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Assessing Athlete Leadership and its Relationship to Selected Group Dynamic Variables Utilizing a Social Network Approach

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Assessing Athlete Leadership and its Relationship to Selected Group Dynamic Variables Utilizing a Social Network Approach

The current study examined the group dynamic variables of athlete leadership, cohesion, and trust utilizing a social network approach. The participants consisted of an elite team of 22 female hockey players ($M_{age} = 24.64$, $SD = 2.32$). After completing an emotional competence self-reported questionnaire (Short Profile of Emotional Competence; Mikolajczak, Brasseur, & Fantini-Hauwel, 2014), the players were asked to rate each other on six dimensions of transformational leadership behaviors (appropriate role model, fostering acceptance of group goals, high performance expectations, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation), two dimensions of cohesion (social and task), and on four dimensions of trust (benevolence, competence, integrity, justice). The networks were analyzed for their density, centralization, and an autocorrelation was conducted between the networks and the attribute of Emotional Competence. In terms of the network density, the results were consistent, with the highest density being the network for trust (i.e., justice), and the lowest density being the network for athlete leadership (i.e., appropriate role model). Moreover, the centralization of the network presented consistent spread in the players' effectiveness to display the behaviors. The least centralized network was trust (i.e., integrity), while the most centralized were the networks of trust (i.e., justice) and athlete leadership (i.e., inspirational motivation). Finally, for the autocorrelation between Emotional Competence (intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions) and the different networks, the Moran's I index was significant although the results were negligible both positively and negatively. Overall, the presence of homophily was detected for 13 out of the 24 autocorrelations performed.