

**Ethical Leadership and its Association with Athletes' Well-Being and Self-
Transcendence Achievement Goals**

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Abstract

Soccer players are continuously questioned regarding their social behavior and it is important to understand how to influence them to help peers while ensuring their long-term well-being and participation in sport as well. Since coaches have an influential role within a team, this study was being conducted to investigate the unique contribution of coaches' ethical leadership and emotional support on female Greek soccer players' (n=374) well-being (explained by vitality and flourishing) and achievement goals, particularly self-transcendence goals aiming at helping peers improve competence. Findings imply that although ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support are closely related concepts, they differ in some important parts when it comes to influencing athletes' well-being and self-transcendence achievement goals. Results indicate a positive relationship pattern among coaches' ethical leadership behaviors and emotional support with athletes' well-being. The findings also indicate that these effects of ethical leadership on athletes' well-being might be mediated by self-transcendence achievement goals. This implication can serve as a base for future studies.

Keywords: Ethical leadership, self-transcendence goals, soccer players, well-being

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Introduction

Coaches engage with their athletes on a day to day basis, therefore they have the chance to impact not only their athletes' athletic performance, but their personal development as well (Burke, 2001; Laios, Theodorakis, & Gargalianos, 2003). In the cases of youth age athletes, coaches have an even more significant influence on them than parents or teachers (Robinson, 2002). For this particular reason, it is highly important to investigate the effects of the different coaching leadership styles, in order to better understand how to influence athletes' well-being and promote self-transcendence achievement goals, so that sports can be transformed for the better in the future.

To mention one important example for this, soccer has often received criticism because of the many examples of unethical behavior displayed by the players, such as physical and verbal violence. Furthermore, this sport is constantly confronted for the more and more increasing incidents of racism (Conn, 2015). Since the scientifically proven influence coaches have on athletes mentioned above, the question arises whether coaches could be able to influence their athletes to engage in selfless goal achievement, by engaging in ethical leadership styles. It is an interesting indication to see, if coaches' promotion of ethical behavior, both verbally and through their actions, could influence soccer players to engage in more positive behaviors.

Another important suggestion to address is the importance of well-being. One of the main goals of coaches is to ensure long-term participation of the athletes in sport and help them achieve maximum performance. Research suggests that coaches have the influence to affect the psychological well-being of their athletes, by reducing the risk for burnout and increase their satisfaction both psychologically and in life. Consequently, these positive

effects of the coach on athletes' well-being can significantly contribute to their athletic performance (Yildirim & Koruc, 2021).

Since little empirical research has been done in the past to further investigate this topic, besides self-transcendence achievement goals, the thesis is also focusing on the question, whether ethical leadership of the coach could influence soccer players' well-being as well. By answering this question, some significant changes could be done in soccer teams. Hence, investigating this topic is important, in order to help coaches create the necessary ethical environment for players that could contribute to the well-being and better soccer performance of the athletes.

Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership is highly important in several contexts such as work and sport, since leaders have the power to both positively and negatively influence the moral behavior of the members of their organization (Langvardt, 2012; Mendonca, 2001). Moreover, ethical leaders can be accountable for the satisfaction and well-being of their subordinates (Avey, Wernsing, & Palanski, 2012). For this particular reason, it is important to highlight the meaning of ethical leadership and the role it plays in different contexts.

There are several definitions that try to capture the meaning of ethical leadership, but the most widely recognized definition is that ethical leadership is “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making” (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009, p. 120). This highly accepted definition is grounded in two theories, the social learning theory and the social exchange theory.

The social learning theory by Albert Bandura is used as a base for ethical leadership, since the emphasis is on observing and modelling reactions, behaviors and attitudes (Bandura 1986). Furthermore, this theory highlights that the behavior of the followers is highly influenced by the reward or punishment administered by the leader. Bandura (1991) gave an outstanding explanation to the motivation behind actions. He explained that a certain behavior can have negative or positive consequences that bring different feelings for the individual such as pride. The result of these emotions is that this individual is either more likely or less likely to engage in similar behaviors in the future, and this is how morals are regulated. Furthermore, they are also more likely to continuously engage in certain behaviors when those behaviors result in a positive affect.

The other theory serving as a base for ethical leadership is social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). This can also help to understand more the influence leaders have on subordinates. The theory focuses on reciprocity and explains that when someone acts in a way that is beneficial for the other person, that person might feel pressure and obligation to return the favor (Blau, 1964).

Although ethical leadership is a distinct concept, most research examines it withing transformational leadership. To understand the uniqueness of ethical leadership, first we have to identify the definition of transformational leadership, in order to better differentiate the two concepts. A transformational leader is an individual, who “seeks to satisfy higher needs and engages the full potential of the follower” (Burns, 1978, p.4). The biggest difference between the two leadership styles is that the main focus of ethcial leadership is on influencing followers to engage in more ethical behaviors, while transformational leadership focuses on improving their performance. To better illustrate this difference, some research suggests that transformational leaders can be unethical when they are motivated by selfish reasons (Bass, 1998; Howell & Avolio, 1992). This particular example is a good illustration that ethical leadership should be examined as a separate concept, however few epirical research have been done connected to the topic.

One outstanding research was conducted to further examine this topic, and invented a questionnaire that measures ethical leadership in work settings (Brown, Trevino & Harrison, 2005). The scale consists of 10 items and participants have to answer by using a five point Likert Scale indicated how often the mentioned situations occur (the items are included in the appendicies below). In ordedr to invent the items, the researchers used seven different studies that were testing trait validity, internal coherence and nomological validity. The items of the scale are written in an understable way and they cover the whole domain of ethical

leadership, therefore the scale can be used in several different settings as well. For the thesis the questions needed some readjustment, in order to better examine ethical leadership in sport context and its association with self-transcendence achievement goals and well-being.

