Leadership- what effect does leadership have on the development and success of professional football clubs, a qualitative study based mainly on the Irish League.

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Abstract

This study is aimed to investigate the effects that leadership can have on the development and success of professional football clubs ,based mainly on the League of Ireland. This study analyzes deeply the relationship between leadership and the effect it can have within professional football clubs. Analysis of this relationship is to significantly understand the different effects it can have on a range of factors within the clubs. Demographics such as age have been influential in this study to investigate whether specific factors influence an individual's approach to leadership. Examples of this type of measurement are influential for the study to provide validity and clarity that benefit the overall study. To measure this , the study utilised a qualitative approach through several one-to-one interviews , along with different types of non-numerical data collections available.The interviews were aimed at footballers and managers , either who are currently playing or who have played in the past , within the League of Ireland. The findings showed that individuals within professional football clubs were positively and negatively affected by leadership based on a range of specific factors. Participants had a range of different views and answers based around the predetermined questions provided to them during the interview process. The findings of the interviews revealed some individuals' similar views on leadership and specific leadership approaches, as well as some very different views that did not correlate with one another. The collected findings also provided the effect and influence that leadership can have on a range of factors within professional football clubs, such as culture.

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1.0 Introduction

The broad range of leadership skills and qualities has resulted in a range of complex and various ranges of leadership styles that has heavily influenced the way in which professional football clubs operate , creating success and growth. In the last several decades , the way in which individuals approach leadership has developed and changed over time. There was an enthusiasm for this development and research began to explore the styles of behaviour that best suited tasks of different kinds(Shehu, Kuriu , Ikonomi , 2019). Leadership in the footballing world has provided opportunities to several football clubs around the world to flourish into new world wide territories. Certain football clubs around the world have benefited from successful leaders which has led to overall success. In today's increasingly competitive conditions , it's essential that football clubs possess individuals with high leadership skills. My current research and success within professional football clubs. Overall leadership in sport has gradually increased in development , providing individuals with new skills and qualities for personal development along with achieving overall objectives set out by the club. Yearly, individuals' findings have provided multiple reasons as to why leadership is so vital in the development of rapidly entering and leaving football clubs , providing new opportunities for upcoming leaders that possess qualities that can influence future success(Schein,2004).

2. Literature Review

In the following sections , relevant literature has been evaluated to construct the main research analysis and results in correlation with research hypotheses. It has revised the relevant literature that relates to the effect that leadership can have on professional football clubs. The research project has also been influenced by relevant literature that relates to leadership effects on sport and organisations.

2.1 The Importance of Leadership in Football Clubs

Specifically , leadership is the process of leading, directing individuals or groups to achieve goals(Shehu, Kuriu, Ikonomi ,2019). Constandt, De Waegeneer, Willem(2018) advocate that the pierced ethical climate of a football club is measured from the perspective of the football players , due to the effect management has within the football club. According to Shehu, Kuriu, Ikonomi (2019), the real behaviour by leaders within football clubs are influenced by certain characteristics such as personality, ability, experience which can influence the overall mindset of the individuals within the football club. The effective leadership of, and within, sports teams has consistently been highlighted to be an important factor impacting upon a range of outcomes including team performance, and team functioning (Cotterill, 2013). Leadership has been shown to be a fundamental factor influencing the performance of sport teams (Cotterill, Loughead,Fransen, 2022).The importance of leadership within football clubs has become more influential as the sport has expanded and grown. Based on the current internal and external environment within a football club , leaders within the club must constantly adjust their mindset based on specific situations that may arise.

The owners and main stakeholders within football clubs have great influence on the overall operation of the club. Morrow,Howieson(2014)have stated that professional football (soccer) in Europe has changed dramatically in the past two decades, with many professional football clubs now being complex businesses. Owners play a vital role in the overall performance and productivity of the club.

 Leaders are constantly exposed to new and challenging situations that demand a high grade of flexibility and know-how(Sauer, 2017). These leaders within football clubs play a very significant role in the lives of each individual affected and play a key role in the overall sport

experience within each club. In relation to literature based on leadership in coaching, Horn (2002) states that effective coaching behaviours result in the athletes reaching: personal achievements, performance goals and positive psychological outcomes. Studies , such as (Williams et al., 2003) state that leadership as provided by the coach plays a very significant role in the lives of athletes and in the athlete's sport experience. In relation to the concept of the effect of leadership in a range of sports, Weinberg and Gould (2003) state that, 'determining what makes effective sports leadership is clearly not a simple process' (p. 213). Acet, Gumusgul ,Isik (2017) states the importance of leadership approaches in the fast growing football industry is an indicator that shows how harmony between coaches and football teams can be used effectively.

James Kouzes and Barry Posner define leadership as "the art of mobilising others to want to struggle for shared aspirations" (Kouzes,Posner, 1987). Leader's attempt to influence the overall culture and performance within a football club , as a recurring focus on specific views and techniques will actively become a daily practice throughout individuals within a club such as players and staff. Yildiz(2021) states that in football and sports organisations, the need for leaders who can manage a group both on and off the pitch has increased tremendously. Sport,as a sphere of human life which is dominated by continuous competition naturally creates and shapes leaders (Gulak, 2017). Leadership within football, including other sports, influences not only the football club but the community in which it is located. Leaders are likely to play a key role in motivating followers and promoting team performance (Zaccaro, 2008). This can be achieved through success externally and internally within the organisations. The influence that successful leadership can possess does not just involve the football team , but several other factors such as the organisation's culture. The University of Ohio (2020) states that being an excellent leader comes more naturally to some personalities than others. Research into how individuals become successful leaders within football clubs has been of continued interest in order to understand how these skills are developed and if an individual's background plays a role in this development.

2.2 Coach-Athlete Relationship with Leadership

The majority of leadership research in sport has focused on the coach (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998). This is understandable as the coach/ manager in a football club makes some major key decisions and several team matters. Leadership does not only come from the coach, yet can

come from the athletes themselves. Athlete leadership has been defined as "an athlete, occupying a formal or informal role within a team, who influences a group of team members to achieve a common goal" (Loughead et al., 2006, p. 144). Jowett(2012), athletes are unlikely to produce top-level performances without the support of their coaches and coaches are unlikely to be successful without the athletes' talent, commitment, and enthusiasm. The significance of the player-coach relationship has been acknowledged by a number of literature and studies. Glenn and Horn (1993) have previously suggested and stated that coaches require one or two athletes within the team who can provide motivation and direction to their teammates, which is understandable as it gives responsibility and leadership skills to flourish within the team. According to Vella(2011), the coach-athlete relationship can have a positive correlation with the developmental experiences. Short, S. and Short, M(2005) have stated the coach-athlete relationship can have tremendous influence on the physical and psychological development of their athletes.

Smoll and Smith (1989) state that athlete's perception and recall determine coaching effectiveness, showing the need to establish a distinctive and significant relationship between the coach and athlete. Jung, Lim and Choi(2019) have stated that cooperative relationships with leaders and teammates in sport situations have a positive effect on team performance, which leads to success throughout the football club over time. Although these relationships do not always have to be personal, success without effective relationships produces athletes with ability, but with no personal growth which may hinder further progress for the individuals and the football club in the future. According to Côté J., Gilbert W(2009) , leadership effectiveness is enhanced by applying consistent integration of professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge with the intent to improve an individual's competence, confidence, connection, and character.

The relationship between the coach and the player creates increased group cohesion , which leads to higher quality performance and productivity. Carron , Widyemer and Brawley(1985) have stated that cohesion as a process involves the propensity for a sport team to form a bond in the quest of satisfying its performance goals or its members affective needs. Chelladurai and Riemar(1998) describe coach leadership as a coach's behavioural processes that influence team members towards performance accomplishments. Jowett(2005) has stated that the relationship between athletes and coaches can be separated into two different dimensions:(1) prizewinning relationships, (2)helpful, caring relationships. In light of the current literature ,

it is clear that there is an appearing significant relationship between the coach and athlete with leadership being a major influence on the positive or negative impact of this relationship.

