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The Relationship between Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication of the Coach on the Psychological Climate of the Sports Team

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Abstract:

The study aims to investigate the relationship between the verbal and non-verbal communication of the coach and the psychological climate of the sports team. For this purpose, we employed a descriptive methodology with correlational approach on a purposively selected sample of 30 football players. As for data collection, it was done by using the Communication Scale and the Psychological Climate Scale. After collecting and statistically analyzing the data, a medium correlation was found between the coach's communication and the psychological climate of the sports team. And on the basis of this, the study recommends giving significant importance to communication and its means, as it serves to transfer experiences, skills, and ideas, as well as enable and improve factors that enhance the psychological climate within sports teams.

Keywords: *Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication; Psychological Climate*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Sports are considered one of the most significant social structures in building any society. As sports communication during training processes takes the form of transferring information, ideas, attitudes, and scientific and practical values that fall under the principles of sports. Therefore, those responsible for communicative training processes seek to integrate and instill these principles in the hearts and minds of active sports participants (Khellout, 2019).

Human communication occurs through two systems: a verbal system represented by a verbal language- spoken and written, and a non-verbal system that includes behavioral patterns and various expressive forms (Oueld Al-Nabiah, 2017). For an effective communication, there must be an ability to combine verbal and non-verbal communication, where each complements the other, in terms of verbal and non-verbal communication match, such as the match of body language with oral speech. The training message is a format of verbal or non-verbal symbols specifically designed to achieve a specific behavioral goal during the communication situation (Amirat, 2013).

The communication process involves two parties, either between individuals or between an individual and a group, as seen in the training process between the coach and the trainee (athlete) or between the coach and a group of players. Successful communication involves the use of verbal language, such as words, voice, or any other verbal expression with skill, as occurs in learning or training sports skills, in addition to the use of sign language, symbols, or body movements that facilitate the communication process. Therefore, communication between the coach and the players is considered an effective element in the training process and is deemed as an important means in achieving the desired goals (Zemmouri, 2018).

Training scientists and those concerned with sports agree that there are essential elements contributing to the training process, such as the curriculum, management, referees, and the coach .

An ambitious and successful coach positively influences and improves the interaction between them and the players. To ensure the success of their work, certain fundamental psychological aspects must be present, including personal characteristics. Numerous studies and researches indicate that most successful coaches possess strong personal traits such as self-confidence, self-esteem, emotional stability, decision-making ability, responsibility, interpersonal skills, as well as verbal and non-verbal communication skills. These traits help in disciplining players both on and off the field (Kribaa, 2019).

The level of mental health is closely associated with the availability of a suitable psychological climate—a climate that encompasses a range of human relationships connecting each individual within the community. It reflects the quality and lifestyle patterns, standards, values, goals, personal relationships, and practices. Many scholars have emphasized the role of the psychological climate that should be provided to ensure a calm atmosphere that helps individuals achieve the desired success (Hachem, 2021) .

The psychological climate is considered one of the most crucial requirements in sports, encompassing things, people, and ideas related to the athlete. As it is also a significant factor in the psychological health and attitudes of players towards the team and their performance. Modern trends confirm that the psychological climate in which players live, and in which a group of colleagues participate to achieve more and better productivity, provides players with a sense of tranquility and confidence. Consequently, this gives them the ability to adapt, be satisfied with their performance, all of which are linked to indicators that include many non-material factors such as feelings and sensations within the individual and team members (Mohammed and Akheroun2013).

"Due to the importance of communication, several studies have been conducted on this topic. Among these studies is the study of Amirat (2013), which found that non-verbal language plays a prominent role in human communications and relationships. Another study by Lot and Ben Mesbah (2019) showed that communication strategies within Algerian sports clubs struggled from several deficiencies, some of which include concealment of information and a lack of communication competence among managers and coaches. Additionally, ZEHAf's study (2016) indicated a weak negative correlation between downward communication and organizational loyalty among employees of the Directorate of Youth and Sports, as well as a weak inverse relationship between upward communication and organizational loyalty among

employees of the Directorate of Youth and Sports.