Coach's Emotional Support

There are different external factors that are highly influential regarding athletes' performance and well-being. One outstandingly important factor is the role of the coach, who is able to impact athletes' well-being in motivation, and influence whether they will continue engaging in that certain sport or not (Wekesser et al., 2021). Unfortunately, there has been very little empirical research examining the effects of coaches' emotional support on athletes' well-being and self-transcendence achievement goals. On the other hand, there are some other areas where research has already been conducted and from where the results can potentially be transferred to sport settings. One of these researches includes the effects of teachers' emotional support on students and their mastery goals. The findings are highly important since this topic is highly related to coach and athlete relationship.

Teacher support refers to students' perceptions that their teacher cares about and will help them (Trickett & Moos, 1973). Results from this research indicate that when students perceive their teacher as emotionally supportive, they are more likely to ask for help, engage more in self-regulated learning strategies (A. M. Ryan & Patrick, 2001) and show more effort regarding their school work (Goodenow, 1993; Wentzel, 1994). Furthermore, those teachers who show more respect and care towards students, promote intrinsic motivations and support mastery goals (Patrick, Ryan, Kaplan, & Maller, 2005). From these results, a very interesting and important question arises, whether the same findings could be concluded in different settings, such as sports.

Although it is clear, that ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support might be linked with self-improvement goals, they can be also linked with a more selfless goal. This is because of their conceptualization and the ethical part of the ethical leadership, since ethical leadership emphasizes care and concern for others. Furthermore, coaches' emotional support

might be linked with caring for others' development in sport setting, without introducing yet the self-transcendence goals.

Self-Transcendence Achievement Goals

When it comes to research on achievement goals, most of them are focusing on the self and individual competence, self-centeredness (Ames, 1992; Dweck & Elliott, 1983; Elliot & Hulleman, 2017; Nicholls, 1989). However, since soccer is a team sport, the only way players are able to win a certain game and achieve their individual goals is if the team as a whole is competent enough to do so. Individual performance can contribute to a better performance of a team; however the outcome also highly depends on the competence of the other players. For this particular reason, it is highly important to further investigate self-transcendence achievement goals, in order to help athletes engage in actions that can result in improving others' competence and athletic performance. Therefore, the focus of this study is to investigate the connections between ethical leadership and emotional support of the coach, and self-transcendence achievement goals such as self-enhancement and helping others improve their competence, that can lead to better performance of the whole team.

First of all, it is important to define achievement goal. It is “the purpose for engaging in competence-relevant behavior” (Elliot & Hulleman, 2017, p. 44). Most of the time, this definition is used to focus on overcoming others and displaying high normatively defined competence (also named ego-involving or performance approach goals) and developing individual competence (also called task-involving, or mastery or learning goals; Ames, 1992; Dweck & Elliott, 1983; Elliot & Hulleman, 2017; Nicholls, 1989) . However, it can be also defined by focusing on behaviors that are displayed in order to help others and improve their competence. The aim of Self-Transcendence goals is to help building other's competence, by understanding their emotions, feelings and developing empathy towards them (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2004). The goal of Transcendence Achievement Goals is to broaden the definition of achievement goals and instead of only focusing on developing “my” competence and

overcoming others, the focus should be also on developing behaviors that are beneficial for others as well, and builds both “my” and “other’s” competence.

Self-Transcendence Achievement goals will be measured by the SESIST scale (Papaioannou & Krommidas, 2021) that was invented by using the ST goal scales, the Self-Enhancement performance goals, and the Self-Improvement mastery goal measure. The scale consists of fifteen items. Participants can answer by using the 7 point Likert Scale, indicating on what extent they agree with the presented statements. With the help of this SESIST model, soccer has the chance to be transformed for the better in the future and become a more ethical sport.

Well-being

Ensuring athletes' well-being in a certain sport is a highly researched topic, since it is linked to internal motivation and increased desire to long-term participation in that sport (Alvarez, Balaguer, Castillo & Duda, 2012). That is why it is outstandingly important for coaches to create an atmosphere for their athletes that supports well-being, hence their long-term athletic participation. However, it may be hard to define the exact meaning of well-being, especially that it is considered a rather subjective concept.

One definition that can capture its meaning well says that "subjective well-being is a broad category of phenomena that includes people's emotional responses, domain satisfactions, and global judgments of life satisfaction" (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999, p. 277). This definition highlights the importance of happiness, life satisfaction and positive affect. Other definitions try to explain well-being as the combination of arousal and pleasure (Warr, 1987). In work context, it is the satisfaction and functioning of the subordinates and the quality of their lives (Grebner, Semmer, & Elfering, 2005; Warr, 1987). Individuals with higher well-being are more engaged socially, more productive, function better in life, use more desirable coping skills when problems arise and are even associated with higher income than those experience lower well-being (Diener, 2000; Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001).

Well-being is differentiated by two main perspectives: the hedonic and the eudaimonic. Hedonic well-being includes happiness, pleasure and life-satisfaction (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2005), while the other refers to self-growth and personal development and emotional fulfilment due to the challenges one has to face in life (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The six main dimensions of well-being are defined as self-acceptance, positive relations to others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth (Ryff & Keyes,

1995). Moreover, flourishing is also considered as part of well-being, since it is connected to social well-being and includes social acceptance and social contribution and integration (Keyes, 1998; Keyes & Lopez, 2005).

