

Values-Based and Relational Leadership: Athlete-Centered Coaching Strategies for Basketball Team Success

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Abstract

Low team performance in basketball is alarming. I explored the perception of basketball coaches in their leadership and strategies that influence athlete performance. The qualitative descriptive research design, purposive sampling, in-depth interview, and thematic analysis were the paddles of my research journey. Upon reaching the shore, I found that leadership is values-based and relational, while coaching strategies are athlete-centered, which influence the performance and development of athletes. I believe that sports coordinators, basketball coaches, and school leaders may address structural barriers through values-driven coaching, coordinated planning, and balanced academic-athletic support. I have high hopes for multiple linear regression to examine how values-based and relational leadership influence team performance, while simultaneously conducting an Exploratory Factor Analysis to develop and validate instruments.

Keywords: Values-based, relational leadership, athlete-centered, coaching strategies, basketball team success

Introduction

Low team performance in basketball is widely recognized as a global concern that affects athlete development. Across international competitions and organized leagues, I observed that variations in coaching strategies contribute to inconsistencies in team performance. Recent studies further highlight that fluctuations in team output and coaching practices remain persistent issues in basketball systems worldwide, reinforcing the widespread concerns about low team performance and variability in coaching strategies in contemporary basketball (Anderson & Wallace, 2023; Müller et al., 2024; García & Torres, 2023).

In Nigeria, athletes do not prefer inappropriate coaching behaviors (Ali, 2020), while in Japan, I read that authoritarian and fear-based coaching styles are still commonly practiced among elite athletes (Kinoshita & Yamaguchi, 2021). In Norway, neglectful coaching approaches can still be harmful despite strong athlete welfare systems (Kerr et al., 2022). Similarly, basketball settings, inconsistencies in team performance and variations in coaching strategies are reported in the United States (Johnson, 2024), Spain (López & Martínez, 2023), and Australia (Bennett & Clarke, 2024), which led me to understand that low team performance and differences in coaching approaches are common concerns across basketball- playing nations.

Here in the Philippines, I have come across studies showing that differences in coaching styles affect the proper development of athletes (Micua et al., 2024), while poorly guided and inconsistent coaching practices make athlete improvement difficult (Cacayan & Villocino, 2024) and this contribute to uneven progress across regions

(Cagas et al., 2022). In basketball settings, I recognize that school-based and community leagues experience inconsistent team outcomes, particularly in interscholastic and regional competitions (Reyes & Dizon, 2023). I observed that local and national programs exhibit fluctuating competitiveness and cohesion due to differences in coaching strategies regarding motivation, discipline, and team unity (Santos et al., 2024). These observations led me to understand that low team performance and variability in coaching practices remain pressing issues in Philippine basketball.

I agree with Juezan et al. (2022) that many Filipino athletes feel underprepared due to coaching approaches that do not meet their developmental needs, and this reveals a gap in how coaches apply values-based, relational leadership, and athlete-centered coaching strategies to foster athletes' growth and development toward team performance beyond expectations. Given the negative impacts of low team performance on morale, confidence, motivation, funding, and athlete development (Anderson & Wallace, 2023; Müller et al., 2024; Reyes & Dizon, 2023), I conducted this study.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it explores the perceptions of basketball coaches in establishing leadership practices that serve as the foundation for developing athlete-centered strategies for team growth and performance. By understanding these perspectives, my study provides valuable insights that may guide coaching staff in enhancing their leadership approaches, strengthening relationships with athletes, and creating more responsive and inclusive training environments. The findings also help student-athletes, athletic directors, sports organizations, school administrators, and academic coordinators design programs and policies that balance athletic performance with academic responsibilities and overall well-being, while promoting holistic development across physical, emotional, social, and academic domains.

My study also supports the Vision, Mission, and Goals of Holy Cross of Davao College by promoting the formation of disciplined, values-driven, and service-oriented individuals through purpose-driven and relational coaching practices. It aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) by emphasizing mental health awareness and the prevention of athlete burnout, and with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by encouraging educational systems to strengthen support structures that prioritize both learning and athletic participation. Furthermore, the study may contribute to improving coaching practices and athlete development in the Philippines by promoting a balanced, values-oriented, and holistic approach to sports leadership.

Research Question

In this study, I explored basketball coaches' perceptions guided by Bass's Transformational Leadership Theory. It focused on the following research questions:

1. What is leadership for basketball coaches?
2. What are the coaching strategies that influence athlete performance?

Theoretical Lens

My study is grounded on the Transformational Leadership Theory, proposed by Bernard Bass (1985). This theory explains that leaders inspire followers to achieve beyond expectations by influencing their values, motivation, and personal growth. According to Bass, transformational leadership occurs when leaders raise followers' awareness of the importance of shared outcomes and inspire them to perform at higher levels.