As for studies related to the psychological climate, Mohammed's study (2013) revealed a strong correlation between the psychological climate and achievement in certain arena and field events. Another study by Zebidi and Akheroun. (2013) revealed a significant moral relation between the psychological and social climate and the motivational drive for athletic achievement among players in team sports at Mosul University.

Based on the aforementioned, the aim of our research is to explore the relationship between coach communication and the psychological climate of a sports team, in accordance with the perspective of football players in the junior category. And that is by posing the following question: Is there a relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication from the coach and the psychological climate of the sports team, according to the perspective of junior football players?

In this study, the researchers employed the descriptive methodology with a correlational approach. The study was conducted on a sample of 30 football players whose opinions were gathered through a scale (measuring verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as a scale assessing the psychological climate of the sports team.) As for the statistical tools, the following were used: (arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and correlation coefficient (Eta) were used). The importance of our research lies in its scientific value in highlighting the level of verbal and non-verbal communication of football coaches, as well as the extent of a coach's diversity in conveying information through body language or verbal interaction with players; As this study aimed to emphasize the communication skills of the coach by examining their use of proper language during training sessions or matches, quality of the message. The message should be intriguing to make the addressee accept it from the addresser, and follow it through to the end. This study also contributes to highlighting the importance of using clear language that is systematic, coherent, and consistent. Additionally, the study sheds light on the importance of the psychological climate in strengthening cohesion within the sports team.

1. Concepts and Terminology Definition

1.1. Communication: Jean-Claude Abric views communication through two models: a technical (or artistic) model, often referring to Shannon's model (1952), consisting of an addresser, addressee, message, encoding, decoding, and feedback. As for the second model, it is related to the psycho-sociology field, defining communication as: the sum of processes causing the exchange of information and meanings between individuals in a particular social situation (Rahmani, 2018).

1.2. Verbal Communication: Spoken words are used as a means of comprehension and conveying messages for interaction with others, either through speech or in writing.

1.3. Non-Verbal Communication: Also known as silent language, it involves facial expressions and body language. It includes: sign language, consisting of simple or multiple signs used by individuals in communication with others (Kribia, 2019).

As for the Procedural Definition: The overall score obtained by players through answering the items in the verbal and non-verbal communication scale.

1.4. Psychological Climate: Defined in a glossary of psychology as:

“The qualitative aspect of mutual personal relationships that manifests as the total sum of psychological conditions, it either facilitates, or hinders productive activities and the overall development of an individual within a group”.

The psychological climate is described as a sensory cognitive phenomenon, wherein the individual widely participates as a presumed organizational unit. Its fundamental function is to shape individual behavior according to the organization's requirements.

It is an internal perception of how individuals evaluate internal states and relationships among group members, that each person can clearly assess (Saadallah and Ismail, 2016).

And in a terminology glossary of social sciences, it is stated that: “The psychological climate is a social phenomenon where mutual influence occurs between individuals, groups, or entities.

This interaction takes place through direct and indirect physical communication. (Ben LARBI, 2014).

As for the procedural definition, it is the overall score obtained by the players through answering the items in the psychological climate scale for the sports team”.

II. Methods and Materials:

* **Research Methodology:** The descriptive methodology with a correlational approach was employed due to its suitability for the nature of the study.

* **Research Sample and Selection Method:** The study included a sample of 30 football players, purposefully selected from the Sports Association of Youth in Ain El Hadjar, Province of Bouira.

* **Research Tools:** The researcher applied a verbal and non-verbal communication scale developed by HocineNadjm AL-AMRANI, where in terms of validity, he relied on content and construct validity. For reliability, the split-half method was used, and the stability was assessed, yielding 0.83 for coaches and 0.81 for players. In addition to Cronbach's alpha coefficient that yielded 0.74 for coaches and 0.72 for players. Concerning objectivity, the researcher provided a correction key without being influenced by the personal judgments of the correctors.