In order to measure well-being, the Flourishing Scale is used together with the Vitality Scale (Diener, Wirtz, Tov, Kim-Prieto, Choi, Oishi & Biswas-Diener, 2010). The first scale consists of eight items. It measures the self-perceived success of participants in areas such as relationships, self-esteem and optimism. The second scale consists of 5 items, and is concerned about both negative and positive feelings an individual has experienced in the duration of the last four weeks. Participants use the seven point Likert Scale to indicate on what extent they agree with each item on the Flourishing scale and use the five point Likert Scale on the SPNE (the items can be found in the Appendices below). These two scales used together are able to conclude a reliable score for an individual's overall well-being. For this particular reason, the thesis using these scales, in order to evaluate the connection between ethical leadership and its association with well-being of the athletes in soccer context.

Ethical Leadership and its Association with Athletes' Well-Being and Self-Transcendence Achievement Goals

Individuals such as coaches, who are in leading position, have a crucial role when it comes to reducing unethical behavior in sport context and creating a safe, ethical environment for the players. (Burton, Welty Peachey, & Wells, 2017; DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010; Grange, 2014). That is why it is a highly important question to address how the ethical leadership of coaches influences their athletes' well-being and self-transcendence achievement goals. This is important for the future to reform soccer and influence players to engage in more ethical behaviors, since this is a highly discussed question nowadays. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to investigate the impact of the ethical leadership of the coach in soccer, in two domains. First of all to see the effects ethical leadership has on players' well-being, and second, to examine in what extent ethical coaching behavior can influence the development of self-transcendence achievement goals of soccer players. Unfortunately, since there is only little empirical research available that has examined ethical leadership in sport context, it is useful to investigate this topic in work settings as well.

On previous pages above, the importance of modelling another individual's behavior, attitude and reaction was highlighted. Furthermore, it was also explained how one's behavior can be shaped through the administration of reward or punishment in exchange for engaging in a certain behaviors (Bandura, 1986). That is why it is important to research, what behaviors displayed by soccer players are reinforced and punished by the coach and how his/her ethical leadership style and moral attitude influences players' overall well-being and self-transcendence achievement goals. Players can observe the coach's behavior, whether it is ethical or not, and his/her reaction to certain situations that they might model later on, in

similar situations. Hence, it is important for the coach to display ethical and positive behaviors, in order to encourage players to do the same.

To further support this idea, there is a study that gives evidence to strengthen the theory. In this research, the findings indicate that the behavior of the followers is highly influenced by the leader. Whether they engage in ethical behavior or not can be determined by the behaviors the leader reinforces and punishes. If the followers are reinforced for engaging in certain ethical behaviors, they are more likely to continue those behaviors in the future (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005; Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003). Furthermore, followers tend to model the behavior of the leader when he/she shows credibility (Brown et al., 2005). If this knowledge is transferred to sport context, it is interesting to find out the impact coaches (as the leaders of the team) can have on their players' ethical behavior, by following ethical principles.

By expressing morals, credible behavior, fairness and trustworthiness, employees are more likely to follow the leaders, because they may feel the obligation to display positive behavior as well (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Furthermore, employees, led by ethical leaders who create a safe environment, are more likely to address conflicts within the organization (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). The same is true regarding addressing misconduct. In a safe environment, employees might be more willing to report unethical behavior compared to an organization that is led by an individual who engages in unethical or questionable behavior and they are also less likely to morally disengage (Sagas & Wigley, 2014). These findings have an important role in sport context as well. In order to ensure long-term participation and satisfaction of the athletes, it is inevitable to create a safe environment for them where they will be able to have the opportunity to address potential issues such as conflicts or hostile behaviors towards each other in the team. These findings are highly important in order to

highlight the importance of ethical leadership not just in work setting but in sport context as well.

Interestingly, ethical leadership can affect subordinates' lives in multiple domains. It does not only influence whether they will engage in moral behaviors in the future, but their overall well-being as well. According to a study conducted with nurses, ethical leadership is associated with trust and those who perceived their leaders as more ethical scored higher on overall psychological well-being (Huang, Qiu, Yang, & Dang, 2021). From this research the question arises if the same findings could be concluded in sport context. For this particular reason, the thesis is interested in the question, whether a coach could influence players' well-being by displaying ethical leadership and creating a safe environment that supports positive behavior for the players.

Several literatures are concerned about the topic how employees are affected by the environment that ethical leaders create. Results of a relevant study concluded that organizations, whose leader is perceived as more ethical, contributes to fewer burnout and workaholism of the employees than an organization with a less ethical leader (Morkevičiūtė & Endriulaitienė, 2017). This knowledge can be highly important transferred to sport context, since it is still a frequently discussed topic in sport psychology to prevent the burnout and overtraining of the athletes, in order to ensure their long-term participation and life satisfaction. Considering the findings mentioned in the previous study, the question arises if the same could be concluded in sport context.

There can be multiple other studies found to support the importance of ethical leadership and its positive effects on subordinates. Researchers investigated the connection between ethical leadership and employees' well-being as well as their work performance. Results showed that a safe environment created by ethical leaders significantly contributes to the well-being of the subordinates. Their work engagement and work performance also

showed a strong connection to leaders who engaged in ethical behaviors and showed positive qualities such as fairness and trustworthiness (Sarwar, Ishaq, Amin, & Ahmed, 2020).

The same phenomenon can be found in sport context as well. Coaching climate can contribute to athletes' psychological well-being through the development of personal and social skills. When coaches create an environment that supports autonomy and positive behavior, athletes experience higher self-esteem, life satisfaction and overall well-being (Cronin & Allen, 2015).