Conceptual Paradigm

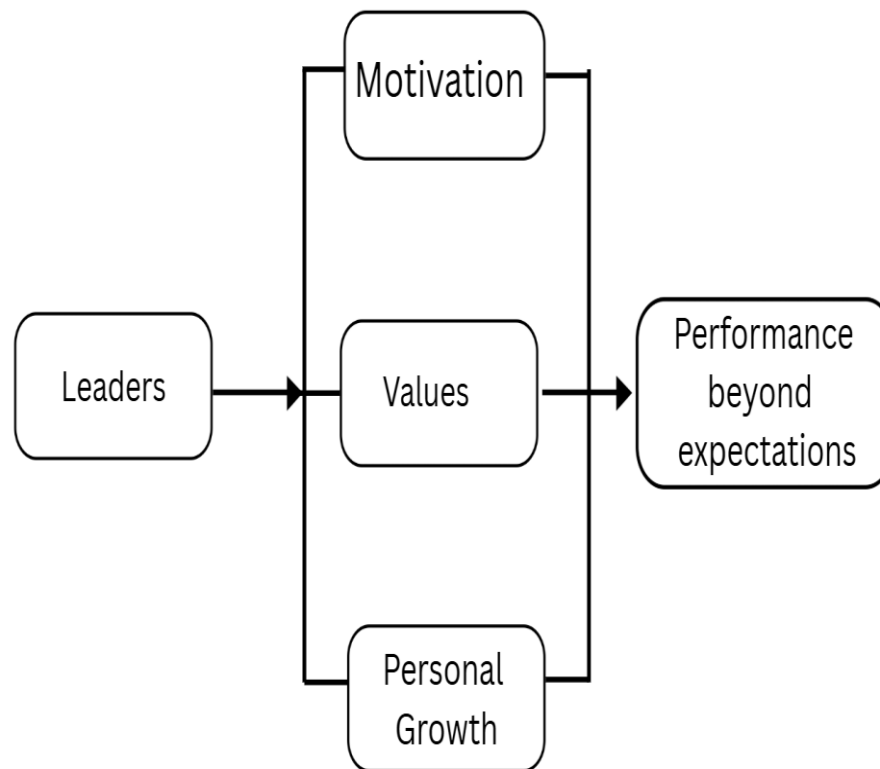


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Transformational Leadership Theory of Bernard Bass (1985)

Assumptions

Guided by Bernard M. Bass's (1985) Transformational Leadership Theory, I assumed that basketball coaches influence and inspire players to achieve beyond expectations by shaping their values, motivation, and personal growth. I assumed that coaches promote athlete development by building trust, encouraging commitment, and motivating players to prioritize collective team goals over personal interests. I further assumed that coaching is a relational and value-driven process in which leaders raise athletes' awareness of shared outcomes, strengthen responsibility, and foster positive behavioral and personal change. Furthermore, I assumed that coaching leadership creates an environment that supports continuous development, meaningful relationships, accountability, and improved team performance.

Methodology

In this chapter, I presented the methodology I used in this study. I discussed the research design, the participants and sampling process, the data-gathering technique I used, the data analysis, and the measures I took to ensure the study's trustworthiness.

Research Design

This study used a descriptive qualitative research design. This method is not just about collecting data; honoring the most powerful insights comes from the source itself. Through this, I can capture their experiences exactly

as they feel them. Descriptive qualitative research presents straightforward accounts of participants' perceptions, experiences, and practices while remaining close to their own words and meanings. As Sandelowski (2023) suggests, this method is uniquely suited for capturing the grit and reality of human behavior. In this study, basketball coaches' perceptions and leadership experiences were described as they inspire and motivate their teams toward success.

Descriptive qualitative research provides immediate, practical insights by maintaining the authentic, real-world context of the participants, in this case, coaches (Colorafi & Evans, 2023). Through semi-structured interviews, I examined specific, relevant details (Annamalai et al., 2022). Furthermore, by bracketing my own preconceptions, I ensured the findings accurately reflected the participants' experiences rather than my own biases (Farrell, 2020; Giorgi, 2009). This methodology allowed for a thorough understanding of how coaching practices influence team performance and athlete development.

Locale of the Study

In this study, participants were basketball coaches from selected public and private schools in Davao City who were actively engaged in team management and athlete development. These schools offer basketball programs and participate in various athletic competitions, which provide a relevant setting for the study. This setting was selected because it provides accessible, suitable participants who can share rich lived experiences related to coaching, leadership, motivation, strategies, and team success.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The participants in my study were five male basketball coaches from Davao City, purposively selected, aged 30 to 50. This selection was appropriate because it allowed me to conduct an in-depth exploration of their experiences while maintaining a manageable scope for qualitative analysis. To ensure authentic and relevant perspectives on coaching leadership, participants were selected based on having at least five years of active coaching experience in public or private schools. Eligible coaches demonstrated active engagement in team development, utilized strategies that exceeded performance expectations, and represented Region XI in the 2025 and 2026 Palarong Pambansa.

To identify the participants of my study, I used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling relied on the researcher's judgment in selecting individuals who could provide the most relevant and meaningful information aligned with the study's objectives (Creswell, 2013). In this study, I deliberately selected basketball coaches in Davao City with significant coaching experience and direct involvement in athlete development, as they were best positioned to offer rich insights into leadership practices and athlete-centered strategies. This approach ensured that participants were selected based on their expertise, experience, and ability to articulate their coaching practices, thereby supporting a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Data Gathering Technique

As a researcher, I adhered to the following procedures to obtain adequate information from the participants:

In this study, I employed In-Depth Interviews (IDI) as the primary method of data collection. IDI is a qualitative approach that involves one-on-one, guided conversations to explore participants' experiences, perspectives, and insights in detail. This method enabled me to engage directly with participants and gain a deeper understanding of their experiences in basketball coaching, yielding rich, comprehensive data.

