Four are certificate teacher training colleges and one is a diploma teacher training college. There are a total of 2056 female students in the five colleges; 1733 in certificate teachers training colleges and 323 in diploma teacher training college. The sample size was obtained using stratified random sampling procedure. The teacher training colleges were stratified into two strata; certificate teacher training colleges and diploma teacher training college. A proportion of 50% of certificate teacher training colleges was randomly selected using simple random sampling technique. The sample size for certificate teacher training colleges was therefore 2 (50%). Since there was only one diploma teacher training college in central region of Kenya, it was purposively selected. A proportion of 50% of female athletes from each of the colleges was then selected using simple random sampling. The study selected 444 (21.6%) respondents from the two randomly selected certificate teacher colleges and the one diploma training college. According to Hinton (1995), a proportion of 20% sample size is acceptable in surveys.

Research Instrument

The study used the questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection. A questionnaire is very useful as it eliminates bias since respondents are given the same questions (Burton & Bartlett, 2009). The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher. However, it was validated by the academic staff in the Department of Physical and Health Education of Kenyatta University. Pre-testing of the instrument for data collection was conducted prior to the main study. Both certificate and diploma teacher training students were

represented. The certificate teacher training college used in the pilot study was not included in the actual research. A few athletes in diploma teacher training college were used in the pilot study but were not included in the main study. In diploma teacher training college, a pre-test sample of 5% of the total female athletes population was used while in certificate teacher training college a pre-test sample of 3% was used. Normally, the pre-test sample is between 1% and 10% depending on the sample size (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The pre-testing was conducted to help determine the suitability, appropriateness and clarity of the questionnaire items in addressing the variables under investigation and at the same time determine the reliability of the instruments.

Results

Table 1 indicates that certificate category had the highest number of respondents (336, 75.7%) while diploma category had the least (108, 24.3%). A total of 444 female athletes participated in the study.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents in Relation to Category of their Colleges

Category of College	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	336	75.7
Diploma	108	24.3
Total	444	100

Table 2 shows the female athletes' extent of preference for a male or female coach.

Table 2: Preference for Male or Female Coaches

Variable	Not at all		Lesser extend		Very much		Missing from system		Test statistics	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Z	Sig.
Preference for male coach	41	9.2	83	18.7	319	71.8	1	0.2	-7.753	0.001
Preference for female coach	102	23	189	42.6	153	34.5				

It is depicted from table 2 that majority of female athletes (319, 71.8%) indicated that they prefer a male coach, followed by (83, 18.7%) to a lesser extent and (41, 9.2%) who do not prefer male coach at all. To further counter-check the responses given by female athletes, they were asked to give their preference for a female coach. The results are summarized in table 2. It is noted that a higher proportion of female athletes (189, 42.6%) indicated they preferred a female coach to a lesser extent, 153 (34.55%) very much and 102 (23%) not at all.

A Wilcoxon signed ranks test was used to examine the results of the preference for male or female coach. The results are summarized in table 2. A significant preference of one gender as coaches was found in the results ($Z = -7.753$, $p = < 0.001$). This was based on positive ranks. It is evident from the descriptive analysis that a larger proportion of the female athletes (71.8%) indicated preference for male coach than those who

favoured female coach (34.5%). Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in female athletes' preference for female or male sports coaches was rejected. This implies that the gender of the coach has a significant influence with regard to coaching of female athletes. The interpretation from this finding is that to ensure effective coaching of female athletes, the teacher training colleges should hire and employ more male coaches than female coaches. The current findings regarding female athletes' preference for a male or female coach are in agreement with those by Frey et al., (2006) who concluded that female athletes prefer a male coach to a female one, citing such factors as males coach's greater level of knowledge, knowing what it takes to be successful and having more respect for him. Frey et al., (2006) further argue that since majority of coaches are men, this could help explain the female athletes' preference for male coaches.

Table 3 below shows the female athletes' extent of preference for youthful or elderly coaches.

Table 3: Preference for Youthful or Elderly Sport Coaches

Variable	Not at all		Lesser extent		Very much		Test statistics	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	Z	Sig
Preference for youthful coach	47	10.6	76	17.1	321	72.3	-9.098	0.000
Preference for elderly coach	141	31.8	179	40.3	124	27.9		

Table 3 indicates that most female athletes (321, 72.3%) very much preferred youthful coaches, 76, (17.1%) to a lesser extent and 47, (10.6%) not at all. It is evident from table 3 that a larger proportion of female athletes (179, 40.3%) prefer elderly coaches to a lesser extent, 141 (31.8%) not at all and 124 (24.9%) very much.