From the findings mentioned above, some questions arise targeting the connection between ethical leadership and self-transcendence achievement goals. According to Solomon Asch (1952), someone who is seeking to fulfill self-interest is motivated to prioritize both the interest of others and the interest of the group/community the individual is part of. This can be outstandingly important when it comes to a soccer team, where the outcome of the match depends on the performance of the whole team. Similar findings can be found in social goals research (Maehr & Nicholls, 1980) and achievement behavior research as well. Ames & Felker (1979) and Johnson and Johnson (2014) explained cooperative, individualistic and competitive goal structures. These structures are highly important, since they help to improve performance and both helping mastery goals and others as well.

Little empirical research has been concerned with the topic of self-transcendence achievement goals, however one scale is quite closely connected to it. According to King (2012), an individual achievement can have significant effects on someone else's improvement in competence. Translated this finding to soccer context, it is important to question what behaviors players need to engage in, in order to result in the improvement of other players' competence as well.

Another interesting question when it comes to self-transcendence achievement goals is empathy, since it is positively associated with some self-transcendence achievement goal

values such as equality and benevolence (Myyry & Helkama, 2001) and it is negatively related to aggression (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2004). Furthermore, empathy is also positively related to prosocial behavior (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). All of these findings are highly important in order to transfer this knowledge to soccer setting. Since empathy is so important when it comes to self-transcendent achievement goals, it is interesting to find out whether ethical leadership style of the coach could help players built it intrinsically, in order to help other players improve their competence and become better as a team.

Self-Transcendence achievement goals and well-being also seem to have a connection based on research. Achievement goal orientation of the players can influence their well-being and whether they will persist or dropout of their sport. For further investigation, it would be beneficial for some of the sports such as soccer, to see if the ethical leadership style of the coach could influence the players for better in order to ensure their well-being and persistence to the sport.

It can be concluded from the different research findings mentioned above that leaders have an influential role when it comes to subordinates. However, it is still an interesting question whether coaches could influence their players' self-transcendence achievement goals, by engaging in ethical leadership both verbally and behavior wise. There is clear evidence, that ethical leadership is highly important regarding employees' behavior in work settings. Leaders performing ethical behaviors can significantly contribute to the decrease of subordinates' moral disengagement. Furthermore, addressing negative affective states to undesirable behaviors of the employees can highly contribute to the reduction of such behaviors (Zhao & Xia, 2019).

Similarly to the findings above, there is evidence from empirical research that children's well-being and self-transcendence achievement goals can be influenced by emotional support (Wekesser et al., 2021). However, this idea has not been examined in sport

setting. Research suggests that teachers' emotional support is highly linked with students' mastery goals that involve self-improvement and learning personal skills (Patrick, Turner, Meyer, & Midgley, 2003) that is strongly connected to self-transcendence achievement goals that the thesis is investigating. Those students, who perceive their teacher as someone who creates a supportive environment with respect, are more likely to focus on mastery goals (Patrick et al., 2003).

Research also indicates, that there is a positive correlation pattern between teachers' emotional support and students' emotional support. Students' emotional support towards peers is an outcome of self-transcendence goals, which is an indirect finding, since students' emotional support to peers is an outcome of self-transcendence goals (Wekesser et al., 2021). Theoretically, self-transcendence goals might mediate this effect of emotional support to peers. Moreover, task related interaction, that is positively related with teachers' emotional support, strengthens the argument of the thesis that this task related interaction is probably an outcome of students pursuing self-transcendence goals.

Since the role and influence of coaches are highly similar to teachers', it is an interesting question to investigate whether the same findings could be duplicated in sport settings as well. For this particular reason, the thesis will focus on the further investigation of the topic.

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Both ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support have a unique contribution in the influence of the well-being of the athletes.

Hypothesis 2: Both ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support have a unique contribution in the influence of self-transcendence achievement goals of the athletes.

Hypothesis 3: The effects of ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support on well-being are mediated by the SESIST goals.

Methods

Participants

The questionnaires were completed by Greek female football players from different age groups (N=374). Participation was voluntary, and those players whose age was under 18 provided written consent from the parents. The study was conducted by following the university ethics committee's approval.

Measures

Coach ethical leadership. In order to measure the ethical leadership of the coach, the items of Brown, Trevino and Harrison (2005) were adapted for athletes instead of employees. Participants indicated their responses on a 5 point Likert-scale.

Coach emotional support. In order to measure coaches' emotional support on athletes' well-being and self-transcendence achievement goals, the teacher emotional support and the mastery goal questionnaire were adapted from school to sport setting (Wekesser et al., 2021). Participants responded by using a 5 point Likert-scale, indicating their preferences on what extent they agree with the presented statement.

Well-being. To measure well-being, two different questionnaires were used. The first one was measuring subjective well-being of the athletes by using the flourishing scale (Diener et al., 2010). Participants' answers on this measure were indicated on a 7-point Likert scale. The other questionnaire (Diener et al., 2010) was measuring the vitality of the athletes during the last month. Participants indicated their responses by using a 5 point Likert scale.

Self-transcendence achievement goals. In order to measure the goals of the athletes and particularly self-transcendence achievement goals, the SESIST measure was used (Papaioannou & Krommidas, 2021). Participants indicated their replies by using a 7 point Likert scale.

The detailed questionnaires and Likert scales can be found below under appendix.

Statistical analysis

In order to test the hypotheses, reliability analysis was conducted to ensure the validity of the results. Afterward, among all the scales Pearson correlation was performed to reveal potential relationships and to see on what extent the variables are related. The aim of the regression analysis was to evaluate the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Hierarchical regression analysis was also conducted to reveal potential mediator effects that can influence the results. All statistical analyses were performed with IBM SPSS Statistics v26, while the p value was set at .05.