A validated semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions was used to facilitate the interviews, allowing probing and follow-up. This approach enabled participants to freely express their thoughts while maintaining focus on the research objectives. I used audio recordings to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data.

(Annamalai et al., 2022), which were later transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes related to coaching practices and experiences (Creswell, 2013).

Data Analysis Technique

In this study, Colaizzi's (1978) method of phenomenological data analysis was used to identify, analyze, and interpret themes from basketball coaches' perceptions (Wirihana et al., 2018). This method was appropriate for the study because it enabled me to explore the meanings participants attached to their coaching experiences and leadership practices. The analysis was anchored in Bernard Bass's (1985) Transformational Leadership Theory, with particular focus on influence, motivation, and personal development in coaching.

The data analysis followed several steps. First, I familiarize myself with the data by repeatedly reading the interview responses in the transcription. Second, I extracted the significant statements related to the participants' coaching experiences. Third, I formulated meanings from these statements and organized them into themes and subthemes. Fourth, I reviewed and refined the themes to ensure consistency and accuracy. Fifth, I synthesized the findings into a description that captured the essence of the participants' perception. Finally, I conducted member checking to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of my findings.

Colaizzi's method was useful in this study because it provided a systematic and rigorous approach to analyzing qualitative data while preserving the authenticity of the participants' narratives. It also supported a theory-based interpretation that helped explain how basketball coaches' leadership practices reflected transformational leadership principles and influenced athlete development and team performance.

Trustworthiness

In conducting this study, I strictly adhered to the ethical standards outlined in Republic Act No. 10532 and the guidelines of Holy Cross of Davao College's Society for Moral Integration and Legal Ethics (HCDC-SMILE). I secured ethical approval through the SMILE Certificate and authorization from the official ethics review body of Holy Cross of Davao College, ensuring compliance with accepted research standards. I also obtained informed consent from the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) of the Schools Division of Davao City, as well as from the respective school principals and participants, before conducting the study.

I upheld trustworthiness in this study by ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability through ethical and systematic practices, as emphasized by Lincoln and Guba (1985). I established credibility by accurately representing participants' perceptions through in-depth interviews, member checking, and prolonged engagement during data collection. I strengthened transferability by providing rich, detailed descriptions of the participants, research setting, and study context, enabling readers to assess the applicability of the findings to similar situations. I maintained dependability through a consistent, systematic research process, including the use of validated interview guides, well-organized documentation, and transparent procedures. I ensured confirmability through bracketing, audit trails, and careful data handling to minimize personal bias and to ground the findings in participants' narratives.

Results

In this section, I narrated my conversation with my participants. At the end of this section, I summarized my findings and presented my modified diagram.