A Wilcoxon signed ranks test was used to examine the results of the preference for youthful or elderly coaches. The results are summarized in table 3. A significant preference for one set of age (youthful or elderly) as coaches was found in the results ($Z = -9.098$, $P = 0.000$). This was based on positive ranks. It is evident from the descriptive analysis that the largest proportion of female athletes 321 (72.3%) indicated preference for youthful coaches compared to those who indicated the same view for elderly coaches 124 (27.9%). Therefore, the null hypothesis that there would be no significant difference in female athletes' preference for youthful or elderly sports coaches in teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya was rejected. The finding suggests that the age difference between the female athlete and the coach has a significant influence with regard to coaching of female athletes. This implies that the teacher training colleges should hire and employ more youthful games tutors and sports coaches to coach female athletes. These findings indicating that female athletes prefer youthful coach concur with the works of Justis (2010) who contends that female athletes prefer young coaches since they are athletic, fit and smart.

Table 4 shows the female athletes' extent of preference for male or female coaches as role models.

Table 4: Preference for a Male or Female Coach as Role Model.

Variable	Not at all		Lesser Extent		Very Much		Test Statistics	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	Z	Sig
Preference for male coach as role model	71	16	122	27.5	251	56.5	-0.774	0.439
Preference for female coach as role model	76	17.1	138	31.1	230	51.8		

Table 4 shows that the largest proportion of female athletes (251, 56.5%) prefer a male coach to be their role model to a large extent, 122 (27.5%) to a lesser extent and 71,(16%) not at all. To further counter-check the responses given by female athletes, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they prefer a female coach to be their role model. It is evident from table 4 that majority of female athletes (230, 51.8%) indicated they prefer a female coach to be their role model to a large extent, 138 (31.1%) to a lesser extent and 76 (17.1%) not at all. From the results, it is thus clear that majority of female athletes in teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya prefer both male and female coaches to be their role models. However, it is evident from the descriptive analysis that a larger proportion of female athletes (56.5%) indicated preference for a male coach to be their role model than those who favoured a female one (51.8%).

To test whether there was any significant difference in the extent of female athletes' preference for male or female coach as role model, a Wilcoxon signed ranks test was used to analyse the results. The results are summarized in table 4. No significant difference was found ($Z = -.774$, $P = .439$). This was based on positive ranks. This implies that there is no significant difference in female athletes' preference for male or female coach as role models. For example, from the descriptive analysis, 56.5% indicated preference for male coach to be their role model which compares very well with 51.8% who indicated the same view point for a female one. The results imply that games tutors and sports coaches of either gender should portray the right mode of training as female athletes' enumerates them as role models. This may be because besides being trained as athletes, they are also training as future games tutors and sports coaches in schools.

Table 5 below shows the female athletes extent to which they were comfortable sharing their personal problems to male or female coaches.

Table 5: Extent of Comfort in Sharing Personal Problems to a Male or Female Coach

Variable	Not comfortable		Comfortable		Very comfortable		Total		Test statistics	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Z	Sig
Comfortable when sharing personal problem to male coach	160	36	133	30	151	34	444	100	-3.970	0.000
Comfortable when sharing personal problem to female coach	103	23.2	100	22.5	241	54.3	444	100		

Table 5 shows that a higher number of female athletes (160, 36%) were not comfortable sharing their personal problems with a male coach, 133 (30%) were comfortable and 151 (34%) were very comfortable. To further counter-check the responses given by female athletes, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they are comfortable sharing their personal problems with a female coach. From table 5, it is noted that most female athletes (241, 54.3%) indicated they were very comfortable sharing their personal problems with a female coach, (103, 23.2%) not comfortable and (100, 22.5%) comfortable.

