

Impact that Team Relationships and Trust with Coach have on a Professional Soccer Team

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Abstract

Coaches of professional sports teams should maintain a positive relationship with their athletes, teams, and their fans. Specifically, the relationship between a coach and athletes has an impact on the trust in athletes. Likewise, the relationship between a coach and fans has an impact on the trust in the fans. Also, the relationship between a coach and the team has an impact on the trust in the team. The purpose of this study is to identify the correlation between the team relationship and professional soccer team coaches' trust in their team loyalty. Specifically, the team relationship was classified into the following multiple aspects: relationship between a coach and players; relationship between a coach and fans; and relationship between a coach and the team. Afterwards, the correlation between the relationship, trust towards each player, fans, or the team, and team loyalty was identified. To accomplish the objective, 100 directors and coaches of domestic professional soccer teams were surveyed during the 2013 season. First, in terms of team relationship and trust with professional soccer team coaches, fan-coach relationships had a positive impact on the trust towards fans. The player-coach relationship had a positive impact on the trust towards players. The team-coach relationship had a positive impact on the trust towards the team. Second, in terms of trust towards fans, players, and the team, the trust towards fans had no impact on the trust towards the team. However, the trust towards players had a positive impact on the trust towards the team. Third, the findings on the correlation between mutual trust and loyalty towards the team are as follows. The trust towards fans and players had no impact on the loyalty towards the team. However, the trust towards the team had a positive impact on the loyalty towards the team.

Keywords: Mutual Trust, Team Loyalty, Team Relationship

1. Introduction

Coaches for professional sports teams should maintain a positive relationship with their athletes, teams, and their fans. Specifically, the relationship between a coach and athletes has an impact on the trust towards athletes. Likewise, the relationship between a coach and fans has an impact on the trust towards the fans. Also, the relationship between a coach and a team has an impact on the trust towards the team.

When a professional soccer team coach 'teaches' soccer players, or 'coaches' them, he or she needs skills and knowledge; it is professional knowledge. A discussion of

the teaching cannot exclude the importance of a coach's character and his or her relationship with athletes. In other words, coaches should go beyond their professional knowledge to understand their athletes and know how to deliver the knowledge. Therefore, forming a close relationship between a coach and players is a critical factor that connects them; one important psychological factor that serves as an important parameter in interpersonal relationship is trust.

Given that the capabilities of athletes can determine the success or failure of sports teams, the goals of an organization and individual athletes should be carefully handled to maximize the organizational effectiveness².

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Organizational and personal goals are two elements of the performance by members of sports organizations. Furthermore, House and Baetz⁷ argued that the essence of leadership plays a crucial role in the influence of each organizational member. Thus, they stated that autonomous participation of members should be encouraged through interactions between members and the organization to accomplish the common goal.

The level of trust in a coach has a critical impact on the outcome of games. It is especially true among athletes with little experience or younger athletes. However, building trust between a coach and athletes is not a simple matter. Trust is formed through complex interaction between the following factors: human factors involving a coach and athletes, and environmental factors. It leads to a basis for trust formation, which is done through continuous and positive interactions between a coach and athletes.

The purpose of this study is to identify the correlation between the team relationship and professional soccer team coaches' trust in their team loyalty. Specifically, the team relationship was classified into the following multiple aspects: the relationship between a coach and players; the relationship between a coach and fans; and the relationship between a coach and the team.

This study is aimed at identifying the correlation among professional soccer team coaches' relationships with their teams, mutual trust, team satisfaction, and team loyalty. In line with the objective, the following hypotheses were established.

1.1 Correlation between Team Relationship and Mutual Trust

The relationship involving professional soccer team coaches can be explained based on the concept of organization-public relationship. Numerous studies have explored the concept, based on the relationship between an organization and the core public. Specifically, there are also studies that explored the relationship within an organization based on the organization-public relationship. One of the studies that identified the correlation between the relationship and trust was conducted by Grunig and Huang⁵; they introduced a 3-stage model involving the organization-public relationship. In view of the correlation, they explained the following variables: mutual controllability, satisfaction, and reliability.