Modified Paradigm

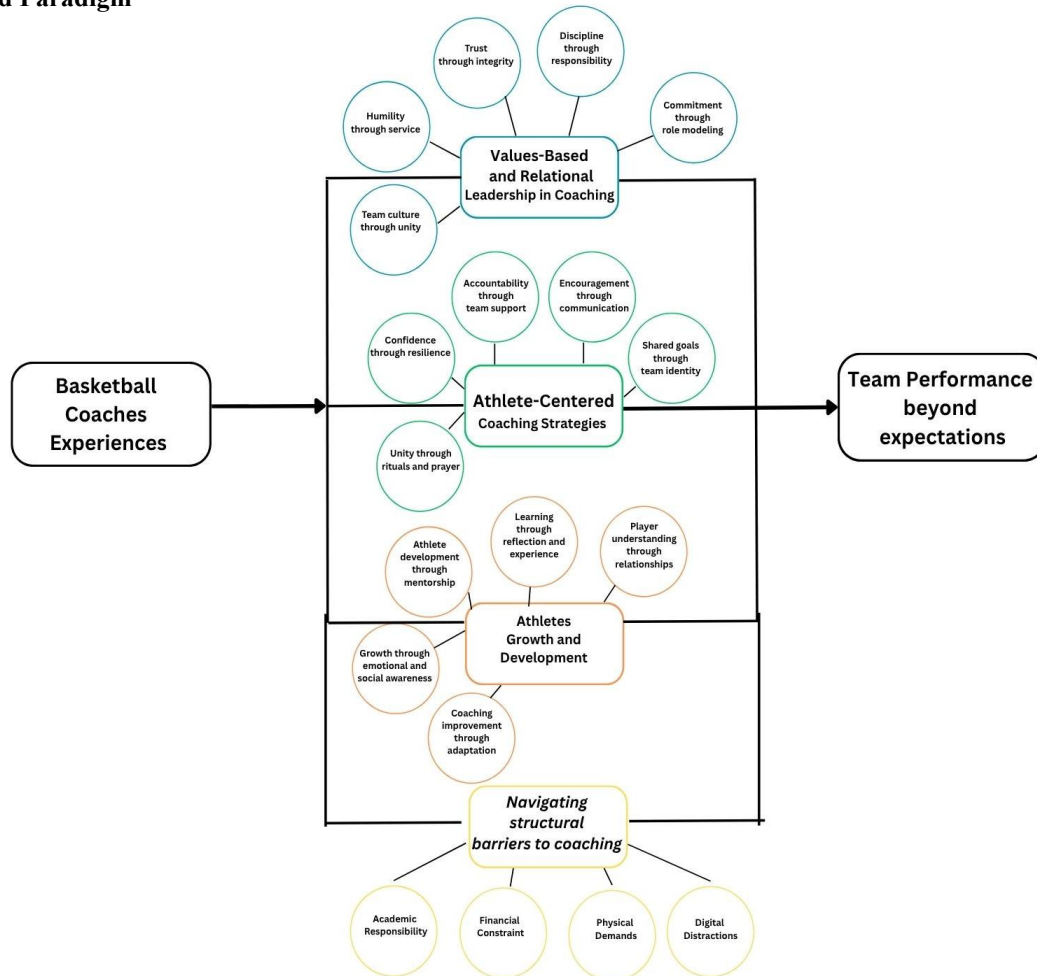


Figure 2. A schematic diagram of the main themes, sub-themes, and emerging themes of Values-Based and Relational Leadership: Athlete-Centered Coaching Strategies for Basketball Team Success

Leadership Experiences of Basketball Coaches

As I listened to the voices of basketball coaches, I heard that commitment through role modelling was not something demanded; it was something they lived and demonstrated every day. One participant shared:

When it comes to inspiring my players, I walk the walk. So, kung unsa akong ginapangayo sa ilaha nga effort, ginapakita pud nako kung unsa ko ka- passionate sa team, dili man nako matudlo kung dili nako buhaton. (When it comes to inspiring my players, I'll walk the talk.' Whatever effort I ask from them, I make sure they see how passionate I am about the team.) -P1–IDI Line No. 7–9, p. 1

The participant added:

So gina make sure nako, always ko naa, mag una jud ko pirmi, ug ginahatag nako akong best para makita nila. (I make sure to inspire my players by being present all the time, always arriving early, and always going the extra mile.) - P1–IDI Line No. 15–16, p. 1

As the stories unfolded, I heard that coaches practiced what they preached, and their actions were the same standards they expected from their players. One participant explained:

Kung unsa ginatudlo nako sa players, ako pud ginabuhay kay dili nako matudlo kung dili ko ana. (Whatever I teach my players, I also make sure I practice it myself. I cannot teach something that I do not do.) -P1–IDI Line No. 778–779, p.19

Similarly, another participant shared:

Kung unsa imong giingon, kinahanglan ikaw pud mosunod para mutuo sila nimo. (As a coach, you have to lead by example. If you say they should be on time, then you must also be on time.) -P2–IDI Line No. 241–243, p. 6

As participants continued sharing their experiences, I appreciated coaching because it was not only about teaching skills or winning games, but also about building responsibility through discipline. One participant shared:

Gisumbag sila sulod sa court, dili sila mubalos, naanad na sila nga magpugong. (Even when they get hit or provoked inside the court, they don't retaliate. They stay composed.) -P1–IDI Line No. 964–967, p. 24

The participant also emphasized:

That's how strict I am about discipline in the team. Kung naay matumba, tabangan dayon sa tanan, kay ing-ana among disiplina. (That's how strict I am when it comes to discipline in the team. When someone falls, all my players help each other.) -P1–IDI Line No. 962–964, p. 24

Coaches also described how discipline became embedded through routine and accountability. One participant stated:

We sacrifice the 'meat' for the week... It's a constant reminder. Para dili makauwaw sa team ug magpabilin ang disiplina namo. (We sacrifice the 'meat' for the week... It's a constant reminder not to do anything that could embarrass the team.) -P1–IDI Line No. 222–224, p. 6

The participant added further:

Maningkamot jud sila ug moabot sayo kay naanad na sila ana. Players always go the extra mile and arrive early. (Maningkamot jud sila ug moabot sayo kay naanad na sila ana. Players always go the extra mile and arrive early.) -P1–IDI Line No. 226–230, p. 6

I noticed that integrity shaped how coaches built trust within their teams. One participant explained:

So, kana siya ma'am kinahanglan jud mo magpaka tinuod lang ka sa tanan labi na sa imuha mga players. Kinahanglan mafeel nila na ikaw sensero jud ka buhat. Naa man bayad or wala bayad. Kung unsa to naa sa imuha heart. Mao jud imuha buhaton. (As a coach, you really need to be genuine, especially with your players. They should feel that you are sincere in what you do, whether there is compensation or not. What matters is what is in your heart.) -P5–IDI Line No. 836–838, p. 21

Trust also emerged as an important part of building culture. Coaches described how leadership was strengthened when relationships were built through consistent guidance and clear expectations. One participant explained:

Mag set jud kag clear na standard og goal,tapos mag build kag trust sa mga tao sa palibot nimo. Maski gamay, padayon lang jud kag build og trust sa ilaha. (Setting clear standards and goals, and building trust with the people around you. always work on building trust with them.) -P2–IDI Line No. 975–976, p. 24