2.3 Leaderships Influence on Culture

The specific leadership approach cultivates a culture within a club that will influence both on-field activities but also off -field activities. Various research has investigated the impact that leadership can have on the overall organisational culture, in this case the football club's culture. Robbins and Coulter(2005) describe the concept of organisational culture as the shared values, beliefs or perceptions held by employees within an organisation. Killman (1985) writes that culture can provide meaning , direction and mobilisation which can move the organisation in a positive direction. Sinclair(1993) mentions culture as becoming an increasingly attribute that management can and should influence to improve organisational performance while Schein (1992) mentioned as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as a correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems. Other studies state that culture within organisations such as football clubs are more than just a set of values, consisting rather of both values and actual ways in which members of a culture go about dealing with their collective challenges (Javidan et al., 2006, p. 899).

Throughout a football club , it is becoming vitally important that clubs create a culture that can be very personable between each individual involved in a football club as it creates a functional atmosphere. The transfer of specific visions and behaviour through every aspect of the club will overall help every individual in which leads to on/off pitch success. Haddad, O'Connor and Burns (2021) state that traditionally the provision of leadership in many professional sports, including football, has been the domain of the coach. Whether that is the Chairman, CEO , Manager or Players, each individual must possess the need to bring real change to the football club whilst setting an example for others. Drew Sherman , a writer for the Player Development Project , states that any sporting organization needs to look firstly at the culture of their own environment before beginning to develop an identity. According to Baric, R., & Bucik, V. (2009), leaders can influence the overall motivational culture, influencing the performance of athletes. Leadership can affect the overall confidence of

individuals within a football club, as they have a responsibility to demonstrate their own beliefs as well as the companies whilst sustaining success that reflects their values. Bennis (1989) suggests that 'challenging the status quo' is a characteristic of a leader that must be adapted in order to create a healthy football club atmosphere. Literature examples such as these are important to my research as these examples have allowed me to gain a deeper understanding on the connection between leadership and the influence it can have on culture within a football club. Yafang Tasi(2011) states that leaders have to appreciate their function in maintaining an organisation's culture. This would in return ensure consistent behaviour between members of the organisation, reducing conflicts and creating a healthy working environment for employees. Research has indicated that the recruitment and development of individuals who possess aspects of positive leadership skills along with having different socioeconomic backgrounds can lead to a healthy culture with positive effects .

The cultures within organisations , such as football clubs , are significantly correlated with leadership behaviour and leadership approaches. Culture is very important as not only does it affect performance and player motivation , it creates a happy and healthy working environment. Society shows us how important leadership is in organisations and the crictival variable it has become , showing how it is more important to look at the other side of the leadership coin—how leaders create culture and how culture defines and creates leaders. This shows how leadership has developed over time , not only in football club settings but different types of organisations. Szymanski, the author of Money and Football, states that "modern leadership theory largely focuses on team building and capacity to bring about change in organisations". Team building will only be successful based on the status of the culture within the football clubs , which relates back to the leaders within. Prachi Juneja(2015) states that the culture decides the way employees interact at their workplace. A healthy culture encourages the employees to stay motivated and loyal towards the management. The concept of organisational culture can be viewed in several different forms and perspectives. Perrin(2013) describes the overall view of organisational culture as the sum of values and rituals which serve as 'glue' to integrate the members of the organisation.

2.4 The Effect of Different Leadership Styles

To date , existing literature in relation to my research idea has tended to focus on mainly the style and behaviours of individuals on the pitch rather than the off pitch importance

leadership can have. There is currently a substantial amount of information in relation to leadership styles within football clubs. Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximises the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal (Kruse, 2019). Thornton & Extebarria (2021) write that leadership is socially constructed through interaction. Different individuals will apply leadership differently within different clubs , based on personal values and beliefs. G. Davies (1989) states that all leaders have the capacity to create a compelling vision, one that takes people to a new place, and then to translate that vision into reality. López-Gajardo (2021) illustrates the importance of developing team identification to improve the relationship between individuals within teams. Individuals have different ways of approaching leadership within football clubs , with the aim of fulfilling a common goal. Khan(2015) suggests that leadership styles in the past decade have gone from a very classical autocratic approach to a very creative, participative approach. Olympiou, Jowett & Duda (2008) state that an athlete's perception of the coach-athlete relationship has motivational significance.

An aim is to understand how specific leadership styles work for different types of individuals within clubs , along with understanding the factors that mended these specific styles into fruition. A framework created by Lyle (2002) suggests that it is possible to locate sports leaders as 'beginners' in many instances, making their first steps into the sporting world . According to Baric and Bucik (2009) , they have stated that the motivation of each player varies based on the behaviour taken by a coach. Leaders and managers play an important role in creating an atmosphere and culture of enthusiasm and productivity among the employees that help them do what they need to do(Alghazo, 2016) . Lewin (1939) suggests that most leaders adopt one of three main "modern leadership theory largely focuses on team building and capacity to bring about change in organisations".leadership styles that can be influenced within football clubs ; authoritarian, participative, or laissez-faire.

Autocratic coaches make decisions with little to no input from the player or players. The coach articulates a vision for what needs to be accomplished by the players, and the players are expected to perform(University of Kansas , 2018). Previous literature has stated that this

leadership approach can cause conflict within the organisation(football clubs). Wang, Liu, Liu (2019) write that studies have suggested that this approach causes a lack of trust , decreases self esteem and causes little motivation to try and improve overall performances throughout the organisation. Participative leadership has been described in literature as the actions that empower the employees and offer them prospects to be involved in independent decision-making processes(Usman , Ghani, Cheng, Farid, Iqbal, 2021). Some studies have shown that participative leadership styles provide individuals with greater discretion, attention, and support and solicit their involvement in addressing problems and making decisions (Nystrom, 1990). Other leadership styles , such as laissez-faire, is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as a philosophy or practice characterised by a usually deliberate abstention from direction or interference, especially with individual freedom of choice and action(St. Thomas University,2014).

A coach's leadership style influences the development of motivational climate(Baric, R., & Bucik, V. (2009) , which influences the overall success produced within professional football clubs. Leaders install values; motivate members to follow the team's objectives(Shehu, Kuriu, Ikonomi* ,2019). Various aspects of team performance will be influenced by leadership , which increases success throughout a football club in different sectors. A coach who has a high ego is assertive, does not care about the well-being of a player and is less likely to drop a player's motivation during training or competition (Nasiruddin,Omar,Omar-Fauzee,2021). History has told us that success can still be achieved by individuals who motivate players in different ways. According to Acet, Gumusgul ,Isik (2017) successful leaders in sports accept that relationships between the environment and themselves positively affect the performance of sportsmen.

Overall, current literature available in relation to my research idea has provided myself with a range of different ideas and approaches that influence my project's outcome. It has allowed the research process to accelerate in recent times due to the range of available resources.. The current resources available provide my research idea with information about specific aspects that have intended to investigate more in depth. It is clear that there is a substantial amount of research available in relation to leadership styles within football than in comparison to culture research available. Current literature based around leadership in football focuses mainly on what leadership style individuals possess , and the different influences their styles can have on a football club. Research conducted such as Baric & Bucik, (2009) and Arnold, Fletcher,

and Anderson, (2015) are studies that possess bodies of information that influence my research in a positive manner, as they provide information that supports the research question. According to Watkins(2012), identifying if consensus exists on an issue along with seeking clarity that the evidence involved have a cause-effect relationship are essential whilst conducting research

2.5 Relationship between Leadership and Motivation

Motivation is the need for and expectation of work and the different factors in the workplace that facilitate team motivation (Bahmanabadi, 2015). Almansour states that motivating employees is the most important and complex task(Almansour, 2012). Roßnagel (2016) states that motivating individuals is a crucial leadership task, as motivation translates employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities into effort and performance by deter- mining the direction, intensity, and duration of work-related behaviours. Motivating teams is more challenging than motivating an individual. Very often, individuals in the team have different beliefs, values and different goals and expectations(Al Rahbi, Khalid, Khan, 2017). The motivational climate in which the coach or hierarchy creates is perceived and transferred to the players. The motivational climate can be described as a set of implicit and/or explicit environmental signals through which the keys to success or failure are defined(Ames, 1992).