Through a study on service corporations, Yoo Jae-woo²¹ found that public relationship had an impact on trust. Also, a study conducted by Ryu Seong-don, Cho Seong-gyun, Kim Jong-kyung, and Cha Myeong-hwan¹⁷ on taekwondo schools led to the following conclusion. Among the service quality factors, the following related to public relationship had a positive impact on trust: mutual controllability; reliability; dedication; community contribution; familiarity. The findings suggest that organization-public relationship can affect trust.

Therefore, the following hypotheses were established as to the relationship among the coach, athletes, fans, and the team, and their correlation with trust. It was based on the findings from the preceding studies regarding the following: correlation between the organization-public relationship and trust.

Hypothesis 1. A coach's relationship with the team affects mutual trust.

Hypothesis 1-1. Coach-athlete relationship affects the trust towards athletes.

Hypothesis 1-2. Coach-fan relationship affects the trust towards fans.

Hypothesis 1-3. Coach-team relationship affects the trust towards the team.

1.2 Correlation among a Coach's Different Versions of Trust towards Athletes, Fans and Team

A coach's trust towards the athletes and fans is probably related to the trust towards the team. Such correlation can be inferred from the findings of preceding studies. In particular, Lee Kye-sok¹¹ found in his study on gyms that trust in instructors affects trust in a gym. It indicates that trust in a person can affect other related things. The concept of trust has been explored by many other studies. Lee Nak-gw¹² found that trust in a store is correlated with trust in a salesperson. Park Jin-yong¹⁶ found that trust in a company affects trust in its employees.

The findings lead to the following conclusion: A coach's trust in athletes and fans can affect trust towards the team. Therefore, the following hypotheses were established as to the relationships among different versions of trust in athletes, fans, and team.

Hypothesis 2. Trust in athletes and fans affects trust in the team.

Hypothesis 2-1. Trust in athletes affects trust towards the team.

Hypothesis 2-2. Trust in fans affects trust towards the team.

1.3 Correlation between Mutual Trust and Loyalty towards Team

In terms of mutual trust and loyalty, Morgan and Hunt¹⁴ found that trust can apply to consumer relationship. Ganesan⁴ introduced the following concept: members based on trust are more cooperative and achieve better results than those based upon conflict; it helps maintain long-term relationships. In other words, customer trust in a store can lead to customer loyalty, a cooperative behavior.

According to Yoon Seong-Joon, Kim, Joo-ho, and Baek Mi-young²⁰, customer trust has a greater impact on purchase intention than customer satisfaction. The findings indicate that trust is a factor that affects loyalty. It also indicates how a coach's trust in athletes and fans is correlated with loyalty towards the team. Therefore, the following hypotheses were established to determine how trust in athletes and fans is correlated with loyalty towards the team.

Hypothesis 3. Mutual trust affects loyalty towards the team.

Hypothesis 3-1. Coach's trust in athletes affects loyalty towards the team.

Hypothesis 3-2. Coach's trust in fans affects loyalty towards the team.

Hypothesis 3-3. Coach's trust in the team affects loyalty towards the team.

2. Materials and Methods

The subjects of this study are 100 managers and coaches of domestic professional soccer teams working in 2013. As for sampling, 'convenience sampling method,' a method of extracting samples at the time and place convenient for the researcher was used. Among the 100 distributed copies of questionnaire, 74 copies were used as valid samples, excluding those with inappropriate or insincere responses.