Beyond discipline and leadership, I also discovered that coaching was deeply rooted in passion and service. One participant reflected:

Passion lang jud coaching nako. ang practice namo per day is 4 hours. (Coaching is really just a passion. Our practice lasts 4 hours daily. -P1–IDI Line No. 11–13, p. 1

Another participant shared:

Kung kwarta lang ang apas, niadto na unta ko, pero para nako, serbisyo jud ni siya. (If I were after money, I could have taken those offers, but for me, it's really about having a heart for service.) -P2–IDI Line No. 1056–1057, p. 26

In support, another participant, a coach, added:

Selfless jud siya, dili lang trabaho kundi calling ug passion. (Coaching is really about being selfless, a calling and a passion.) -P3–IDI Line No. 1080–1081, p. 26

One participant further emphasized humility, saying:

For about 15 years in coaching, there has been a clear vision, a culture of consistency, and a commitment to always being humble. Kung unsa naabot dili pwede na imuha team wala na nagtamak sa yuta. Always be humble, kung unsa mana imuha naabot. (In coaching for about 15 years, it's important to have a clear vision, a strong culture, consistency, and always to remain humble). -P2– IDI Line No. 786–787, p. 19

As I continued listening, coaches described how values became part of team culture. The participants also shared that consistency became most visible during moments of victory and defeat. One participant shared:

Maski madaog og mapilde dapat consistent dili jud pwede dili magpasalamat sa mga tao na nitabang og nisupporta. (Whether we win or lose, we must remain consistent. We should never forget to be grateful to the people who helped and supported us.) -P2–IDI Line No. 856–857, p. 21

Another participant added:

Ang mga athlete karun dili pud ka confident as a coach, dili pud ka kuan sa imuha ways ba kung бага passive lang ka ba, dili pud inana ka effective imohang bata. (If you are not confident as a coach and you are passive in your approach, your players will not be as effective.) -P3–IDI Line No. 860–863, p. 21

As I listened to the participants' stories, I heard that coaching was a deeply personal relationship. One participant shared:

With 15 players nga lahi-lahi og personalities, kinahanglan jud nimo sila tun-an ug sabton unsaon pag approach sa matag usa. (With 15 players who all have different personalities, you really have to study each one and understand how to approach them properly.) -P1–IDI, Line No. 373–375, p. 9

Another participant explained:

My difficulty ani maam kay lain-lain jud ang personalities sa akong athletes, ilang beliefs ug values, mao na ako sila ginaduolan isa-isa para masabtan. (My difficulty is identifying the different personalities of my athletes, their beliefs and values. So, what I do is I approach them one by one.) -P4–IDI, Line No. 122–124, p. 4

I noticed that coaching extended beyond basketball instruction. One participant reflected:

Sa akong maam, dili lang jud ko coach, murag teacher pud ko nila, usahay murag amahan, disciplinarian, ug usahay murag guidance counselor nila. (As a coach, I am not just a coach—I am also a teacher. Based on my experience, you are not only a coach, but also like a second father to them, the prefect of discipline, and even a guidance counsellor.) -P2–IDI, Line No. 385–387, p. 10

Another participant added:

Ginapwesto nako akong kaugalingon as amahan sa ilaha aron dili sila mahadlok ug makaduol sila nako anytime. (I set myself as a father figure so that the players will not feel distant from me. I encourage them to treat me like their father.) -P4–IDI, Line No. 482–484, p. 12

As I listened to the participants' experiences, I realized that leadership also required coaches to navigate contextual and structural challenges that shaped how they guided athletes. One challenge involved balancing academic responsibilities alongside athletic participation. One participant explained by saying:

Kailangan jud makapasar sila sa ilang subjects una bago sila makadula. So overall, muabot jud siya sa time management. (They need to pass their subjects first before they can play. So overall, it really comes down to time management.) -P1–IDI Line No. 91–92, p. 3

Financial limitations also influenced coaching leadership, especially within public school settings. One participant shared:

Labi na sa public school maam, ang amua mga players financially challenged jud. So isa sa amoang pinaka challenge kay unsaon pag cope sa ilahang financial needs. (Especially in a public school, our players are financially challenged. So one of our biggest challenges is how to cope with financial needs.) -P3–IDI Line No. 113–115, p. 3

Coaches also encountered digital distractions that affected the athletes' focus and discipline. One participant explained by saying:

Daghan kaayo distractions para sa ilaha. Una na jud ang cellphone. Karun na panahon, mas daghan na silag oras sa cellphone—mag TikTok o mag duwa ug games. (There are a lot of distractions for them. First is their cellphones. Nowadays, kids tend to spend more time on their phones—using TikTok or playing games.) -P2–IDI Line No. 98–100, p. 3

Another participant emphasised that the connection was more effective than the control, saying:

Labi na karun naa na social media ug gadgets, dili jud nimo sila pwede mapugos — kailangan mangita kag paagi unsaon pag connect nila para maminaw sila sa imuha. (With social media and gadgets, you can't just force them—you need to find strategies on how to connect with them so they will listen to you.) -P5–IDI Line No. 764–766, p. 19