Motivation in a sports complex is a key determinant of behaviour in sport. It is a complex construct, with athletes having diverse and dynamic motives for initiating, directing, sustaining, and terminating effort(Monteiro, Teixeira , Travassos, Duarte-Mendes, Moutão, Machado Sérgio, Cid, 2018). Forzoni(2001), writes that extremely high levels of motivation are necessary to repeatedly produce the kind of high quality training sessions and match activity that are required for elite football performance. This gives the insight of how important motivation is within football clubs , along with the effect it can have on overall performance due to internal and external factors. In the context of football, motivation is one of the concepts most referred amongst the reasons that justify the success and very often, the failure of players and of teams. Frequently coaches, players and audience associate the collective and individual performance to different motivational states(Sarmento, Catita, Fonseca, 2008). Leaders within football clubs must distinguish what motivates individuals based on specific levels of motivation. Extrinsic motivation is when we are motivated to perform a behaviour or engage in an activity because we want to earn a reward or avoid

punishment(Cherry, 2022) , expecting something in return and are motivated by external factors. According to Di Domenico and Ryan(2017), intrinsic motivation refers to people's spontaneous tendencies to be curious and interested, to seek out challenges and to exercise and develop their skills and knowledge, even in the absence of operationally separable rewards. Applications of both types of motivation would be based on the individual's approach and beliefs , with extrinsic coming from outside sources while intrinsic comes from within with both having different effects on productivity and performance. Schaffer(2008) writes that without being able to motivate followers, in this case the individual players, it is unlikely that the leaders within the football clubs will be able to achieve success.

2.6 Real-World Leadership & Motivation Examples

Applications of motivational approaches and strategies can be seen in several football clubs around the world, such as Manchester United. Previous Manchester United manager/coach Sir Alex Ferguson is a certain past manager that has provided insight into the specific managerial approach that combines both leadership and motivation. Former players of Manchester United Football Club have often remarked about the halftime locker room "hairdryer treatment" talks of the legendary coach of Manchester United Sir Alex Ferguson. Some believe it is a measure of confidence, a winning attitude that motivates one to better performance(Roberts,Nerstad, Lemyre, 2018). Pelletier and Vallerand (1996) note that a coaches ations have a significant impact on an athletes behaviour, sustainment and enjoyment within the activity. It is noted that the self-determination theory and achievement goal theory were considered the most comprehensive theoretical frameworks for understanding cognitive, behavioral, and emotional patterns associated with practitioners goals in sport contexts (Duda, 2013). Based on the context of both of these theories , (Duda, 2013) states that researchers have integrated both theories to provide a multi-theoretical framework of sport behavior. According to Monteiro, Teixeira , Travassos, Duarte-Mendes, Moutão, Machado Sérgio, Cid, (2018), Self-determination theory explains all of the determinants of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, considering one's personal factors and his/her's involvement in a social context as causes of self-determined behavior. Achievement goal theory holds that, when performing achievement-related tasks, individuals can fluctuate in their state of involvement directed toward task or ego goals. That is, they can be more or less task- and ego-involved at any point during task engagement(Duda, 2004). The important assumption agreed to by most contemporary theorists is that motivation is not an entity but is a process

(e.g., Maehr & Braskamp, 1986). Much evidence points to the associations between motivation and important outcomes across a range of life domains(Sheehan, Herring, Campbell, 2018) , such as an individual's mental health and productivity. A negative mood, anger, frustration, stress and fear can all have a profoundly harmful effect. Positive emotion is a critical issue in the field of positive psychology(Yang, Wen, Xiu, 2020) in relation to the individuals within the football clubs, as they have an influence on specific components of performance and psychological well-being(McCarthy, 2011). Literature has shown that over the last few decades , there has been a realisation and understanding of the importance of the physiological side of athletic performance. Sport specialists agree that athletic performance is influenced not only by physical skills but also by psychological ones(Mouloud,Abd Elkader, 2016).

2.7 Summary

The literature available based around the hypothesis varies between focus specifically on the effect leadership has on football , yet there has tended to be more significant research conducted based around the effect leadership has on a variety of sport views. It is a hope that research conducted can lead to further research and discussion of the effect leadership has primarily on professional football clubs. In relation to the sport of football, literature conducted has signified the positive relationship leadership has on athlete performance. Conducted literature has shown the effect that leadership can have on a variety of different factors , such as motivation and culture. The research conducted has contributed to the literature on leadership and the effect it has on the development and success of professional football clubs. The following sections discuss the research methodology conducted in line with the conducted literature review.

3.Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

By reviewing current literature , it is clear that research in relation to this field of study is substantial in relation to leadership effect within football clubs , yet it is limited in certain in depth themes in which inspires further investigation and research into the overall effect that leadership can have on the development and success of professional football clubs.

3.2 Research Question

The relationship between leadership and professional football clubs has been overlooked in past literature, with more deep focus on the effect leadership can have in sport. Furthermore, past literature has often excluded the specific effect that leadership can have on a range of factors specifically in professional football clubs. The research question of this master's dissertation used a qualitative method in order to broaden the themes/objectives specific understanding. To have a deeper contextual understanding , thoughts, feelings and based on life experiences around the research questions were applied to broaden the research feasibility and quality. The following sections will reveal the most important themes and objectives of the study discussed in light of existing literature that were developed in line with the hopeful findings and observations of the study; The Importance of Leadership in Football Clubs(1) The influence of Coach Leadership (2) The influence of Player Leadership (3) The impact that past individuals can have on on coach/athlete leadership approaches/styles (4) How leadership influences motivation in professional football clubs (5) The influence that leadership has on the development and creation of club culture.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Research methodology is defined by Buckley and Chiang (1976) as "a strategy or architectural design by which the researcher maps out an approach to problem-finding or problem-solving." Various types of research are currently available to examine the conditions and overall capabilities of successful leadership within football clubs, as well as the impact it can have on success on and off the field. During the research process, qualitative research

was used to collect and analyse non-numerical data. The small sample size of the research process was questioned, but previous research has shown that the purpose and scope of the research are more important than the sample size. According to Morse(2000), the richness of the data and the structure of the questions in qualitative interviewing allow the research data to become the most important aspect, rather than the sample size. In terms of the participants, qualitative research allows them to be themselves by freely expressing their thoughts and opinions without any pre-set constraints. As a result, the likelihood of receiving genuine responses is high in this type of research (Rahman, 2021).

According to my research, leadership is not about power or control, but about recognizing what motivates employee commitment and using that knowledge to leverage performance and positive results (University of Florida). The research methods have focused on an attempt to understand the skills and qualities of leadership in football that have led to success in the past, as well as what characteristics of leadership are required for success in football.

In order to fully project my research idea, various different types of non-numerical data were used. In relation to my research ideas and objectives, non-numerical data collection methods such as interviews, document studies, and case studies have been used, with a focus on qualitative data. In order to fully capture my argument and results, non-face-to-face interviews were conducted with current or former football players based primarily in the League of Ireland. Before conducting interviews with football-related individuals, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of people. A pilot study is a "small study designed to test research protocols, data collection instruments, sample recruitment strategies, and other research techniques in advance of a larger study" (Stewart PW.) A pilot study is an important stage in a research project because it identifies potential problem areas and deficiencies in the research instruments and protocol prior to full study implementation (Lancaster GA, Dodd S, Williamson PR,2004, Kraemer HC, Mintz J, Noda A, Tinklenberg J, Yesavage JA,2006). This test's application provides strength and validity for accurate testing. The findings from my methods have made the research idea more vivid and clear in relation to dissertation objectives and hypotheses. The interviews with current or former individuals involved in football clubs who have previous experience in relation to leadership have been a significant breakthrough in my research idea. Based on current COVID-19 restrictions and employee contract issues, interviews were conducted virtually with the hope of being able to speak with them in person, but this was not possible.

