

Relationship between Football Player Satisfaction and Team Cohesion: A Research Study

He Shen, Janaka Low

Malaysia University of Science and Technology (MUST), Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract: This study explores the relationship between football player satisfaction and team cohesion. Through a literature review and theoretical analysis, this paper first reviews the relevant research on football player satisfaction and team cohesion and clarifies the research objectives. Then, using quantitative research methods, this study collects data on football player satisfaction and team cohesion through a questionnaire survey. Statistical analysis tools are used to conduct descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis on the data. The results show a significant positive correlation between football player satisfaction and team cohesion. The findings of this study have important practical implications for improving team cohesion and player satisfaction in football teams.

Keywords: Football Player Satisfaction; Team Cohesion; Relationship Research; Quantitative Research Methods; Statistical Analysis Tools

1. Introduction

Football is undoubtedly one of the most influential and popular sports in the field of competitive sports [1]. As a team sport, the individual satisfaction of football players and the overall team cohesion have a significant impact on the team's performance. In recent years, the relationship between athletes' psychological states and team performance has attracted the attention of sports science researchers and professional club managers [2]. In particular, the interaction between athlete satisfaction and team cohesion is considered a key factor in influencing team success. Athlete satisfaction not only affects their personal career development but also directly influences the team's atmosphere and performance [3]. Team cohesion, as a force that tightly binds members together, is crucial for team sports

such as football that require strong teamwork. Previous research has shown that team cohesion is positively correlated with team performance [4], and higher team cohesion can promote cooperation and communication among athletes, thereby improving overall team performance. However, there is still limited research on how football player satisfaction and team cohesion interact with each other and how this interaction specifically influences team performance.

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between football player satisfaction and team cohesion and how this relationship affects team performance. Through scientific research methods, this paper will define the concepts of satisfaction and cohesion, analyze the underlying mechanisms of their interaction, and hypothesize that this interaction has a positive impact on team performance.

The significance of this research is reflected in several aspects. Firstly, for individual athletes, understanding the factors influencing satisfaction can help them improve their personal career experiences and enhance their well-being. Secondly, for team management, this study can provide practical recommendations on how to enhance team cohesion by improving athlete satisfaction. Finally, for the academic fields of sports psychology and sports management, this research can provide new empirical data for the development of relevant theories.

2. Theoretical Foundation

2.1 Concept and Relevant Theories of Football Player Satisfaction

Football player satisfaction can be understood as the extent to which players are satisfied with various aspects of their team environment, coach support, teammate relationships, and personal development. Satisfaction not only affects athletes' mental states but also directly

relates to their performance and the overall team's achievements [1]. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory [3], satisfaction can be seen as a manifestation of meeting athletes' needs at different levels, including self-actualization, esteem, social relationships, safety, and physiological needs. More specifically, Herzberg's two-factor theory [4] divides the factors influencing satisfaction into motivators and hygiene factors, where motivators (such as achievement, recognition, and the nature of the work itself) directly increase satisfaction, while the absence of hygiene factors (such as salary, working conditions, company policies, etc.) leads to dissatisfaction. In the field of football, research on athlete satisfaction usually focuses on satisfaction with match results, training environment, coach leadership style, and teammate relationships [2]. For example, positive feedback and support from coaches, good communication and mutual respect among teammates, as well as good training facilities and match opportunities, have been proven to significantly enhance athlete satisfaction.

2.2 Concept and Relevant Theories of Team Cohesion

Team cohesion is defined as the tendency of individual members to maintain group membership and group unity [5]. In the field of sports, team cohesion is considered one of the key factors influencing team performance. Carron et al.'s research [6] suggests that team cohesion can be measured from four dimensions: individual attraction to the group (organizational and social dimensions) and group integration (task and social dimensions). Highly cohesive teams usually have more vital team spirit, better communication, and higher levels of cooperation among team members. These factors work together to improve overall team performance and reduce conflicts among team members, enhancing problem-solving abilities.

2.3 Theoretical Relationship between Football Player Satisfaction and Team Cohesion

The relationship between football player satisfaction and team cohesion is interactive. On the one hand, when athletes are satisfied with their team environment, coach support,

teammate relationships, and personal development, they are more willing to contribute to the team, enhancing overall team cohesion [7]. On the other hand, a highly cohesive team provides a positive and supportive environment, further enhancing athlete satisfaction [8]. Research has shown that there is a positive correlation between football player satisfaction and team cohesion. The higher the satisfaction of the athletes, the stronger the team cohesion [9]. This relationship highlights the importance of improving athlete satisfaction and team cohesion, as it not only enhances team performance but also promotes athletes' personal development and well-being.

Based on the above theoretical foundations, we understand that the relationship between athlete satisfaction and team cohesion is not unidirectional but rather a complex interaction process. Through further empirical research, this paper aims to explore this process's specific manifestations and underlying mechanisms, providing a theoretical basis and practical recommendations for effectively improving athlete satisfaction and team cohesion in football teams.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research method, collecting data through a questionnaire survey and using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to validate the research hypotheses. The research design is cross-sectional, collecting data at a single time point and providing a snapshot of the relationship between football player satisfaction, team cohesion, and team performance.

3.2 Participants and Sample Selection

The sample selection was conducted randomly from Chinese university teams at all levels. To ensure the representativeness and generalizability of the research results, the sample includes athletes of different ages, genders, experience levels, and cultural backgrounds. Ultimately, 200 athletes from 10 universities were selected for the study.