To test whether there was any significant difference in the extent of female athletes comfort in sharing personal problems with male or female coach, a Wilcoxon signed ranks test was used to test the results. The results are summarized in table 5. A significant difference was found in the results ($Z = -3.970$, $P = 000$). This was based on negative ranks. This implies that there is a significant difference in female athletes' extent of comfort in sharing personal information to a male or female coach. For example, it is evident from the descriptive analysis that a larger proportion of female athletes (54.3%) indicated that they are more comfortable in sharing their personal problems with a female coach compared to those who indicated the same view of male coach (34%). This implies that while coaching female athletes there is need to always have a female assistant coach whenever female athletes are being trained by a male coach so that she will be able to handle their personal problems. In addition, the female coach will offer the much needed information with regard to personal problems and issues surrounding the female athletes. The results also implies that the teacher training colleges should hire and employ more female sports coaches and tutors so that female athletes can have more coaches whom they can disclose their personal problems to thereby ensuring they enjoy their training programs and sessions. These findings of female athletes comfort in disclosure are in agreement with those of Frey et al., (2006) which also reported that female athletes were more inclined to discuss personal information with a female coach. Frey et al., (2006) study further found that the female athletes can discuss anything about sport, certain plays and tactics with male coaches without discussing with them any personal problem.

Table 6 below shows the extent to which female athletes feel intimidated by the presence of a male coach.

Table 6: Intimidation by Presence of Male Coach

Variable	Not at all		Lesser extent		Very much		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Intimidation by presence of male coach	238	53.6	136	30.6	70	15.8	444	100

It is evident from table 6 that majority of female athletes (238, 53.6%) are not at all intimidated by the presence of a male coach, 136 (30.6%) to a lesser extent, while 70 (15.8%) very much intimidated. This implies that female athletes are comfortable while being coached by male coaches and are not intimidated by their presence. The current findings are in contrast to those of Frey et al., (2006) who found that many of the female athletes are intimidated by the presence of a male coach.

Table 7 below shows the extent to which female athletes prefer the following coach leadership behaviours; democratic, autocratic, social support, positive feedback and training and instruction.

Table 7: Preference for Various Coach Leadership Behaviour

Coach leadership behaviour	Not at all		Lesser extent		Very Much		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	Democratic	5	1.1	68	15.3	371	83.6	444
Autocratic	335	75.5	85	19.1	24	5.4	444	100.0
Social Support	13	2.9	43	9.7	388	87.4	444	100.0
Positive feedback	6	1.4	19	4.3	419	94.4	444	100.0
Training and instruction	8	1.8	60	13.5	376	84.7	444	100.0

It is evident from table 7 that majority of female athletes (371, 86.6%) prefer democratic coach leadership behaviour, 68 (13.3%) to a lesser extent, while 5 (1.1%) not at all. The largest proportion of female athletes (335, 75.5%) does not at all prefer autocratic coaching leadership behaviour, 85 (19.1%) to a lesser extent, while 24 (5.4%) very much. In addition, most of the female athletes (388, 87.45%) prefer social support coach leadership behaviour, 43 (9.7%) to a lesser extent, while 13 (2.9%) not at all. It is also evident from table 7 that majority of female athletes (419, 94.4%) prefer positive feedback coach leadership behaviour, 19 (4.3 %) to lesser extent, while 6 (1.4%) not at all. Furthermore, majority of female athletes (376, 84.7%) prefer training and instruction coach leadership behaviour, 60 (13.5 %) to a lesser extent, while 8 (1.8%) not at all.

From the descriptive analysis, it is evident that positive feedback coach leadership behaviour has the highest percentage in terms of level of preference (94.4%) and thus is the most preferred by female athletes in teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya. It is also evident from descriptive analysis that the least preferred coach leadership behaviour by female athletes in teacher training colleges in central region of

Kenya is autocratic coach leadership behaviour. This implies that while coaching female athletes, it may be necessary for the coach to engage in coaching behaviours to which female athlete is receptive. Also, since positive feedback had the highest percentage in terms of level of preference, this finding suggests that games tutors and sports coaches in teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya should reinforce their female athletes by recognizing and rewarding good performance. Further, the finding indicates that female athletes should also be involved in decision making regarding the mode of training rather than being dictated upon by the coach as the study results in deed shows that autocratic coaching behaviour is the least preferred by them. These findings are in contrast with those of Frey et al., (2006) whose majority of participants in their study approved authoritarian style of coaching utilized by male coaches as it aided in keeping them focused. The findings are also in contrast to those of Nazarudin et al., (2009) whose study results indicated that the female athletes' preferred coach leadership behaviour is social support. However, Nazurudin et al., (2009) investigated both male and female athletes' preference for coach leadership behaviour and this could have influenced the results. However, the findings of this study are in agreement with those of Young (2010) whose study found out that female athletes seem to be satisfied when coaches emphasize training and instruction as well as positive feedback.