3.4 Interview Process

Qualitative interviews, which can range from unstructured to open-ended and provocative, are methodologically well-established tools for gathering social-scientific data (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Roulston, 2010). Although there are numerous qualitative methods that could have been used during the research process, the interview method would provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the research objectives and themes. Semi-structured interviews were not permitted due to contract issues with several current footballers, as advised by their current clubs. The goal was to meet these people in person in the hopes of developing a deeper connection and relationship with them, but due to unforeseen circumstances, this did not come to fruition. Each individual has years of experience in both underage and professional levels in the footballing industry. As a result, all participants were carefully and precisely chosen based on these factors. The participants were invited via email and social media interaction that were provided. The interviews with the participants took place between the 7th and 22nd of June. Each individual interview lasted no more than 10 minutes. These dates were chosen because the majority of the people were away on personal vacations prior to these dates, as it was a specific few weeks for them where they were allowed to rest from their club activities. This allowed for the participants to be more relaxed and open minded within the interview process which benefited the research process.

Individuals were asked specific open-ended questions in order to collect a large amount of data in order to correlate effective comparisons and results. Open-ended questions were used to collect qualitative data in order to understand why people answered questions in the way they did (Mathers et al., 2009). Even with some limitations, these questions were asked to gain a better understanding of leadership within professional football clubs. As some of the questions were rather complex, it was critical that the individuals answered honestly in order to achieve the best results. Cresswell(2007) states that the interview guide questions include the core question as well as many associated questions related to the central question, which are then improved further through pilot testing of the interview guide. To achieve fairness and the desired results, each individual was asked the same questions in the same format. Fox(2009) describes the interview process as a valuable data collection technique that involves verbal communication between the researcher and the participant. The goal is to

collect research that combines both specific data relating to the research objectives and quality data that fits the overall research ideas' specific implications. A subsequent step in the analysis process was to transcribe the meeting shortly after the interview. It was critical to identify the data for further analysis in order to determine the depth, quality, and richness of the conducted interviews (McGrath, Palmgren, & Liljedahl, 2019), which would aid in the subsequent discussions and outcomes of the data outcomes.

The reason for using these specific types of methods in relation to the research idea and objectives is that they allow me to combine both quality research and in-depth research. In contrast to bad research, which begins with a conclusion and only presents supporting evidence, good research reflects a genuine desire to discover what is true (Litman, 2019). There is currently a wide range of literature available in relation to my selected idea, with opportunities to delve deeper into the current research idea in question. Previous research, such as that conducted by Neto, Miragaia, and Ibáez (2021), has focused on the use of methodology such as systematic reviews. There is difficulty in accessing literature involving interviews and questionnaires, with a focus on qualitative research involving non-numerical data. The resources that are currently available have only allowed me to reach a certain level of capacity in terms of research required to find the answers to my question. As a result of one-on-one conversations with individuals who combine both leadership qualities and previous experience within football clubs, the research improves in both quality and detail.

In order to fully capture my argument and results, non-face-to-face interviews were conducted with current or former football players based primarily in the League of Ireland. This was viewed as a disadvantage because the plan of action called for meeting the participants in person, which was not feasible. For the current players, this was due to contract clauses and issues that caused them to halt in-person interviews, despite the fact that the interview process was still successful. The interview was rather structured due to the participants not meeting in person, it could have been questioned that this would hinder data quality , yet the participants were still talkative and positive during the interview. With their permission, research conducted with the individuals involved was granted. As the nature of this research could be considered sensitive or personal, it was critical that each individual felt safe while answering. Questions were only published that the participants felt comfortable answering as personal questions about their upbringing and background. Participants could

choose to remain anonymous in both the questionnaire and the interviews if doing so would pose a risk to themselves or others. Due to club complications, one person requested to remain anonymous, which was accepted.

Another practical issue that arose is that, due to the current pandemic, some individuals may feel more comfortable interviewing virtually rather than in person. Understanding the participants' opinions and points of view has aided in the fulfilment of my research idea and objectives by providing new vital information. Previously conducted research based on interview guides , such as Creswell (2007) helped develop the core question as well as many associated questions, which were then improved further through pilot testing. After the interviews concluded, participants' answers were transcribed and written out in full detail.

The collection instruments were critical in giving my research idea a clear purpose and understanding. The methodology and analytical approach used by the researcher determine how the information collected is used and what explanations it can generate (Teherani A, Martimianakis T, Stenfors-Hayes T, Wadhwa A, Varpio L,2015, Wright S, O'Brien BC, Nimmon L, Law M, Mylopoulos M,2015). It has increased awareness of the importance of leadership in football clubs by focusing on individuals who have previously or currently participate in football clubs and have previously encountered leadership in some capacity. The research sample and size were very specific in order to achieve the highest level of accuracy, reliability, and viability in relation to my results and conclusions, which were based on specific methods. To present in a research methodology chapter in a concise but precise manner, reliability and validity are required (Mohajan, 2017). In qualitative research, Singh(2014)states that validity and reliability increase transparency while decreasing opportunities for researcher bias. The interviews were conducted with seven individuals ranging in age from 18 to 60 who currently or previously worked for professional football clubs. Each interview enabled the data collection to have a broad representation of people's perspectives.and opinions on leadership within football clubs. Interviews consisted of specific questions based on leadership in relation to football , aiming to uncover major aspects as to how leadership affects several aspects within football clubs. The interview process has allowed the research process to collect knowledge on specific areas of research purposes in relation to leadership in football clubs, focusing on specific questions that can affect leadership styles and approaches.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Early on in the research process, ethical considerations were made to ensure that the information pertaining to the participants correlated and complied with data protection as well as the ethical guidelines provided by the National College of Ireland. They agreed that their names could be published with each person's individual consent, but no other information could be published on their behalf (email, phone number). Demographic questions such as age, gender, area, and current or previous level of study/experience in relation to professional football clubs were asked and answered with consent.

Each participant was shown a consent form stating the ethical codes that outlines that they are aware and understand the reasons why they have been united to participate in this interview, what questions will be asked of them while participating in the interview, and that their participation is voluntary on their behalf before participating and completing the interview. Participants gave their consent prior to the interviews, and they were given two weeks to remove their answers if they felt it was a risk to themselves or their football club if they are currently playing for one. Owens(2010) describes informed consent as allowing potential research participants to freely volunteer their participation without fear of repercussions or undue pressure.

Another ethical consideration is the nature of the questions themselves, with some appearing intrusive or personal in some ways. It was critical that the questions during the interviews attempted to understand the socioeconomic backgrounds of the participants, while also ensuring that the questions did not cause distress or provocation. During the interview, each individual was free to refuse to answer any question they did not feel comfortable answering and to end the interview at any time. Several days before the interviews, each participant received a participant consent form. A goal of this consent form is to promote research goals such as knowledge expansion. They support the values required for collaborative work, such as mutual respect and fairness. This correlates with past conducted research , such as (Resnick,D.B, 2015) who stated research depends on collaboration between researchers and groups. This upholds the ethical guidelines necessary , providing full validity of the interviews.The consent form can be found in the appendix(Appendix B).

3.6 Summary

Research conducted has taken a qualitative approach in line with the conducted literature review. Both past literature and new data were conducted in order to achieve validity and reliability in relation to the research results. Athletes who are current/former football players were interviewed as part of the research project. All participants answered honestly and fairly , taking certain ethical factors into consideration. The interviews conducted were structured interviews , in order to achieve the highest level of accuracy, reliability, and viability in relation to my results, analysis and conclusions. The interviews conducted correlated significantly with previous conducted literature and research. Participants varied on age, in an attempt to signify the development or regression of the overall effect leadership has within professional football clubs. The following section outlines the results from the research methodology that correlates with past conducted literature.