Procedure

Data for this study were collected through a questionnaire targeting perceived ethical leadership and emotional support of the coach. Responders participated from Greek female football teams. Athletes responded to the questionnaire online. Their participation was completely voluntary, they were able to stop and drop out of the study at any part they wished to do so. Signed parental and coach agreement was obtained in case of those athletes whose age was under 18. Furthermore, in order to encourage honesty of the participants, confidentiality was guaranteed, since the completion of the questionnaire was completely anonymous.

Results

In order to get the results, reliability analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis were computed. The first calculation was a reliability analysis between the 5 SESIST goals. Results indicated that the alpha for the total scale was equal to .85 that implies a high and strong validity, where all items contribute positively as the table shows below.

After the reliability analysis, Pearson-product moment correlations were conducted among all scales. The findings revealed that there was a positive correlation pattern among ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support with well-being, vitality and flourishing. Here the results indicated that a high relationship can be found between emotional support of the coach and ethical leadership $r(371)=.583, p<.001$. Table 1 displays the correlations between the variables, the mean, standard deviation and scales' Cronbach's alpha. Results show a significant correlation between ST and STC $r(371)=.740, p<.001$ and between SE and SEC $r(371)=.840, p<.001$. As Table 1 shows below, the more we move from Self-Transcendence (ST) to Self-Enhancement (SE), the weaker the relationship becomes, that indicates that the emerged correlation pattern closely conforms to a simplex correlation pattern.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics, means, standard deviations, Cronbach’s alphas and correlations.

		Mean	Std.	Alpha	Pearson Correlations								
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1	Vitality	3.468	.843	.915									
2	Flourishing	5.762	.777	.872	.510**								
3	Ethical leadership	4.309	.477	.872	.248**	.216**							
4	Emotional support	4.368	.574	.820	.213**	.276**	.583**						
5	ST	5.816	.954	.890	.307**	.307**	.344**	.315**					
6	STC	6.362	.817	.882	.307**	.331**	.306**	.321**	.740**				
7	SI	6.336	.794	.845	.308**	.308**	.218**	.262**	.586**	.736**			
8	SEC	5.074	1.091	.817	.206**	.210**	.102	.048	.360**	.314**	.373**		
9	SE	4.437	1.215	.894	.193**	.110*	.052	-.025	.244**	.187**	.279**	.840**	

Note: ST = Self-Transcendence, STC = Self-Transcendence Composite, SI = Self-Improvement, SEC = Self-Enhancement Composite, SE = Self-Enhancement.

** $p < .01$.

Then, five standard multiple regression analyses were conducted using the 5 SESIST goals as dependent variables and ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support as Independent Variables. As shown in Table 3, the 1st regression analysis revealed that the two IVs in combination accounted for significant variance in ST, $R^2=.131$, $p<.001$. Both ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support accounted for significant unique variance in ST.

Results from the 2nd regression analysis revealed that the two IVs in combination accounted for significant variance in STC $R^2=.119$. Only coaches' emotional support accounted for significant unique variance in STC $\beta=.273$, $p<.01$.

Results from the 3rd regression analysis revealed that the two IVs in combination accounted for significant variance in SI $R^2=.075$. Only coaches' emotional support accounted for significant unique variance in SI $\beta=.203$, $p<.001$.

Results from the 4th regression analysis revealed that in SEC only ethical leadership accounted for significant variance, but the total explained variance very low $R^2=.023$.

Results from the 5th regression analysis revealed that no IV accounted for significant variance in SE, $R^2=.015$, $p>.05$. The small but statistically significant standardized coefficient shown in Table 2 is an indication of suppression effect because the bivariate correlation between SE and ethical leadership ($r = .08$) was lower than the standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = .15$).

Table 2. Standard regression analyses of achievement goals on ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support.

IVs	Dependent Variables														
	ST			STC			SI			SEC			SE		
	R ²	β	t.	R ²	β	t.	R ²	β	t.	R ²	β	t.	R ²	β	t.
	.131			.119			.075			.023			.015		
Ethical Leadership		.243	3.75***		.105	1.61		.100	1.5		.172	2.50*		.147	2.13
Emotional support		.162	2.5*		.273	4.18***		.203	3.04**		-.044	-.64		-.116	-1.68

Note: ST = Self-Transcendence, STC = Self-Transcendence Composite, SI = Self-Improvement, SEC = Self-Enhancement Composite, SE = Self-Enhancement.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 3. Hierarchical Regressions.

Independent variables	Dependent variable					
	vitality			flourishing		
	ΔR^2	β	t	ΔR^2	β	t
Step 1	.068***			.081***		
Ethical leadership		.176	2.62**		.123	1.85
Emotional support		.115	1.72		.194	2.91**
Step 2	.073***			.078***		
Ethical leadership		.118	1.79		.069	1.05
Emotional support		.065	.98		.135	2.04*
ST goals (ST + STC)		.174	2.27*		.164	2.16*
SI goal		.088	1.17		.131	1.75
SE goals (SE + SEC)		.092	1.64		.059	1.05

Note: ST = Self-Transcendence, STC = Self-Transcendence Composite, SI = Self-Improvement, SEC = Self-Enhancement Composite, SE = Self-Enhancement.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

We computed a new combined self-transcended goal, which was the average of the pure self-transcendence goal and the self-transcendence composite goal (ST + STC). The new combined self-enhancement goal was computed by the average of the pure self-enhancement goal and the self-enhancement composite goal (SE + SEC).

We computed hierarchical regression analysis, using vitality as dependent variable and entering ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support in step 1, and the three achievement goals (ST combined, SI, SE combined) in Step 2.