Before conducting the questionnaire survey, the researchers explained the research purposes in detail and obtained informed consent from

all participants.

3.3 Measurement Tools and Indicators

The primary measurement tool in this study is a self-designed questionnaire consisting of three parts: the athlete satisfaction questionnaire, the team cohesion questionnaire, and the evaluation of team performance. The athlete satisfaction questionnaire references Martens' model of athlete satisfaction [10], covering aspects such as training quality, coach support, teammate relationships, personal development, and match performance. The team cohesion questionnaire is based on Carron et al. 's team cohesion scale [11], including team unity, goals, assistance, and individual attraction to the team. The team performance evaluation is determined based on objective data, such as win rate, ranking, and goals scored, from the team's past season.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis Methods

Data collection is completed through both online and paper-based methods to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. After data collection, data cleaning is conducted to exclude invalid questionnaires and missing data, ensuring the quality of subsequent analyses. Statistical software such as SPSS is used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize sample characteristics and basic trends of variables. Correlation analysis uses the Pearson correlation coefficient to test the relationship between athlete satisfaction, team cohesion, and team performance. Finally, multiple regression analysis is conducted to explore further the predictive role of athlete satisfaction and team cohesion on team performance.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Descriptive Statistics Analysis

Descriptive statistics analysis reveals the distribution of athlete satisfaction and team cohesion in the sample. The results show that the mean value of athlete satisfaction is 3.58 (on a scale of 1-5), with a standard deviation of 0.64, indicating that athletes are generally satisfied with their own conditions. The mean value of team cohesion is 3.76, with a standard deviation of 0.59, indicating a high level of team cohesion.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis using the Pearson correlation coefficient shows a significant positive correlation between athlete satisfaction and team cohesion ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$), supporting research hypothesis that satisfaction and cohesion are positively correlated. Additionally, athlete satisfaction is significantly positively correlated with team performance ($r = 0.59$, $p < 0.01$), and team cohesion is also significantly positively correlated with team performance ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.01$), confirming research hypothesis 2 that both satisfaction and cohesion are positively related to team performance.

4.3 Regression Analysis

After controlling for basic team characteristics (such as league level and club resources), multiple regression analysis results show that athlete satisfaction significantly predicts team performance ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$), and team cohesion also significantly predicts team performance ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$). This further confirms that satisfaction and cohesion are not only related to team performance but also have an impact on team performance.

5. Discussion and Interpretation

Based on the questionnaire survey and analysis of 200 football players from Chinese university teams at all levels. We found a strong positive correlation between athlete satisfaction and team cohesion. This finding is consistent with Martens' theoretical framework of athlete satisfaction [12], which suggests that when athletes' inner needs are met, they are more likely to feel satisfied with their sports experiences, and this satisfaction can be transmitted to the team atmosphere, enhancing the close connection among team members.

Regarding the predictive role of athlete satisfaction on team performance, the regression analysis results ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$) indicate that satisfaction is an important predictor variable. If athletes are satisfied with their training quality, coach support, teammate relationships, and personal development, they are more likely to perform positively on the field. This could be because higher-satisfaction athletes are more motivated to improve their technical skills and are more willing to contribute to the team.

Similarly, the relationship between team

cohesion and team performance also shows significance in regression analysis ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the positive impact of team unity, team goals, team assistance, and individual attraction to the team on team performance. Carron et al.'s research [15] has also confirmed the promoting effect of team cohesion on team success, and this study further validates this point and demonstrates the influence of team cohesion on football team performance in the Chinese cultural context.

When comparing with previous studies, we find that our results align with most of the research, confirming the generally accepted view that athlete satisfaction and team cohesion have a positive impact on team performance. However, this study is conducted in China's specific cultural background, which may make the effect of team cohesion more significant among Chinese football players. Chinese traditional culture emphasizes collectivism and group harmony, which may enhance the positive impact of team cohesion on team performance.

Furthermore, our study reveals that Chinese athletes seem to value coach support and collective success more than their Western counterparts, possibly due to the concept of "master" in Chinese culture and the high emphasis on collective success. Therefore, even in the sports domain, cultural differences are important factors influencing athlete psychology and team dynamics.

The practical significance of this study mainly lies in providing implementable strategies for club managers and coaches to improve athlete satisfaction and team cohesion, thereby enhancing team performance. For example, improving training conditions, increasing coach-player interactions, establishing clear team goals, and enhancing team atmosphere can effectively enhance athlete satisfaction and team cohesion. Academically, this study enriches the literature in the fields of sports psychology and organizational behavior, especially in the research on team sports in the Chinese cultural context. Through empirical research, this study validates the relationship between athlete satisfaction, team cohesion, and team performance. It proposes the possible influence of cultural differences on these variables' relationships, providing references for future cross-cultural studies.

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that in the Chinese cultural context, athlete satisfaction and team cohesion have a significant positive impact on team performance. The findings not only provide strategies for School coaches to enhance team performance but also offer new perspectives for understanding athlete behavior and team dynamics in different cultural backgrounds. Athlete satisfaction and team cohesion are variables that School coaches can control and improve. By focusing on these factors, teams can gain an advantage in the competitive sports environment. Future research can further explore the differences in these variables among different cultures, sports, and even athletes of different genders, as well as how to optimize athletes' mental states and team performance through practical interventions.

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