4. Results/Analysis

The research carried out in this chapter provided the findings from the interviews and data collected in relation to what effect leadership has on the development and success of professional football clubs. The aim of the study was to primarily establish if there is a clear effect of leadership within professional football clubs, understanding the specific factors that it can positively or negatively affect. Additionally, the results established several other conclusions that were not previously hypothesised. It was hypothesised that there would be a clear positive correlation between leadership and the professional football clubs. Factors influencing the specific use of leadership styles and approaches were explored throughout the interview process with an inductive analysis of the interview transcripts. This study has been applied to football players and coaches in the region of Ireland, Northern Ireland and England yet mainly focusing on the Irish region. 7 individuals having the title of football athlete or football coach have been selected from different clubs and leagues in the specific regions noted.

 The interview process allowed the research to focus on a range of specific factors in relation to leadership. The results outlined the descriptive answers from each participant from the interview process in correlation with studied literature. The qualitative interview techniques used have a greater level of reliability and correlate well with the literature being utilised within this research ,providing greater validiality. The participants' answers showed clear

trends between one another, showing conclusions that were not part of the preliminary hypothesis.

In the interview process, 7 people were interviewed, and they were asked 9 questions about leadership in football clubs based on their previous or current experience. Each person was asked each question, with no one withdrawing or refusing to ask any of the questions. The interview questions were identified and set several weeks before the interview process began. Males made up the entire group of seven participants (100%). The participants' ages ranged from 22 to 51 years old, as shown in the table below. In line with the main findings and the literature, the results were centred on a set of specific themes and objectives.

Table 1- Age Range

Age Range	Frequency
18-24	5
25-34	0
35-44	0
45-54	2

Five of the seven participants are currently playing for teams in both the Sky Bet Championship (Blackburn Rovers) and the Airtricity League of Ireland Divisions 1 and 2 (Bray Wanderers, Shelbourne, UCD, and Longford Town). The other two participants, both over the age of 49, are retired players from the Airtricity League of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Football League, with clubs such as Cliftonville, Shamrock Rovers, and St Francis (formally of the League of Ireland). Six of the seven participants' names were used and published, while one participant requested anonymity. During the interview process, each individual answered honestly and fairly without any complications. The goal of this study is to learn about a player's or coach's experience with the impact of leadership in professional football clubs and how it has influenced their playing style or approach. During the interview process, the organisation's culture, organisational environment, and overall club values were assessed. According to the main findings and data analysis, it was critical to comprehend the significance of their knowledge within the footballing world, as well as the participants' prior

experience in relation to the research question and current literature available. This enabled my research to gain insightful knowledge and experiences, allowing me to improve the overall quality and insights of the research.

4.1 Correlation between Leadership and Individual Backgrounds

The findings of the participants on the topic of individual backgrounds and the impact it can have on their specific leadership style/approach were conclusive. Each participant felt that their personal background had an impact on their overall leadership ideology. 7/7 participants (100%) stated that a family member had a significant influence on their leadership ideas, with their fathers being the primary sources of influence. 6/7 people stated that previous clubs they have played with have had a significant influence on their approach to leadership, picking up leadership traits from different people and incorporating them into their own approaches.

4.2 Leadership Styles

The findings revealed that the leadership styles of each individual's coaches/managers varied. 5/7 of the participants stated that their previous coaches all varied their leadership approach depending on the time of year. During the season, their managers would be more democratic/participative, but at the start (pre-season), they would come across as very authoritative, displaying clear trends among the participants. Most participants talked about coaches who were more democratic/participative with them, as well as working in a more open and inclusive environment. The result showed that participants would rather have a coach that can vary their leadership approach, mainly being more democratic. Several participants signified the willingness and need for /managers/coaches to be rather amicable.

Each of the seven participants spoke extensively about their efforts to be leaders both on and off the field. 7/7 of the participants mentioned the importance of group cohesion in their leadership approach, being there for each of their teammates, and not overlooking the importance of having a group with high chemistry and positivity. Participants showed significant compassion for their fellow teammates. A combination of both participative and transformational leadership was seen in the approaches of the participants, focusing on good communication skills and positive influence on fellow team mates in order to achieve a high level of motivation and morale.

4.3 Motivation

In terms of motivation, each participant emphasised the importance of motivation in their teams. Based on the responses of the participants, their concept of motivation correlates with their leadership style. Six out of seven participants mentioned the importance of motivating their teammates, demonstrating the link between leadership and motivation. Self determination was a leadership theory that several participants tended to approach. Participants spoke about willingness to motivate themselves , not necessarily requiring leadership from the coaches/managers at all times. Furthermore, 4/7 of the participants stated that self-motivation was important in their leadership approach, working hard on and off the field to motivate themselves and their teammates. According to the hypothesis, the findings revealed a clear positive correlation between motivation and leadership in professional football clubs.

4.4 Culture

Each participant was asked what they thought about leadership as a driving force for culture in their previous/current teams. Each of the eight participants felt that it was a driving force in creating a positive culture within the clubs. Participants emphasised the importance of team members getting along well, indicating a positive relationship between group cohesion and culture. Team bonding was a factor that played an important role in each player's team culture, with four participants mentioning that this factor aids in the development of constructive relationships between each player. Two participants stated that they and their teammates do not have to be overly personal with one another, but they understand the importance of group cohesion in order to improve individual and team performance.

4.5 Summary

The participants' answers showed a clear correlation with past conducted literature. The results discussed showed a significant effect that leadership has on a range of factors within professional football clubs. Each of these results must be considered alongside one another. The results showed that participants would rather have a coach/manager who is more amiable with them in their teams. This also translates to their own leadership approach as a significant

number of individuals took a more transformational/ participative approach in their leadership style/approach. Motivation played a significant role in each participant's leadership approach, focusing on motivating themselves along with their fellow team mates in order to reach overall team objectives and achieve self development. Participants all viewed leadership as having a significant effect on overall club culture. Each felt that leadership develops or maintains a specific club culture , signifying an expression of team values and attitudes within their specific team. Additionally, this may vary based on the specific hierarchy and coach/manager within the football club.The following section discusses the results in a more in depth manner.

5.Discussion

This study shows that coaches and athletes employ a variety of leadership styles and approaches. The goal of this study was to examine the significance of leadership within professional football clubs, and to compare the findings to previous research that predicted a positive relationship between leadership and football (Arnold, R., Fletcher, D. and Anderson, R., 2015).

There are several reasons why this field of study is particularly interesting, the most important of which is the lack of focus that leadership has on the overall structure of professional football clubs, as well as the coaches and athletes themselves. Initially, the findings revealed a clear understanding of the impact of an individual's upbringing and socioeconomic background on their specific approach to leadership within their football clubs. Based on the findings, it is clear that leadership has a significant impact on not only individual performance but also group cohesion, which can lead to increased performance and success, which is consistent with previous research(Molan, Matthews & Arnold (2016), Carron. A.V.. Widmeyer WN..&Brawley, L, R, (1985), Loughead, T. M., Hardy, J., and Eys, M. A. (2006)). Each participant emphasised the importance of leadership within their respective football clubs, as well as how it has improved their performances. The two retired ex-footballers/coaches both spoke about how important leadership was during their playing careers, demonstrating the impact it has had on several generations of footballers.

Based on the responses of the participants, the effect leadership has on male football players demonstrates the clear impact it has on their overall footballing approach. Each individual stated how specific leadership styles and approaches have had a significant impact on their performance and development as football players, which can affect football clubs positively or negatively. The analysis's common results revealed a direct correlation with specific leadership styles, techniques, and approaches, which was consistent with previous research (Yildiz, S., 2021, Nasiruddin,Omar,Omar-Fauzee, 2021). Each participant discussed the various methods and approaches that they or their coaches have used as a team in the past or present. This variable has a catherogial effect on team culture and performance, which can have an impact on overall football club operations. According to the findings and analyses, the relationships between culture and group cohesion have a strong correlation with motivation within specific teams, which is consistent with previous research (Almansour, Y.M. (2012), Al Rahbi, Khalid, Khan, 2017).The following sections will reveal the most important findings of the current study discussed in light of existing literature previously mentioned that also correlates with the research hypothesis.