In Step 1, ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support accounted for significant variance in vitality $R^2=.068$, $p<.001$. From the two variables, only ethical leadership accounted for significant unique variance in vitality.

Addition of the three goals in Step 2 accounted for additional significant variance in vitality, $\Delta R^2 =.073$, $p<.001$. Only the combined ST goals accounted for unique variance in vitality, standardized beta = .174. Interestingly, the contribution of ethical leadership that emerged in Step 1 was not significant anymore, implying that probably some effects of ethical leadership on vitality might be mediated through ST combined goals.

The hierarchical regression analysis also used flourishing as a dependent variable and ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support in step 1, and the three achievement goals (ST combined, SI, SE combined) in Step 2.

In Step 1, ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support accounted for significant variance in flourishing $R^2=.081$, $p<.001$. From the two variables only coaches' emotional support accounted for significant unique variance in flourishing.

Addition of the three goals in Step 2 accounted for additional significant variance in flourishing, $\Delta R^2 =.078$, $p<.001$. Coaches' emotional support, standardized beta = .135, and

the combined ST goals, standardized beta = .164 accounted for unique variance in flourishing.

Discussion

In this study, the aim was to better understand if ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support have a unique contribution in the explanation of athletes' well-being (explained by vitality and flourishing) and self-transcendence achievement goals. Furthermore, it was also investigated whether these effects on vitality and flourishing are mediated by SESIST goals.

The results indicated that ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support are related concepts. However, although they share a lot of similarities, they also have some important differences; therefore they have to be recognized as unique and separate concepts. The findings support this idea, since the correlation that examines these two concepts (shown above) proves that they are related, however they are not identical, because they share 34% common variance, therefore there is a high proportion of variances that are distinct.

Results also showed that the ethical leadership style and emotional support of the coach perceived by the athletes might influence their flourishing and vitality, hence their well-being. Since the first hypothesis suggested that both ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support have a unique contribution on well-being, the results indicate a partial support for the first hypothesis. This partial support of the hypothesis emerged, since only ethical leadership explains uniquely vitality, while only coaches' emotional support accounts for unique variance of flourishing. The possible reason for these results will be explained in a paragraph below.

The results indicate a partial support for the second hypothesis. Although both ethical leadership and coaches' emotional support seem to have a unique contribution in the influence of self-transcendence achievement goals, only ethical leadership explains pure self-transcendence goals while coaches' emotional support explains mastery and composite self-transcendence goals. The findings imply that the coach has a positive contribution in the

explanation of self-transcendence goals, which means that the more ethical behaviors the coach engages in, and the higher emotional support he provides for the athletes, the more he influences the athletes to adopt and initiate self-transcendence goals such as helping others, collaborating with others, talking positively to others and helping others to improve their competence. A possible explanation for these results might be that since self-transcendence goals include concern for others, it is probably affected by an environment that emphasizes moral and ethical issues. A moral and ethical environment might influence an individual to engage in a more selfless way of thinking that initiate the adoptions of goals which are linked with the well-being of others as well. The coaches' emotional support is also highly linked with an inclusive environment, however when it comes to moving from altruistic goals to more self-centered goals such as mastery goal and composite self-transcendence goals, the emotional support takes higher importance. This is especially true for settings where achievement has higher importance.

In connection with these findings, the results fully support the third hypothesis, since initiating self-transcendence goals might result that the athletes feel higher vitality, more energy, and are happier. These findings can be highly important for the future, because they imply that there is a significant effect of coaches' engagement in ethical behavior and providing emotional support for the athletes, that can affect and help athletes' well-being in long-term. Results imply that those athletes, who perceive the leader as ethical, and emotionally supportive, might facilitate the development of self-transcendent goals. Coaches, who are perceived to engage in more ethical behaviors and emotional support, can increase athletes' vitality, but some of these effects might influence vitality through the self-transcendence goals. One of the possible reasons why engagement of the coach in ethical leadership and emotion support can increase athletes' vitality is because the ethical leader might help them facilitate to initiate self-transcendent goals.

Although results indicate that the effects of ethical leadership might be mediated by self-transcendence goals on vitality, they also show that self-transcendence goals might mediate the effects of coach's emotional support on flourishing. This effect is not clear, therefore further research is needed to examine whether this will emerge again in the future and potentially examine the difference more deeply between vitality and flourishing withing ethical leadership literature.

There have been no studies so far examining the effects of ethical leadership with well-being explained by vitality and flourishing. The results of this study also showed what Papaioannou and Krommidas (2021) have already described in their research, that self-transcendence goals contribute to well-being. However, the results of this study added some new information, that these goals may mediate the effects of ethical leadership on athletes' well-being. Regarding emotional support, the same theory can be confirmed that was mentioned in the paper at the beginning of the thesis that coaches have an important role in athletes' lives, since they have the potential to influence their well-being (Wekesser et al., 2021).

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Appendices



Internal Ethics Committee

Trikala: 6/4/2022
Protocol Number.:1929

Approval of research entitled: "Ethical Leadership and its Association with Athletes' Well-Being and Moral Disengagement"

Scientist responsible – supervisor:
Dr.Athanasios Papaioannou (Supervisor, University of Thessaly),

Main researcher – student:
Adrienn Veisz (University of Thessaly)

Institution & Department:
University of Thessaly, Department of Physical Education and Sport Science