As I reflected on the participants' shared stories, the words that most resonated were "motivation," "team identity," "shared leadership," "resilience," and "athlete-centered growth." I witnessed their presence on the court before the interview, where they moved actively during drills, pointed and used firm hand gestures when giving instructions, and maintained an upright posture that showed authority and focus. Their faces were serious, with tight lips and focused eyes when correcting players, and they often nodded or used direct eye contact to ensure understanding. During the interview, I heard their firm yet sincere tone, and saw slightly furrowed brows, narrowed eyes, and a steady gaze when discussing discipline. At the same time, their expressions softened, proud of their leadership despite the challenges they face, as they continue to show dedication, resilience, and genuine care in molding disciplined athletes both on and off the court.

Coaching Strategies That Shape Athlete Performance

Coaches built motivation by creating a strong team identity. One participant explained by saying:

Una, ginamake sure nako na naa jud mi usa ka identity as a team. Ikaduha, naga adjust ko depende sa ilang personalities. (First, I make sure the team has a single identity.) Second, I adjust my approach depending on their personalities.) -P1–IDI Line No. 369–371, p. 9

Another participant shared:

Naa mi tagline: 'WE, NOT ME.' (We have a tagline: WE, NOT ME.) -P2–IDI Line No. 245–246, p. 6

I learned that coaches maintain motivation through regular communication and team routines. One participant shared:

Every night naa mi huddle, ug every morning before magsugod naa pud. Gina remind sila na naa mi diri para mutrabaho, dili magbakasyon. (Every night after everything, we have a huddle. And every morning before the start of the day, we also have one. Through our huddles, they are always reminded that we are here to work, not to relax.) -P1–IDI Line No. 658–661, p. 16

Another participant explained by saying:

Kung mapildi sila, ma-down jud sila, mao na amo silang i-encourage ug ingnan na magpadayon og paningkamot. (When the players lose, they really feel down, so we give them words of encouragement. We remind them to keep working hard and striving toward their goals.) P3–IDI Line No. 327–329, p. 8

The participant described how motivation was strengthened when accountability was shared within the team. One participant shared:

Dili nako kaya ako ra mag motivate sa tanan, mao na musalig ko sa team captain ug chaperone para matabangan ko. (I cannot always motivate all the players on my own, so I rely on the team captain and the chaperone for support.) Through their help, I can maintain motivation within the team. -P4–IDI Line No. 557–559, p. 14

Another participant emphasized teamwork, saying:

One for all, all for one. -P3–IDI Line No. 679–680, p. 17

I noticed that coaches encouraged players to accept results and continue improving. One participant shared:

Dawat mi kung unsa resulta, madaog man o mapildi. Importante makabounce back ug makakat-on sa nahitabo sa duwa. (We accept whatever result comes, whether we win or lose. What's important is that we bounce back and learn from what happened in the game.) -P1–IDI Line No. 850–851, p. 21

Another participant added:

Sa training, naa jud times na dili sila inana ka focus, didto ko musulod ug kasab-on sila para mabalik sa 100% effort. Kinahanglan consistent gikan Monday hangtod Sunday. (During training, there are times when they are off, and that's when I step in and scold them to maintain 100% effort in every practice. Consistency—Monday to Sunday—is required.) -P1–IDI Line No. 583–589, p. 15

Faith also became part of motivation and unity. One participant stated:

Maghatag ko og advice ug ginadasig nako sila na muduol sa Ginoo. (In terms of discipline, I always give them advice and encourage them to seek guidance from God.) -P4–IDI Line No. 259–260, p. 7

Another participant explained by saying:

Mag-ampo mi before ug after sa game, ug magpasalamat sa mga tao sa palibot apil ilang kauban. (We pray before and after the game, and we thank the people around us, including their teammates.) -P4–IDI Line No. 985–987, p. 24

As I listened to the participants' stories, coaches viewed learning as a lifelong process. One participant described himself as someone who never stopped learning, saying:

Throughout the years, I have remained a student of the game. So, every year, every day, I learn. Wala jud ko nagaingon na maayo ko. (Throughout the years, I have remained a student of the game. Every year, every day, I continue to learn. I have never told myself that I am already a good coach.) -P1–IDI Line No. 776– 778, p. 19

The participant also explained that learning required listening and curiosity, noting:

I make sure na maminaw ko, mutuo ko, maging curious ko sa unsay ma-adapt ug ma-improve pa sa among team. (I make sure that I listen, believe, and stay curious about what else I can adapt and improve for our team.) -P1–IDI Line No. 779–781, p. 19

I also saw that coaching involved recognizing when athletes needed care, rest, and understanding. Coaches paid attention to physical and emotional limits because performance could not be separated from well-being. One participant shared:

Naa jud panahon na ang babae dili musipot sa practice tungod sa dysmenorrhea. (There are times when female athletes cannot attend practice due to dysmenorrhea.) -P4–IDI Line No. 926–928, p. 23

Another participant stated:

Kailangan kabalo ka kanus-a sila papahulayon. kung ma-overwork nimo sila, maburn out jud sila. (You need to know when they should rest. If you overwork them, they can burn out.) -P2–IDI Line No. 529–531, p. 13