In terms of demographic characteristics of the subjects, there were 10 people in their 30s, 41 people in their 40s, and 19 people in their 50s and above. In terms of experience of the coaches, there were 14 people with less

than one year experience, 17 people with 1 to 4 years of experience, and 41 people with at least 4 years of experience. The teams they are affiliated with are as follows: people in Ulsan Hyundai, 4 in Pohang Steelers, 4 in Jeonbuk Hyundai, 4 in FC Seoul, 3 in Suwon Samsung, 4 in Incheon Utd, 4 in Busan IPark, 2 in Seongnam Ilhwa, 9 in Jeju Utd, 4 in Jeonnam Dragons, 2 in Gyeongnam FC, 3 in Daegu FC, 4 in Gangwon FC, and 4 in Daejeon Citizen.

This study has consulted the following studies to use the scales on organization-public relationships, trust, and loyalty: study by^{1,3,14,18}. Based on their findings, the questionnaire for this study was created.

First, 'organization-public relationship' can be defined as the following types: linkage, transactions, exchanges, and interactions between an organization and the public¹. In this study, the scale used for a study by Lee Joon-il, Woo So-young, and Bae Hyun-mi¹⁰ was revised in line with this study. Afterwards, the three sub-factors of organization-public relationship were established as follows: coach-athlete relationship; coach-fan relationship; and coach-team relationship.

Second, 'trust' is an activity for predicting the behaviors of the other party in a relationship. It is the belief that the other party will not engage in unusual behaviors, even upon a new opportunity. Also, trust refers to the belief and confidence in the other party's sincerity¹⁴. In this study, the scale used for a study by Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol¹⁸ and revised by Song Yoon-jae¹⁹ was modified for this study. Afterwards, the three elements of trust were classified into the following: trust in athletes, trust in fans, and trust in team.

Third, 'loyalty' refers to a positive attitude towards a particular brand after buying the products continuously. It can be defined as the result of customers' learning that the brand can satisfy their needs (Assael, 1992). In this study, the scale used by Dick and Basu³, and Lee Yong-gi¹³ was modified and developed into a 5-stage Likert scale. Also, the single concept of this study was established as the loyalty towards a team perceived by a coach.

The collected data was processed through frequency analysis, exploratory factor analysis, and reliability analysis for demographic analysis of the respondents and to explain the survey questions, with PASW Ver. 18.0. Afterwards, AMOS 18.0 was used to conduct a correlation analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling analysis; the purpose was to identify the correlation and directionality of factors with con-

Table 1. Reliability analysis

| | | Cronbach's α |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|
| Team Relationship | Relationship between a coach and fans | .83 |
| | Relationship between a coach and the team | .84 |
| | Relationship between a coach and players | .82 |
| Trust | Trust towards the players | .91 |
| | Trust towards the fans | .86 |
| | Trust towards the team | .94 |
| Team Loyalty | | .77 |

firmed single dimensionality and scales of each research unit and to test the model and hypotheses of this study.

3. Result

To verify the convergent validity and discriminant validity as to all units of this study, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. To improve the questions whose standardized estimate is below .5 and the goodness of fit, 'Modification Index' (MI) was used to refine the scale. As a result, four questions were eliminated.

For empirical analysis, Maximum Likelihood (ML) based on multivariate normality was used. To verify the constructs and whether the variable composition is optimal, the goodness of fit was assessed. The χ^2 value did not meet the standard. There is a study, however, that argues that the structural equation model's goodness of fit indices should be considered, along with other indices, as relative indices, instead of absolute indices⁶. Thus, the following were used to verify the goodness of fit: TLI and CFI (above standard .9) introduced by Netemeyer, Boles, McKee, and McMurrian¹⁵; χ^2/df value (below standard 3) introduced by Kim Gae-soo; RMR and RMSEA (below standard .08). It led to the following results: RMR = .046; TLI = .919; CFI = .935; χ^2/df = 1.451; RMSEA = .079. Those figures satisfied the goodness of fit.

Table 2 and Figure 1 indicate the results of the structural model analysis as to the relationship among the following: team relationship involving professional soccer team coach, mutual trust, and loyalty towards a team.