Table 8 shows the respondents' views of other behavioural traits of Coaches preferred by female athletes.

Table 8: Other Behavioural Traits of Coaches Preferred by Female Athletes

Variable	Unimportant		Important		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Extent to which coaching experiences is important to you	32	7.2	412	92.8	444	100
Extent to which personal relationship with the coach is important to you	56	12.6	388	87.4	444	100
Extent to which ability to motivate of the coach is important to you	14	3.2	430	96.8	444	100
Extent to which feedback from the coach is important to you	11	2.5	433	97.5	444	100
Extent to which encouragement of the coach is important to you	14	3.2	430	96.8	444	100

Table 8 shows that majority of female athletes (412, 92.8%) indicated that coaching experience is an important aspect of coach-athlete relationship while 32 (7.2%) indicated that it is not important. This implies that to ensure good coach-athlete relationship with female athletes, games tutors and sports coaches should be knowledgeable about the activity they intend to coach female athletes. This finding is in agreement with Frey et al., (2006) results, which found that the female athletes view a good coach as one who is able to perform the skill and have more than adequate knowledge about the sport. The current findings are also in line with those of Stewart and Taylor (2000) who note that some factors affecting female athletes' performances in sports are the athlete's perception of coaching competence and coaching behaviour.

It is evident from table 8 that majority of female athletes (388, 87.4%) indicated that personal relationship with the coach is an important aspect of coach-athlete relationship while 56 (12.6%) indicated it is not important. This finding of the study suggests that games tutors and sports coaches should understand that female athletes value personal relationship with coaches and thus should create good interpersonal relationship with them. The finding also implies that while coaching the female athletes, games tutors and

sports coaches should also address and relate well with them in a friendly manner. The finding confirms the results of Frey et al., (2006) which found out that female athlete ranked the coach ability to relate well to athletes and understanding athletes' feelings as two of the top three desirable characteristic of a coach.

Table 8 shows that majority of female athletes (430, 96.8%) indicated that the ability of the coach to motivate is important aspect of coach-athlete relationship, while 14 (3.2%) indicated it as being unimportant. This implies that motivation is an important aspect of coach-athlete relationship. The finding therefore suggests that games tutors and sports coaches should motivate female athletes during coaching in order to encourage them to acquire the various sporting skills. This finding also tallies with the literature by Pendleton (2001) who posits that it is important for female athletes to feel comfortable with team mates and coaches who should also motivate them to achieve desired performance.

It is evident from table 8 that the largest proportion of female athletes (433, 97.5%) indicated that feedback from the coach is an important aspect of coach athlete-relationship, while 11 (2.5%) indicated it as being unimportant. This implies that feedback from the coach is an important aspect of coach-athlete relationship. The finding therefore indicates that those responsible for coaching female athletes should give them feedback regarding their performance. The current finding is in line with the literature of Wooldridge (2001) who argue that it is necessary to provide continuous feedback and encouragement to assist the female athlete in their skill development.

Conclusions

- i. Female athletes in the teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya prefer male coaches to female ones.
- ii. Female athletes in the teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya prefer youthful coaches to elderly ones.
- iii. Female athletes in the teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya prefer to have both male and female coaches as their role models.
- iv. Female athletes in the teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya are more comfortable sharing their personal problems to female coaches.
- v. Female athletes in the teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya are not at all intimidated by the presence of male coaches.
- vi. The coach leadership behaviour, coaching experience, personal relationship with the coach, ability of the coach to motivate, feedback from the coach and encouragement from the coach are all important behavioural traits preferred by female athletes in the teacher training colleges in central region of Kenya.

Recommendations

In light of study findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

- i. There is need for management of the teachers training colleges to always have a female assistant coach whenever female athletes are being trained by male coach. This is because according to the study results, female athletes are only comfortable sharing their personal problems to female coaches, a factor that should not be ignored during training for the sake of psychological wellbeing of female athletes. In addition, the female assistant coach, by being a female, will also provide the much needed information in dealing with a female athlete.
- ii. Coaches should engage in coaching behaviour to which female athlete prefers.

- iii. There is need of training teachers/tutors who double as coaches on methodology of coaching that equips them with knowledge on the behavioural traits of coaches preferred by female athletes.
- iv. The management of Teacher Training colleges should cater for the demographic characteristics of coaches through hiring and also providing the coaches preferred by female athletes.

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