6.1 Individual Backgrounds

To investigate the impact of leadership on professional football clubs, it is necessary to first understand each individual's background in order to understand how each participant views the overall concept of leadership in their footballing lives. Due to the difficulty in accessibility and time with the participants during the interview process, this factor was not specifically a key feature within my research process. The question of whether the information sought from the participants was too personal was raised, but they all satisfactorily agreed to answer the questions posed to them. It was critical to understand the individuals' social backgrounds in order to determine whether they were a key determinant of the future opportunities and success that individuals involved in football clubs might have. The findings revealed that each individual had been nourished into a specific approach based on their background or previous interactions, as noted in previous literature such as Thornton & Extebarria (2021). Family members, particularly fathers, as well as previous coaches and managers, were determined to be the most influential individuals in the development of the individuals' approach to leadership in their footballing careers. At first glance, it appears that an individual's background and upbringing influence their leadership style. Conor Kane, a

current Shelbourne FC football player, stated in the study when asked of the influence that his own background has had on his leadership approach:

" I'd say my family background would have influenced my leadership in some way, my dad used to play football at a decent level and always tried to encourage me to be a leader in and out of sport"

Personnel who have had a previous leadership figure or figures in their lives have a strong approach to leadership and understand its importance. Most participants mentioned someone who had previous experience or knowledge in the football world, either playing or coaching at a high level. Such social factors have an impact on both the individual approach to leadership in football and the outside world. Individuals who have experienced a socioeconomic factor influence such as this will have a more profound connection and understanding of the concept of leadership and the impact it can have on the overall organisation. An individual's background and upbringing have a significant impact on their leadership philosophy. One could argue that without a strong leadership influence in one's upbringing or background, an individual's development in the football world will be hampered.Past experiences and background, according to participant Thomas Clarke, have a significant impact on an individual's approach to leadership in football. Clarke, a former League of Ireland and Northern Ireland Football League player, stated in an interview:

"My past experiences and background definitely influenced my approach having my dad who also played as a professional. His experience playing the game , along with his knowledge added to my experience playing under some brilliant man managers. Along the way you pick up something different from each and every one of them and I do feel that's influenced my approach to leadership definitely".

There is a clear link between an individual's background and their leadership style. A strong background or upbringing in which leadership is a major influence in your football life can influence not only your leadership approach but also your overall personal development. Individuals who have had an influence in their past and have strong leadership skills provide participants with the opportunity to develop their athletic performance and influence within their team, a unique combination that allows the individuals to add extensive knowledge to already pre-existing knowledge. Each participant spoke about a previous member of their

family or an external individual who has significantly affected their ideology and approach to leadership. Traits are innate, or heritable qualities of an individual, as noted by Khoshhal & Guraya(2016). Thus, it appears that within the interviews that the participants all have found that leadership traits and specific approaches are nourished throughout their years internally and externally in the footballing world.

6.2 Coach Leadership Styles and Approaches

The findings in this section are about the specific leadership approaches that the coaches of current/past players have demonstrated, and how it has affected them as well as their teammates. According to Williams (2003), the coach's leadership has a significant impact on the athletes' loves and their experiences. This section provided some clear insights into the leadership approaches and styles of coaches/managers within professional football clubs, as well as how this can affect a wide range of factors within these clubs. Each participant discussed how their current/past coaches approach leadership differently, demonstrating their distinct differences. Cribben (1981) shows past conducted literature that relates to the result findings , stating that a successful coach's leadership can change an athlete's behaviour as a result of the coach's effort and get others to behave the way the coach/manager wants them to The study sought to identify the interpersonal/personal aspects of coach leadership in order to identify similarities in the participants' previous coaches' leadership styles. The interview process also provided me with insight from a coach, Thomas Clarke, who previously coached in the Leinster Senior League. Participants' feedback revealed a clear mix of coaching styles. James Brown, a current Blackburn Rovers player in the Sky Bet Championship, responded:

"With the clubs I have been involved in , it has been more or less the same. Managers tend to be aggressive with how they speak to some and maybe give constructive criticism to others in order to get a reaction as everyone is different. Managers and coaches tend to know what way to get certain players going after working with them for a long period of time."

This finding demonstrates the clear influence that leaders have over specific individuals, as stated in previous research such as (Cotterill, Loughead, Fransen, 2022), as well as the critical role that man management plays in successful leadership effectiveness. The participant stated unequivocally that individuals must first understand their surroundings before implementing their approach to leadership, in this case the coach's approach to the group of players. It can

translate specific leadership styles throughout the group by developing a deeper understanding of your environment. This finding demonstrates the clear influence that leaders have over specific individuals, as stated in previous research such as (Cotterill, Loughead, Fransen, 2022), as well as the critical role that man management plays in successful leadership effectiveness. The participant stated unequivocally that individuals must first understand their surroundings before implementing their approach to leadership, in this case the coach's approach to the group of players. It can translate specific leadership styles throughout the group by developing a deeper understanding of your environment. When asked about past/current coaching styles from the perspective of the participants, Paul Stokes stated:

"I would say my coaches had a mixture of coaching styles. I think it is important in a sporting environment because at times you need to be strict such as in pre season when you are trying to get players fit, and then there are times when the fixture lists can be quite congested during the season and a lighter session/team bonding session is more beneficial for the squad".

From the two responses, both individuals mentioned coaches who can be very authoritative at times, which was a common theme in many of the responses. It is also important to highlight that one of these participants is currently playing and the other is retired. The findings revealed that individuals differ in their natural tendency to specific leadership styles, as it is highly dependent on the group of players with whom they are collaborating, as highlighted by (Jung K.I., Lim D.K., Choi H.H, 2019). The manager/specific coach's leadership approach has a significant impact on the club's sporting matters, which is consistent with previous research (Shehu, A., Kuriu, A., and Ikonomi, E., 2019, Haddad, O'Connor, and Burns) (2021) The second participant discussed how the coach tends to develop his coaching style based on specific time periods (see,Sauer, 2017). The coach creates a clear environment that understands both the individuals and the entire team in order to increase performance and cohesion by creating different working environments based on specific circumstances. In the early stages of the season, for example, managers may be more direct and impersonal in order to regain fitness and quality levels as players return from the off season.

It is important to note that coaching leadership can vary from coach to coach, with different behaviours displayed. Certain coaching styles are not appropriate for specific individuals,

which may have an impact on performance over time, emphasising the importance of group cohesion. Leadership is a difficult process. It may take some time for the coaches to figure out which way to lead, because what works for one person may not work for everyone on the team. The findings indicated that the coaches had a strong understanding of their group of players and staff, knowing what type of training session or activity would be most beneficial to the team's overall performance. Overall, the findings demonstrated the critical importance of leadership from coaches/managers.

6.3 Player Leadership

This section focused on the leadership skills and qualities that each individual participant possesses, as well as identifying their specific leadership styles and the similarities that each participant possesses. The level of leadership required within a team to help achieve overall goals has been of recent interest in previous years. The findings in this section were aimed at gaining a better understanding of the participants' specific leadership styles and the impact they can have on themselves and the club as a whole. Understanding their own personal approaches would aid in understanding and searching for how these approaches came to fruition. The importance of effective leadership has been viewed and cited in various studies by athletes and coaches as an effective aspect to sports achievements in football, but also in sport in general (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998; Gould,Hodge,Peterson,& Petlichkoff, 1987). The findings revealed a significant difference in leadership perspectives among the participants. Some participants saw themselves as having a significant impact on leadership, whereas others did not believe they had any impact on leadership in previous or current clubs. Some participants believed that leadership influence on the team itself develops over time as you settle into the team. Based on their current impact, this can be interpreted as having a more formal or informal role within the team. A player who does not start as many games, for example, may not have the same impact on the team as a regular starter. Christian Maguerson, a current Longford Town footballer, provided this example in his response. During the interview, he stated:

"I wouldn't consider myself a leader in our team as I still think that I need to learn a lot more when it comes to trying to push people when needed. I will always try my best to be as much of a leader as I possibly can ".