Coaches learned through reflection and adjustment. One participant shared:

Post and reflect... mag reflection jud mi pirmi para dili na namo gusto balikon tong mga sayop. (After every game, we reflect. You don't want to repeat the same mistakes.) -P3–IDI Line No. 910–911, p. 23

Another participant explained by saying:

Every month, every three months, gina review nako ako sarili ug maghimo ko og changes. (Every month, I reflect on myself and make changes.) -P5–IDI Line No. 567–572, p. 14

As I listened to the participants describe their coaching strategies, I realized that performance was shaped not only by motivation and skill development but also by the external challenges athletes faced. One participant shared that academic requirements influenced participation and preparation. The participant said:

Kailangan jud makapasar sila sa ilang subjects una bago sila makadula. So overall, muabot jud siya sa time management. (They need to pass their subjects first before they can play. So overall, it really comes down to time management.) -P1–IDI Line No. 91–92, p. 3

Financial limitations also affected athletes' preparation and training consistency. One participant shared:

Labi na sa public school maam, ang amua mga players financially challenged jud. So isa sa amoang pinaka challenge kay unsaon pag cope sa ilahang financial needs. (Especially

in a public school, our players are financially challenged. So, one of our biggest challenges is how to cope with financial needs.) -P3–IDI Line No. 113–115, p. 3

Coaches also recognized the physical demands of intensive training, emphasizing:

Sa upat ka oras nga practice kada adlaw, medyo rigid jud ang training, unya dili malikayan ang injuries—part jud na siya sa basketball. (With four hours of daily practice, the training can be quite rigid, and injuries are unavoidable—it's really part of basketball.) -P1–IDI Line No. 87–89, p. 3

Digital distractions were also identified as barriers to focus and discipline. A participant expressed:

Kung training na gani, dapat naka-focus jud sa training. Kung walay rules, posible jud nimo mawala ang imuhang mga players. (When it comes to training, it should really be focused on training. Without rules, you might lose your players.) -P2–IDI Line No. 101–106, p. 3

As I listened to the participants sharing their stories, the words that resonated most were "communication," "encouragement," "shared leadership," "faith," and "adaptability to athletes' needs and challenges." During the interview, I observed their serious, focused faces, steady eye contact, and upright posture as they explained their strategies; they paused, glanced downward or to the side, and made small hand movements, such as tapping their fingers, indicating they were thinking and adjusting their strategies to fit individual athletes. I also noticed prayerful gestures such as slightly bowing their heads, clasping their hands, or looking upward. They became more expressive when discussing motivation and teamwork, smiling, raising their eyebrows, and using wider hand gestures. At the same time, their tone softened, their smiles faded, and their faces grew more serious as they discussed athletes' needs and challenges. They also nodded and used open hand gestures when expressing gratitude.

Through their narratives, I interpreted coaching strategies as dynamic, athlete- centered processes grounded in motivation, reflection, emotional awareness, and adaptability, which enhance performance and long-term development. I was inspired by their dedication to continuous improvement and to supporting athletes beyond performance.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed that basketball coaches demonstrate leadership as a values-driven and relational process, while coaching strategies influence athlete performance.

Leadership for basketball coaches is a values-based, relational process demonstrated through motivation, commitment in role modelling, discipline grounded in responsibility, trust built through integrity, humility through service, and team unity, while also fostering relationships, mentorship, and athlete-centered growth.

Coaching strategies that influence athlete performance include building values through team identity, communication and encouragement, shared accountability, and resilience, as well as promoting personal growth through mentorship, reflection, emotional awareness, and continuous adaptation to athletes' physical, emotional, and social needs.

Discussions

This chapter discusses the findings of this study. I also presented the future directions and implications for practice.

Values-Based and Relational Leadership in Basketball Coaching

My finding show that successful basketball coaches lead by building relationships and grounding their actions in core values. These findings include leading by example, fostering disciplined responsibility, operating with integrity, and cultivating unity, all while mentoring athletes and keeping their growth at the center of the process. Corresponds with Cotterill (2021), who asserts that value-driven, relational coaching leadership—reinforced by trust and communication—substantially improves athlete engagement. Aligning with these findings, Turnnidge and Côté (2022) assert that transformational coaching leadership manifests through role modelling, positive relationships, and a core focus on the athlete's personal and athletic growth. In line with these outcomes, Vella et al. (2023) highlighted that when coaching leadership is grounded in integrity and mentorship, it builds a supportive culture that fosters total athlete development. These studies confirm that effective leadership relies on consistent actions, relationships, and service rather than mere authority. Coaches who embody core values and build deep connections are far better equipped to enhance both athlete performance and personal development.

However, my finding contrast with those of Santos et al. (2022), who emphasized technical competence. While their research prioritized performance-oriented methods, this study redefines leadership as a values-driven, relational process.

