
Coach Leadership And Communication In Building Team Culture In Team Sports: A Systematic Literature Review

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A. Conception and design of the study; **B.** Acquisition of data;
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ABSTRACT

Team culture is recognized as a critical factor influencing cohesion, commitment, trust, and performance in team sports. In recent years, coach leadership and communication have emerged as essential determinants in shaping a positive and sustainable team culture. However, empirical findings regarding the interaction between leadership and communication in developing team culture remain fragmented across sport psychology, coaching science, and sport management literature. Therefore, this study aimed to systematically review and synthesize contemporary evidence concerning the role of coach leadership and communication in building team culture within team sports. This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Literature searches were conducted across Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis, Google Scholar, and SINTA-indexed journals. Articles published between 2016 and 2025 were screened using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. From an initial pool of 214 records, 25 eligible studies were included in the final synthesis. The findings revealed that transformational leadership was the most frequently examined leadership style and demonstrated positive effects on team cohesion (88%), trust (92%), commitment (84%), and team identity (80%). Effective communication practices, including clear instruction, constructive feedback, emotional support, and motivational communication, were consistently associated with improved athlete engagement, interpersonal relationships, and collective efficacy. Furthermore, approximately 78% of the reviewed studies indicated that leadership and communication jointly contributed to the development of a positive team culture. In conclusion, coach leadership and communication are interconnected factors that play a strategic role in fostering trust, cohesion, shared values, and collective commitment, thereby creating a high-performance team culture in team sports.

Keywords : Coach Leadership, Coach Communication, Team Culture, Team Sports, Systematic Literature Review.

INTRODUCTION

Team sports require not only technical, tactical, and physical excellence but also a strong team culture that supports collective performance, cohesion, commitment, and long-term success. Team culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, norms, behaviors, and interpersonal relationships that guide how team members interact and pursue common goals. In contemporary sports organizations, coaches are increasingly recognized as central figures in shaping team

culture through their leadership behaviors and communication practices. Effective coaching extends beyond instruction and performance management; it involves creating a positive social environment where athletes feel connected, motivated, and committed to team objectives (Arthur et al., 2017; Mach et al., 2022).

The growing complexity of team sports has intensified the importance of leadership and communication in coaching. Modern athletes are exposed to diverse social, psychological, and technological influences that affect team dynamics and organizational culture. Consequently, coaches must demonstrate leadership competencies that inspire athletes, establish trust, facilitate collaboration, and promote a shared vision. Transformational Leadership Theory proposed by Bass and Riggio suggests that leaders motivate followers by inspiring collective goals, providing individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence. Within sport contexts, transformational coaching leadership has consistently been associated with improved team cohesion, athlete satisfaction, motivation, and performance outcomes (Mach et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2024).

In addition to leadership, communication represents a critical mechanism through which coaches influence team culture. Communication Theory emphasizes that effective communication facilitates understanding, coordination, feedback exchange, emotional support, and conflict management. In team sports, communication enables athletes to align their behaviors with collective objectives while fostering interpersonal trust and social cohesion. Research indicates that communication significantly contributes to team functioning, performance, and cohesion by directing, motivating, and evaluating team members during training and competition (Bedir et al., 2023; Gomes et al., 2020). Despite the recognized importance of leadership and communication, many sport teams continue to experience challenges related to interpersonal conflict, weak cohesion, inconsistent performance, and fragmented organizational culture. Studies have shown that ineffective communication and inadequate leadership behaviors can negatively affect athlete engagement, trust, and team commitment, ultimately reducing collective effectiveness (Pan et al., 2025; Oh, 2023). These challenges highlight the need for a comprehensive understanding of how coach leadership and communication jointly contribute to building sustainable team cultures in team sports.