The responsibility for the club's performance extends not only to the hierarchy and managers, but also to the players' performances. Effective leadership of and within sports teams has consistently been identified as an important factor influencing a variety of outcomes such as team performance and team functioning (Coker,Cotterill,Griffin,2021). Some members of football teams may believe they have little influence over the reading of their specific group. The significant impact of leading certain individuals may emerge over time as they gain a better understanding of their group and surroundings. This may be a problem for some people because they want to spread their leadership style throughout the team but do not have the responsibilities or capabilities to do so at the moment. In the future, this may hinder individuals' leadership approach as their experience with leadership decreases over time. One reason these may be of interest is the increased research interest in the correlation between athlete leadership within football clubs and the link it may have to other club functions such as team and individual performance. Other participants, on the other hand, saw themselves as having a significant impact on leadership. According to James Brown:

"I would take my approach to leadership very seriously when playing on the pitch, it's very important to take leadership in key moments for not only yourself but as a team overall."

The ideologies and approaches to leadership of both players are starkly different. Leadership is a necessary driving force in achieving any organisation's vision and mission (Liphadzi,Aigbavboa,Thwala,2017). It should be noted that James was previously the captain of his previous team, Drogheda United, for two years prior to joining his current club. The majority of team captains in this study held a strong view and approach to leadership, setting an example not only for themselves but also for the team as a whole. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, such as how an individual trains or communicates with their teammates. Paul Fox , showed how players can lead within their teams in relation to communication and encouragement within teams. He stated:

"I would try to encourage my team mates by being vocal, we all try to demand standards off each other in an attempt to keep standards as high as possible".

In particular, players in the study focused not only on themselves but also heavily on leading their teammates in order to achieve the team's overall goals. More specifically, the findings revealed specific factors that most people attempted to translate into their leadership styles:

communication, quality, and motivation. Communication, in particular, tended to be the most important aspect in each participant's leadership approaches, as it had a significant impact on overall team dynamics. In certain scenarios, players with high leadership status within a team, such as team captains and vice-captains, can act as the communication link between the team and its coaches, as seen in previous literature such as (Glenn and Horn ,1993).This can create a trusting relationship between the players and the coaches within the team, as there is a clear communication bridge between the different sets of groups within the club.It is a question ro raise that captains and leaders within a team must not provide too much information to their coaches in relation to the team to avoid any lack of trust between themselves and their teammates in which may be used to their own benefit rather than the thought of the team. Regardless, it is critical that player leaders identify any major issues, such as mental health or other personal issues within the team, and communicate this to their coaches, demonstrating crucial leadership skills and halting any negative impact on the team's performance. The overall goal of player leaders' communication should be to encourage or motivate their teammates, rather than to discourage their efforts. As evidenced by the results, good leaders will understand the purpose of verbal communication and will select the appropriate feedback.

Certain participants took the leadership approach as a high necessity within their playing style as it has a major influence on their performances , noted in previous literature such as Jowett(2009, 2012) . Even though it may be a high necessity, it is important that their leadership approach does not overlook the overall club objectives by causing any negative effect on the overall group. It initially appears that each individual knows the importance of leadership within their specific teams , yet specific individuals feel that they do not have the capacity to have control over leadership within their teams at this moment in time. This however can change over time as the participants become more settled within their team surroundings and have a more settled role within the team.A reasonable question to ask is if athletes gain leadership responsibilities within their clubs over time based on personal performances and good relationships with their coaches. The participant spoke clearly about the importance of Enhanced responsibility being given to those who have a more secure position within the squad, leading to enhanced opportunities to show the individual's leadership qualities and skills. As previously mentioned, it is also questioned whether an individual's background and upbring is transferable to an individuals specific leadership approach and thought process.

6.4 The Effect of Motivation

Within this section , the main findings was to identify whether leadership has a significant impact on individuals behaviour and performances in relation to motivation within professional football clubs. The theme of motivation in sport has been explored thoroughly(Olympiou, A., Jowett, S.,Duda, J.L. (2008), Almansour, Y.M. (2012)), yet the research process focused on the specific effects leadership has on motivation in football. The aim of the questions asked within the interview process was aimed at understanding if there are certain ways themselves or their coaches to motivate them, and whether this influences specific factors such as team performance. Past literature , such as Sinclair(1993) , has mentioned the overall affect that motivation can have on an individual's performance. The answers of the participants showed a clear correlation between leadership and motivation, identifying the clear need for motivation from both the coaches and the athletes in order to channel their full potential extremely effectively. As previously stated within the literature review, self determination was a theory focused on within the research process to understand the mindset and approaches of both the athletes and the coaches. From the research, all participants were extremely self initiated and their behaviours were based on their own choices rather than influences from external sources. Each individual had a clear understanding of the connection between their behaviours and the effect it can have on the overall team dynamic, as seen in previous literature (see, Roßnagel, 2007).The results showed no clear indication of external regulations being put upon them , with the individuals being mainly focused on the success and quality of both themselves and their fellow team mates. The following quote is from James Brown when asked if their are any specific ways he tries to motivate his fellow teammates:

"I've tried to motivate teams in the past by working hard and looking at my own game not only on the pitch but off it as well, that can drive people on. It's also very important for your coaches to have motivation from their side as they are looking at the game as a whole and from a different angle."

This shows an example of a player trying to not only motivate themselves , but those around them. Though it is also noted the participants mention of the coaching staff, as previously stated they also play a major role in motivating their players which enhances various factors

within the clubs. The player is trying to motivate himself to increase his own performances (see,Taylor,2009) , hoping that it may also have an effect on his other teammates in increasing their own. The participant gave insight into self determination which differentiates motivation in terms of being autonomous and controlled(Deci, Ryan,2012). The individual demonstrated clear leadership skills , as he was not only trying to motivate himself but also his teammates in an ate,pt to improve overall team performance, noted in previous literature such as (Zaccaro, 2008). Having identified that individuals use self determination to motivate themselves in certain situations , the research also focused on how external individuals such as coaches also have a significant impact on motivation through leadership. The results from the study showed that various participants have had an individual in the past who has had an overall impact in forming either a positive or negative impact on their motivation. These findings are related to various aspects of the study , as it also associates with the development of an individual's leadership approach and their socio economic background. Another participant , Thomas Clarke , is a retired professional footballer. When speaking about the impact that previous leadership figures in his playing career has had on his motivation whilst playing, he stated:

"I played under some great managers but one in particular went on to coach some of the top teams in this country. It was easy to see why he had such a good career in the game cause not only was he tactically astute, he made you feel good about yourself and knew to say the right things. Alot of my coaches would do this to motivate me when playing, they would also talk to me about my personal life to see if it was affecting the way I was playing. It made you want to give your life for them".

As this participant was a retired footballer, it was crucial to understand if the impact motivation had over players had changed and developed over the years. It is clear that the importance of personal relationships between the coach and athlete has not changed, showing the clear significance motivation has over the individuals within the football club regardless of the specific time periods. For example, when the head coach finally tries to help their players on a more personal level, it creates key communication between themselves and athletes in which leads increase quality level and performance(see, Duda J.L., Balaguer I, 2007). When further discussing the impact of motivation, Conor Kane stated:

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"My way would be to encourage the lads before the game or sometimes say something to get them angry and get a reaction out of them. It all depends on the person you're trying to get a reaction from".

Several participants spoke about how motivation can be communicated between individuals by seeking an emotional reaction from them, whether that is through positive emotions or negative emotions. Some individuals need an arm around their shoulder and to be comoref influence their performances, whilst some need an angry reaction from within. As previously stated, real-world examples of these approaches can be found in football clubs around the world, such as Manchester United. Sir Alex Ferguson can be seen as a specific example of this , demonstrating good man management based on specific individuals.