According to Table 2, χ^2 stands at 282.980 ($df = 205$, $p = .000$), which is not appropriate. As mentioned earlier, χ^2 values are sensitive to the sample size and the structural equation model's goodness of fit indices should be factored in with other indices as relative indices, instead of absolute indices⁶. Thus, additional standards were used to assess the goodness of fit. As a result, the following results were obtained: TLI = .931; CFI = .944; χ^2/df = 1.380; RMR = .065; and RMSEA = .072. Those figures satisfied the goodness of fit. Thus, the hypotheses and models of this study well explain the empirical data.

The findings are as follows.

First, in terms of team relationship and mutual trust between professional soccer team and its coach, fan-coach relationships had a positive impact on the trust towards fans. The player-coach relationship had a positive impact on the trust towards players. The team-coach relationship had a positive impact on the trust towards the team.

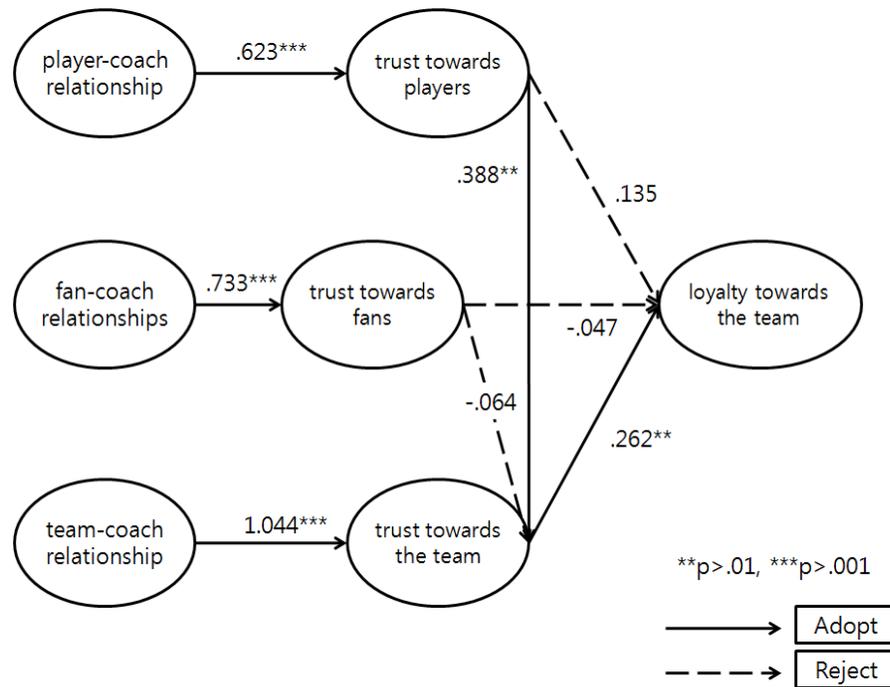
Second, in terms of trust towards fans, players, and the team, the trust towards fans had no impact on the trust towards the team. However, the trust towards players had a positive impact on the trust towards the team.

Third, the results on the correlation between mutual trust and loyalty towards the team are as follows. The trust towards fans and players had no impact on the loyalty towards the team. However, the trust towards the team had a positive impact on the loyalty towards the team.

Coaches play a crucial role in a professional soccer team. When they manage their teams effectively with a service mindset and a sense of unity, they can maximize

Table 2. The goodness of fit of the model

| X ² | df | p | X ² /df | TLI | CFI | RMR | RMSEA |
|----------------|-----|------|--------------------|------|------|------|-------|
| 317.760 | 219 | .000 | 1.38 | .931 | .944 | .065 | .072 |

**Figure 1.** Hypothesis testing results.

team performance and individual abilities of players by garnering high satisfaction and trust. Also, coaches should pursue a strategic approach and leadership based on strong knowledge, competency, and character with the following efforts: setting clear goals and direction that inspire member commitment; inspiring vitality and a sense of pride; gaining trust from members and team employees with a sincere attitude.

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