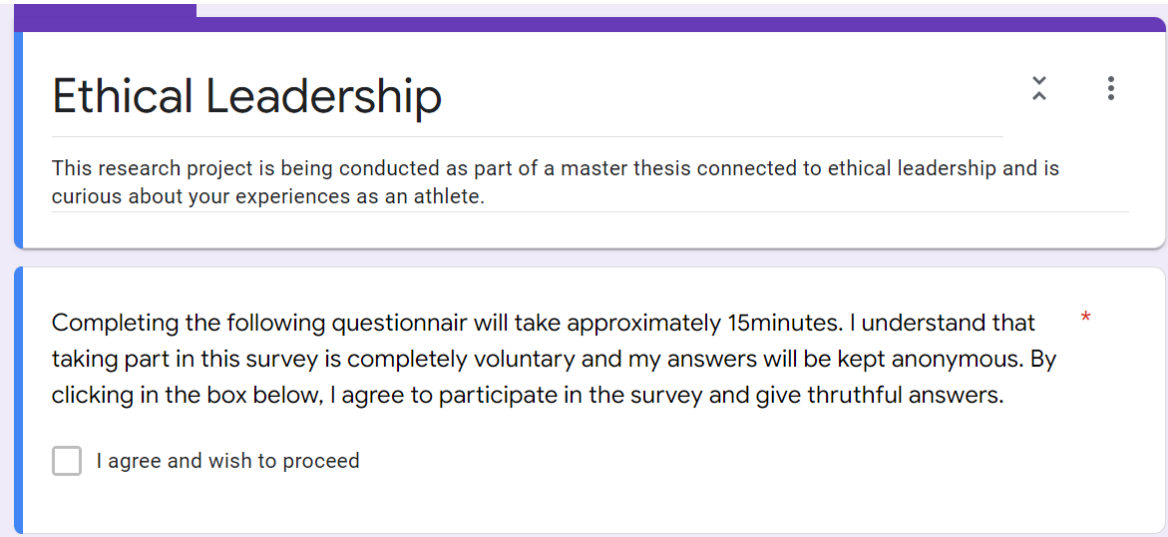
Contact phone: +36309350480
Contact email: veisz.adri.bogyo@gmail.com

The Internal Ethics Committee (IEC) of the Department of PE and Sport Science (DPSS), University of Thessaly, examined the proposal in its 2-2/6-4-2022 meeting and approves the implementation of the proposed research.

The Chair of the IEC – DPSS

Athanasios Tsiokanos, PhD

The questionnaire participants were asked to complete was completely anonymous and all the provided information is kept in confidentiality. At the very beginning of the questionnaire, there was some information provided about the project and participants were required to agree on the consent form. Without this they were not able to proceed to further questions. The consent form and some general information about the questionnaire can be found below.



The screenshot shows a digital consent form with a purple header bar. The title 'Ethical Leadership' is displayed in a large, bold font. Below the title, a short paragraph explains the research project. A second section contains a detailed consent statement, followed by a checkbox for agreement.

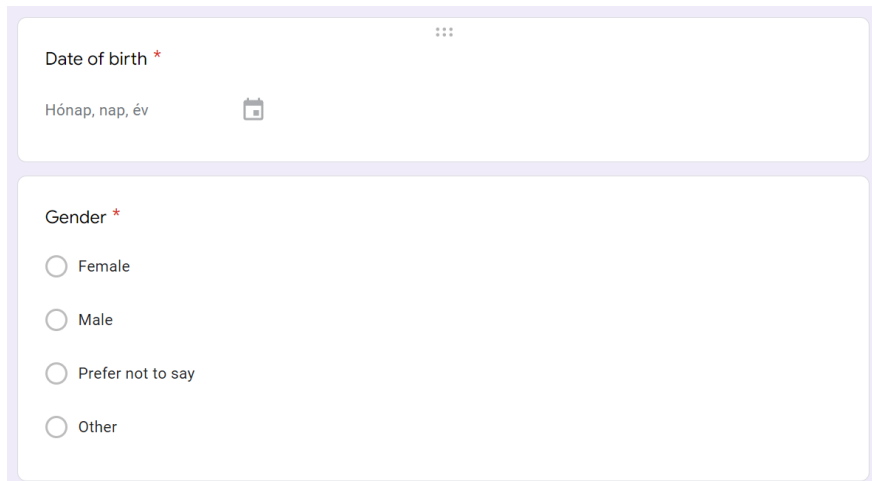
Ethical Leadership

This research project is being conducted as part of a master thesis connected to ethical leadership and is curious about your experiences as an athlete.

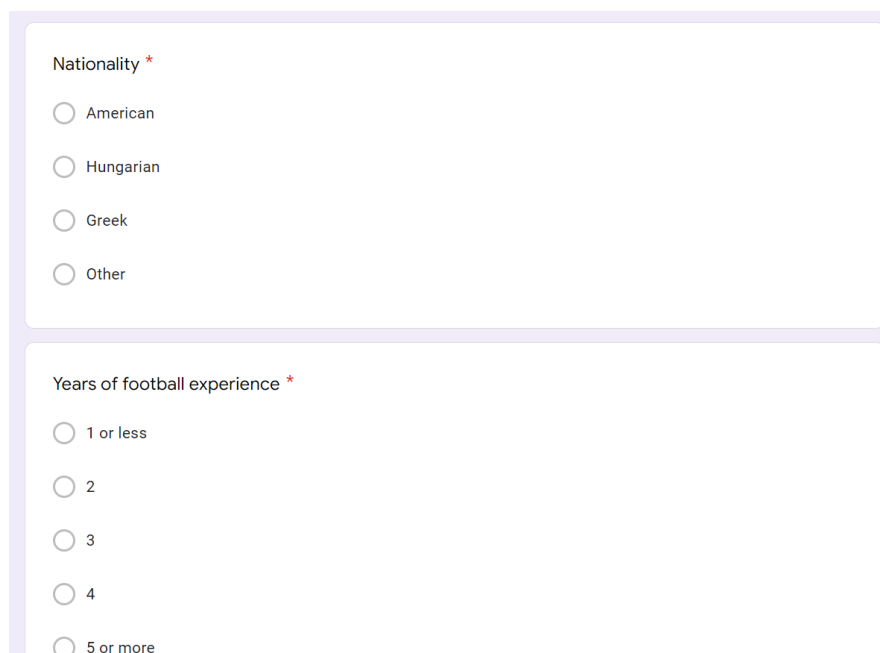
Completing the following questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes. I understand that taking part in this survey is completely voluntary and my answers will be kept anonymous. By clicking in the box below, I agree to participate in the survey and give truthful answers.