6.5 Leadership and Club Culture

In this section , the main finding was to understand the effect that leadership can have over club culture , whilst understanding whether the club culture has a positive or negative effect over various factors within the football clubs. As previously stated, club culture plays an important role in the ideology of a club and signifies a specific way of life whomever is involved within the club as seen in previously conducted research(Robbins and Coulter,2005). Schein(1992) has proposed the correlation and relationship between leadership and organisational culture, which has also seen a positive correlation between leadership and the clubs. All participants were asked about their view on culture and the effect that leadership can have on their current or previous team's culture , trying to understand each individual's perspective on the theme at hand. Not only were they conscious of culture within their football clubs, but also its prevalent increase in importance(see, Yafang Tasi ,2011).Club culture is becoming more important as clubs develop and grow in the modern footballing industry. A challenge for any football club is to aim at creating a long lasting footballing legacy that can develop the club and players involved, having a specific "culture" that can have a long lasting impact on the achievements and performances of the team Within any club there's already a culture that exists as there has been previous ideas and behaviours that previous managers, coaches, players and hierarchy have been associated with. However, this raises the questions as to whether leadership plays a role in successful club culture.

One of the arguments was to understand whether leadership plays a driving force into the adaptation of specific cultures within football clubs. This raises the question as to whether there is a connection between culture and leadership in organisational cultures and microcultures(Schein). When interviewees were asked if they believed that leadership play a driving force in the creation and adoption of culture within their clubs(current/previous), responses varied but most focused on the importance of group cohesion and team bonding. Several respondents brought up topics of discussion that were quite insightful to the research process, moving the focus away from on-field performances and focusing on the off field activities that help develop and maintain good culture. The following quote is from one participant when asked about his opinion on leadership being a driving force on overall club culture.

"I believe that leadership is a driving force for culture within a team. I have always got on well with my teammates. It is important that you do as these are people that you are with 5-6 times a week. I don't think you need to be "best friends'' with your teammates but I think it is important to get along with teammates and create a good culture in the team as this will make it easier to work constructively with one another especially if we have a poor run of results``.

The participant spoke extensively about the importance of group cohesion , and how this plays a major role in creating good culture within the football team. He spoke about how each individual did not have to be close on a personal level, yet to work together constructively in order to reach their common goal as a team. This relates back to the leadership concept , as specific individuals must lead each individual to work with one another to reach their team targets. This is a major challenge for many leaders as some individuals(eg. Players, Coaches) have less longevity within football clubs if they are not reaching their club objectives.

"Yeah we get on very well when your with a team everyday of the week your gonna get to know all them and I think it's important to know everyone away from football like we'd go on nights out together and go for food, our captain drives leadership he doesn't let standards drop even if it's a gym session which rubs off on everyone else".

The result showed a clear need for positive group cohesion along with healthy working environments in order to produce good culture. Each interview showed a clear need for group

togetherness both on the pitch and off the pitch in order to maintain a healthy culture within their clubs, noted in literature such as Juneja(2015). Both participants both spoke clearly about the importance of togetherness between themselves and the others within their group, as this creates enhanced performances and increases overall quality that indicates the overall culture within the club. This in turn can be determined by the leaders within the group, whether that is a coach or player, to maintain this prevailing culture. As previously stated, the moivalal climate within the clubs plays a major role in a clubs culture as it can determine a specific set of attitudes, values and beliefs throughout the club. The motivational climate might be one of the potential aspects that could shed light on what limits or enhances athlete satisfaction(Duda,Balaguer,2007), which may lead to success on and off the pitch within football clubs based on the increased satisfaction which can . Although it takes time for club culture to be expressed over a short period of time , over time it can promote individual success along with team success. There has seemed to be a lot of unanswered questions on the impact that successful club culture can actually have. To show the impact it can have , a participant stated :

"We definitely all get along with one another , and as a team sport that is vital to get the best out of the team. I would have to say that leadership is a driving force for culture within a team as without leadership in a team it could be very hard to bind with each other and have the motivation to play well when needed. That's what our leaders usually do in a team/group, they pick you up and push you when you're down".

The findings in this section all showed the significant impact that leaders throughout a club can have on the overall culture, stated in past literature such as (Acet, Gumusgul ,Isik 2017). The leaders can have a major impact on overall player and group developments, encouraging long term mentality and behaviours throughout the club that can have a significant impact on the long term success of the club. It can determine a clear and simple mentality throughout the club that can have long lasting effects , as new coaches and managers come and go quite rapidly in the modern football era(see, Morrow, 2014).

7. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the impact that various leadership factors could have on various aspects of professional football clubs, with a particular focus on both athletes and coaches/managers. The study sought to quantify the impact that leadership can have on

various aspects of professional football clubs, an area of research that has received little attention in the past. The dissertation attempted to identify any similarities in the responses of the participants, who were all current or former athletes or coaches. The small sample size within the research was a limitation , although participants' answers provided significant data necessarily for the overall result and did not hinder results/analysis. One of the main areas of concern was determining whether specific leadership styles and approaches have a significant impact on the performance of both players and management.

One of the most significant findings was the level of influence that leadership has on athlete performance, with a lack of leadership within a team resulting in a decrease in performance quality and player motivation. Furthermore, the research updates the existing literature on the relationship between leadership and professional football clubs. It is clear that both the coach and athlete leadership have a significant impact on not only their own performance but also the performance of their teammates. The interview results enabled my dissertation to establish and support several of my overall objectives, including seeking clarity on the concept of leadership within professional football clubs and the overall effect it can have on a variety of factors within the clubs.

Although the findings were based primarily on individuals with prior or current experience in the Irish Football League, they provided support for the general impact it can have in various footballing leagues. The impact of different leadership styles on different groups of people as well as different environments was a key finding in the research study. Due to leadership within football clubs being a key cause of success, we might have expected a variety of different leadership approaches and styles. However, the findings revealed that all of the participants had very similar experiences. All participants appeared to have had a similar experience with managers who change their specific leadership styles and approaches depending on the situation.

The findings revealed coaches being authoritative with specific individuals, sometimes in order to elicit a personal reaction in order to further develop the players and the team. The coaches all seemed to base their leadership style and approach on specific periods throughout the season, such as during the pre-season, when they would become more authoritarian and less personal with their players in order to achieve the specific performance levels required for success. It is clear that effective leadership requires a great deal of thought in order to be

successful within football clubs, with the most prominent individuals flourishing throughout the club with effective leadership.

Furthermore, the study investigated how specific leadership styles and approaches were personally developed, and whether social and economic backgrounds played a role. Every participant had evidence of an individual who played a significant role in the development of their approaches to leadership within the football world. Individuals with previous or previous experience in the footballing world, in particular, have transferred their knowledge to the participants, demonstrating the importance of leadership. Furthermore, it was discovered that the participants' knowledge of leadership was further developed as a result of their own experience in the footballing world, where they gained leadership experience from other players and coaches. The findings revealed a clear relationship between an individual's background/past experience and their idea of leadership.This outcome has a clear impact on how these participants view leadership, understanding its importance not only for them as individuals, but also for the overall club and team that they represent.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Questions:

1. Do you feel that your past experiences, such as your background, have influenced your approach to leadership?

2. How would you describe your coach's style ?

3. How would you describe your approach to leadership when playing , or off the pitch?

4. Are there any previous individuals in sport that you look up to that posed major leadership traits?

5. What sort of feedback do your coaches give you ?

6. In what specific ways do/did you try to motivate your team? What importance would you give to motivation within teams , and from the coaches ?

7. Do you believe leadership influences the way you play or train?

8. Within your clubs , what sort of techniques have managers and coaches made attempts to motivate you and your teammates. If so , how ?

9. Do you and your teammates get on with each other along with working constructively with one another? Is leadership a driving force for culture within the team ?

Appendix B

Consent form:

- I…………………………………… voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the
  opportunity to ask questions about the study.

- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.

- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity can remain anonymous.

- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in my dissertation and published papers .

- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities.

- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in NCI for 5 years.

- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for 5 years within NCI.

- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Ben McShane , International Business , mcshaneben45@gmail.com, National College of Ireland.

Signature of research participant
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Signature of participant ,Date

Signature of researcher , Date

—------------------------------ —---------------------
I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.