Athlete-Centered Coaching Strategies for Athlete Growth and Development

The finding indicate that coaches optimize athlete performance by cultivating shared values, open communication, accountability, and psychological resilience, while simultaneously driving personal evolution through targeted mentorship, emotional awareness, and adaptive responses to shifting athlete needs. This outcome aligns with Vella et al. (2021), demonstrating that constructive coaching practices, specifically encouragement, communication, and interpersonal connection, directly optimize athlete motivation and competitive performance. My findings reinforced those of Turnnidge et al. (2022), who described transformational coaching as promoting team identity, resilience, and responsiveness to individual athlete needs. In addition, my findings echoed those of Nash and Taylor (2023), who emphasized that reflective practice, emotional awareness, and continuous adjustment are essential for improving coaching effectiveness and athlete development. These studies highlight that performance is shaped not only by physical training but also by meaningful interactions, adaptive strategies, and the coach's awareness of athletes' overall well-being.

However, my finding offers a broader perspective of Ford et al. (2022), emphasizing that athlete performance is primarily shaped by deliberate practice, structured training, and repetition. While their study highlighted the importance of technical and skill-based development, my findings highlighted the importance of influencing athlete performance, including building values and promoting personal growth.

Future Directions

Future research may employ multiple linear regression or Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to empirically test the influence of values-based and relational leadership on team performance, specifically examining how athlete-centered strategies and athlete growth serve as mediating variables.

Furthermore, researchers should investigate the role of structural barriers, such as financial constraints and digital distractions, as moderating factors that may strengthen or weaken the impact of leadership on performance outcomes.

Additionally, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) may be conducted to develop a standardized assessment tool based on the themes of role modelling, integrity, and mentorship identified in this study. This validation process must include assessing data suitability using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, utilizing principal axis factoring with ProMax rotation to refine the factor structure, and establishing internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. Establishing this instrument will provide a robust foundation for future studies to measure transformational coaching across diverse athletic settings.

Implications for Practice

The findings of my study highlighted practical ways to strengthen leadership practices and holistic development among basketball student-athletes. Basketball coaches and team leaders may promote a values-based approach by integrating reflective practices such as daily "Post and Reflect" sessions and pre-practice huddles that emphasize team identity. Providing consistent opportunities for reflection and shared accountability may serve as a foundation for building team cohesion, leadership, and athlete-centered development.

To enhance coaching effectiveness, athletic directors and sports consultants may support coaching staff through mentorship programs and professional development initiatives focused on emotional awareness and adaptive leadership. These may include "Coaching-the-Coach" workshops and the collaborative development of context-specific playbooks that guide coaches in addressing challenges such as academic pressures, financial limitations, and digital distractions. These strategies may help strengthen coaches' capacity to respond to the evolving needs of student-athletes.

At the same time, school administrators and academic coordinators may promote balance and well-being by implementing structured "Synergy Meetings" that align training schedules with academic demands. Through coordinated planning, they may create holistic development calendars that prevent athlete burnout while supporting both academic and athletic success. Establishing clear communication and shared responsibilities among stakeholders may further enhance student-athlete support systems.

Furthermore, national coaching associations and sports organizations can strengthen the broader coaching community by organizing leadership summits and integrating transformational leadership modules into their certification programs. These initiatives may focus on emotional awareness, role modelling, and values-based leadership to ensure consistency in coaching practices across different contexts.

My findings suggest that leadership effectiveness and student-athlete development may be enhanced by promoting values-driven coaching and strengthening mentorship and professional development. They may also be supported by ensuring a balance between academics and athletics and fostering collaboration among key stakeholders.

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Appendix A. Questionnaire

Research Title: Values-Based and Relational Leadership: Athlete-Centered Coaching Strategies for Basketball Team Success

Research Question	Interview Questions	Probing Questions
1. What is leadership for basketball coaches? 2. What are the coaching strategies that influence athlete performance?	1.Can you describe your experiences as a basketball coach in inspiring and motivating your team toward success?	1.1 How do you inspire your players to give their best effort during practices and games? 1.2 What challenges have you encountered in motivating your team, and how did you handle them? 1.3 How does your coaching style influence the way you inspire and motivate your players toward success?
	2.What strategies do basketball coaches use to inspire athletes in the pursuit of team success?	2.1 What actions or behaviors do you use to encourage discipline, teamwork, and confidence among your players?

		2.2 How do you adapt your motivational approach when athletes face challenges, setbacks, or losses? 2.3 How do you motivate players with different personalities, skill levels, or attitudes? 2.4 How do you balance encouragement and discipline when motivating your team?
	3.What motivational approaches do basketball coaches use to maintain team success?	3.1 How do you maintain your team's motivation and performance throughout the entire basketball season? 3.2 How do you respond when players' motivation or energy declines during training or competition? 3.3 How do you set, communicate, and reinforce team or individual goals to keep athletes focused? 3.4 How do you adjust your motivational techniques or coaching style based on your players' personalities, needs, or team dynamics?
	4.What leadership qualities do you believe are most important for a successful basketball coach? Why?	4.1 How do your leadership experiences and coaching practices contribute to your effectiveness in achieving basketball team success? 4.2 How do you lead your team during both victories and defeats to maintain confidence and unity? 4.3 How have your past coaching experiences shaped your current leadership style and decisions? 4.4 How do you promote discipline, respect, and teamwork through your leadership approach?