I agree and wish to proceed

After the consent form, participants were asked to provide some general information about themselves, such as date of birth, gender, nationality, years of football experience, the number of years they had the same coach, the name of their team and their team level. The potential answers can be seen below.



The screenshot shows two sections of a survey form. The first section is titled 'Date of birth *' and includes a calendar icon and the text 'Hónap, nap, év'. The second section is titled 'Gender *' and contains four radio button options: 'Female', 'Male', 'Prefer not to say', and 'Other'.



The screenshot shows two sections of a survey form. The first section is titled 'Nationality *' and contains four radio button options: 'American', 'Hungarian', 'Greek', and 'Other'. The second section is titled 'Years of football experience *' and contains five radio button options: '1 or less', '2', '3', '4', and '5 or more'.

How many years have you had the same coach? *

- 1 or less
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

The name of your current team *

Rövid szöveges válasz

The name of your current team *

Rövid szöveges válasz

Team level *

- Amateur
- Semi professional - lower division
- Semi professional - middle division
- Semi professional - higher division
- Professional

The third part of the questionnaire was targeting perceived ethical leadership of the coach based on (Brown, Trevino & Harrison, 2005). The questions were transformed from the view of employees to the view of athletes, in order to better understand coaching behavior.

Participants were asked to answer the questionnaire by using a 5 point Likert scale, indicating how often the presented situations occur. The scale can be found below.

Please indicate how often the following situations occur (1-never, 2-rarely, 3-sometimes, 4-often, 5-almost always)

Leírás (nem kötelező)

The questions were the following:

In this team, our coach...

...conducts his/her personal life in an ethical manner

...defines success not just by results but also the way that they are obtained

...listens to what athletes have to say

...disciplines athletes who violate ethical standards

...makes fair and balanced decisions

...can be trusted

...discusses sports ethics or values with athletes

...sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics

...has the best interests of athletes in mind

...when making decisions, asks "what is the right thing to do?"

The fourth part of the questionnaire was targeting the goals of the athletes. The questions were based on the SESIST measure (Papaioannou&Krommidas, 2021). Participants were asked to answer the questionnaire by using a 7 point Likert scale, indicating on what extent they agree with the presented statements. The scale can be found below.

Please indicate on what extent you agree with the following statements (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-slightly disagree, 4-neither agree nor disagree, 5-slightly agree, 6-agree, 7-strongly agree)

Leírás (nem kötelező)

The items of the scale are the following:

In football, my goal is...

To do better than I usually do.

To outperform my teammates.

To help my teammates do better than they usually did before.

All of us to do better than usual, both me and my teammates.

To outperform both my previous performance and the performance of my teammates.

To have better results than I have done in the past.

To perform better compared to my other teammates.

To help my teammates have better results than before.

All of us to become more effective than in the past, both me and my teammates.

To perform well, compared to myself and to others.

To be more effective than in the past.

To perform better than my teammates.

To help my teammates be more effective than they usually were.

Both me and my teammates to perform better results than we have done in the past.

To do better than both my past performance and my teammates' performance.

The fifth part of the questionnaire was measuring the subjective well-being of the athletes. The questions were based on the flourishing scale (Diener et al., 2010) Participants were asked to answer the questionnaire by using a 7 point Likert scale, indicating on what extent they agree with the presented statements. The scale can be found below.

Please indicate on what extent you agree with the following statements (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-slightly disagree, 4-neither agree nor disagree, 5-slightly agree, 6-agree, 7-strongly agree)

Leírás (nem kötelező)

The items of the scale are the following:

I lead a purposeful and meaningful life

My social relationships are supportive and rewarding

I am engaged and interested in my daily activities

I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others

I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me

I am a good person and live a good life

I am optimistic about my future

People respect me

The next part of the questionnaire includes a scale that measures athletes' vitality during the last month (Diener et al., 2010). Participants were asked to answer the questionnaire by using a 5 point Likert scale, indicating on what extent they agree with the presented statements. The scale can be found below.

Please indicate on what extent you agree with the following statements relating to your everyday life in the last month (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree)

Leírás (nem kötelező)

The items of the scale are the following:

During the last month...

...I felt full of vitality

...I had high spirits

...I looked forward to each day

...I nearly always felt alert and awake

...I felt I had a lot of energy

The last part of the questionnaire includes a scale that measures coaches' emotional support perceived by the athletes. The questions were adapted from the teacher emotional support and the mastery goal questionnaire from school to sport setting (Wekesser et al., 2021).

Participants responded by using a 5 point Liker-scale, indicating their preferences on what extent they agree with the presented statement.

Please indicate on what extent you agree with the following statements relating to your everyday life in the last month (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree)

Leírás (nem kötelező)

The items of the scale are the following:

Your coach really understand how you feel about things

Your coach tries to help you when you are sad or upset

You can count on your coach when you need it

Your coach respects your opinion

I like learning during soccer training, even if I make a lot of mistakes

An important reason I play soccer is because I like to learn new things

An important reason I play soccer is because I want to improve my skills