Additionally, the Sports Psychological Climate Scale, developed by Mohamed Hassan Allaoui, was applied, who solely relied on establishing its validity through concurrent validity by applying it simultaneously with the Sports Team Cohesion Scale. Concerning reliability, he relied on determining the stability coefficient by reapplying the scale after three weeks, resulting in a coefficient of 0.68, whereas the Cronbach's alpha was 0.81.

* **Statistical Methods:** The SPSS program was employed to calculate the following:

- Arithmetic mean.
- Standard deviation.
- Eta coefficient for correlation.

III. Results and discussion:

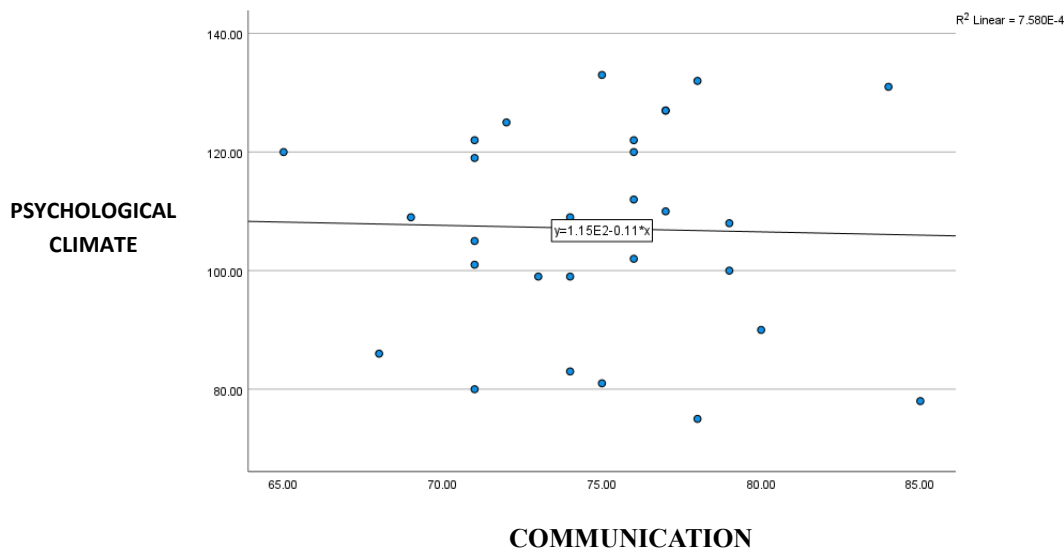
* **Results:**

Table (1): Illustrates the results of the normal distribution of variables using the Shapiro-Wilk test:

Variables	Shapiro-Wilk value	Probability	Result
Communication – Psychological Climate	0.97	0.48	Statistically non-significant

The table shows that the p-value for the Shapiro-Wilk test is 0.48, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the data follows a normal distribution.

Figure (1): Illustrates the spread shape of the variables.



The figure shows that the spread of the variables is non-linear, thus the Pearson linear correlation coefficient is not suitable for measuring the relationship between the variables.

Table (2): Illustrates the descriptive statistics of variables.

Variables	Lowest value	Highest value	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
Communication	65	85	74.90	4.37
Psychological Climate	75	133	107.10	17.41

Table (3): Shows the results of the Eta coefficient for the relationship between communication and psychological climate.

Variables	Eta coefficient	Explanation
Communication	0.66	medium
Psychological Climate		

It appears from the table that the Eta coefficient value between the variables reached 0.66 indicating a medium correlation between the variables.

*** Discussion:**

The results revealed a significant correlation between the coach's communication and the psychological climate of the sports team. These results appear logical to a higher extent, considering communication being an effective process in the training workflow and a crucial means that contribute to achieve the desired goals. Therefore, the success of the training process is closely associated with the nature of the communication or interaction occurring between the coach and the players, or among the players themselves (Zamouri, 2018). This is further explained by the coach's expertise and experience within his specialty in dealing with players in line with their capabilities. Since communication is only a social process, the coach takes advantage of his training to enhance social relationships in the best possible way, which facilitates the communication process with the players. As this aligns with Qadid's study (2019), which indicated that taking advantage of the professional experience of a sports and physical education teacher contributes to the communication and cohesion of students among each other, and positively impacts social and moral motivation among them.

The researcher attributes these results to the coach's awareness of the importance of communication between him and the players. As he endeavors to make their communication clear and effective, delivering evident messages that enable players to understand and respond to the content of the message. In addition, the coach implements verbal and non-verbal symbols suitable for the age, culture, and the special abilities of the addressees, diversifying vocal tones while considering the pace and speed during speaking and talking in a manner that suits the training situation. Additionally, the coach emphasizes listening and positive interaction with players, as understanding their feelings and emotions is not always easy in their observable behavior. To achieve this, the coach must be attentive to a crucial skill for the communication with the player to work, and that is to stand in the shoes of the addressee and listen to what crosses his thoughts during the elaboration of different scenarios.

The study showed the extent of interaction between the coach and the player in the communication process through the coach's communication skills as a sports leader. As was indicated in Amirat's study (2013), that the effective communicator possesses the characteristics of a successful negotiator, and there are general rules and principles that should be taken into consideration and benefited from during the verbal communication process: clarifying ideas before the process of communication, having a clear goal, and the verbal addresser should be understandable and a good listener.

On the other hand, psychological climate is an essential factor in the sports field. Where we can notice that there are some individuals that face social and psychological clusters, conflicts, and

issues, leading to poor performance and poor athletic excellence, reaching low levels. Whereas, the presence of a positive psychological climate helps fostering social relationships, interactions, and participation among individuals. As it creates a sense of collaboration, love, and boosts moral spirit among individuals, resulting in mutual social relationships (ABBOUD, 2017).

Coaches play a vital role in encouraging players to play together as a team. Therefore, they need to understand how interactions among team members impact athletic performance. As most coaches and sports psychologists agree that a team consisting of the best players does not necessarily create the most successful teams; For instance, we may find some major clubs in different sports, such as football, do not win the league or cup championships despite having talented players in those teams, this is because a good team is more than just assembling its members; but rather the success of the team depends on working together effectively, and that is considered the predominant factor for a team's success (Ben LARBI, 2014, p. 52).

Abdelhafid and Bahi (2001, as cited in Ben LARBI, 2014, p. 52-53), citing Caron (1984), affirm that cohesion and collective stability are associated in a circular manner, which means that the longer the team stays together, the more likely cohesion will appear, and the more cohesive the team becomes, the less likely members are to leave the team.

Fawzi and Badr al-Din (2001, as cited in Ben LARBI, 2014, p. 53) highlight the importance of measuring social relationships among members of the sports team as a process aimed at objectively understanding the nature of the psychological climate among them. This measurement, that reveals the degree of interaction among team members, should be the first step in enhancing the interactive and productive efficiency of the team. In addition, some team climate factors can be changed more easily than others, exceptionally, all of them can impact the effective performance of the group, some of which include: social support, proximity, excellence, justice, and similarity. Moreover, the coach has the most influence on the team climate.

In addition to being an important means of achieving success and uplifting performance level, and considering communication effectiveness as well as the nature of the psychological climate in relation to players' performance and their relationships within the team, with that being said, this study supports the results of other researchers. As an extension of their efforts, it quantitatively appreciates the interaction between these variables.

IV. Conclusion:

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication of the coach and the psychological climate of the sports team. And after collecting and analyzing the data, we came to conclude that there is a medium correlation between these variables, and based on these, we recommend the following:

- The necessity for coaches to employ different communication means and skills to convey information to players.

- Train and develop coaches in communication skills and educating them about its positive impact on players' performance and behavior.

- Emphasize the importance of communication and its various forms, as it serves to transfer experiences, skills, and ideas. It is also necessary to diversify the use of both verbal and non-verbal communication, ensuring that the language used is clear, cohesive, and widely understood to guarantee effective communication between the coach and players, thus ensuring a successful coaching message.

- Enable and enhance factors that improve the psychological climate within sports teams.

- Provide a suitable and appropriate psychological climate for a successful coaching process.

- Provide specialized training courses for coaches to enhance their skills for an appropriate psychological climate.

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