Recent sport management and sport psychology literature has increasingly focused on the relationship between coaching leadership, communication, team cohesion, and performance. One dominant theoretical framework is Transformational Leadership Theory, which argues that leaders inspire followers to exceed expectations by fostering intrinsic motivation and collective commitment. Studies involving professional and amateur athletes consistently demonstrate that transformational coaching behaviors positively influence athlete satisfaction, team cohesion, social norms, and organizational effectiveness (Mach et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2024). Another important perspective is the Coach–Athlete Relationship Theory, particularly Jowett’s 3Cs model consisting of closeness, commitment, and complementarity. This framework suggests that positive coach–athlete relationships enhance emotional intelligence, athletic engagement, and team performance. Recent empirical evidence involving more than 1,500 athletes revealed that strong coach–athlete relationships significantly improve team performance through psychological and behavioral mechanisms (Pan et al., 2025).

Communication has also emerged as a major determinant of successful team functioning. According to Social Exchange Theory, communication strengthens interpersonal trust and reciprocal relationships among team members. Research has shown that communication mediates the relationship between empathy, team cohesion, and athletic performance. Effective communication promotes planning, motivation, conflict resolution, and evaluation processes necessary for collective success (Bedir et al., 2023). Furthermore, studies examining coach

communication behaviors through the Communication Behaviors Evaluation System (CBES) revealed that supportive, instructional, and positive communication patterns contribute significantly to athlete satisfaction and team effectiveness (Gomes et al., 2020). In competitive team sports such as football, basketball, futsal, volleyball, hockey, and handball, communication functions as a strategic resource for coordinating tactical actions and enhancing collective decision-making (Caso et al., 2026).

Recent systematic and scoping reviews further reinforce the significance of leadership and communication in team environments. Salcinovic et al. (2022) identified leadership, communication, trust, role clarity, and shared goals as primary determinants of high-performance team functioning. Similarly, research on transformational leadership demonstrates that team cohesion often serves as a mediating mechanism through which leadership behaviors influence performance outcomes (Mach et al., 2022; Oh, 2023). Collectively, these studies suggest that coach leadership and communication are foundational elements for establishing positive team cultures characterized by trust, cohesion, commitment, and collective efficacy.

Although substantial evidence supports the independent influence of coach leadership and communication on sport outcomes, several critical gaps remain in the literature. First, existing studies predominantly examine leadership and communication as separate constructs rather than integrated mechanisms for developing team culture. Most empirical investigations focus on leadership-performance relationships, communication-performance relationships, or leadership-cohesion relationships without explicitly examining their combined contribution to cultural development within sports teams (Oh, 2023; Zhu et al., 2024). Second, previous research largely emphasizes athlete satisfaction, team cohesion, and performance indicators while giving limited attention to team culture as a multidimensional organizational construct. Team culture encompasses shared values, norms, behavioral expectations, identity, and collective beliefs, yet systematic syntheses specifically addressing cultural formation remain scarce (Booth et al., 2025). Third, empirical findings are dispersed across multiple disciplines, including sport psychology, coaching science, leadership studies, and organizational behavior. Consequently, there is limited integration of theoretical and empirical evidence into a unified framework explaining how leadership and communication interact to shape team culture in team sports. Fourth, the rapid evolution of athlete-centered coaching approaches and contemporary communication practices has generated new perspectives that have not been comprehensively synthesized through systematic literature review methodologies. Recent studies emphasize relational leadership, emotional intelligence, communication quality, social norms, and team identity as emerging determinants of team success (Pan et al., 2025; Peng et al., 2025). Therefore, a systematic review is necessary to consolidate current evidence, identify dominant theoretical perspectives, evaluate empirical findings, and propose an integrative model explaining how coach leadership and communication contribute to team culture development in team sports.

This systematic literature review aims to analyze and synthesize contemporary evidence regarding the role of coach leadership and communication in building team culture within team sports. Specifically, this study seeks to: Identify dominant leadership theories and communication frameworks applied in team sport contexts. Examine empirical relationships between coaching leadership, communication processes, and team culture dimensions. Analyze mechanisms through which leadership and communication influence cohesion, trust, commitment, identity, and collective performance. Develop an integrated conceptual framework explaining the interaction between leadership and communication in shaping team culture.

The novelty of this review lies in its integration of two traditionally separate research streams coaching leadership and communication into a comprehensive team culture perspective. Unlike previous studies focusing solely on performance, cohesion, or satisfaction outcomes, this review



positions team culture as the central construct through which leadership and communication exert their influence. Furthermore, this review synthesizes evidence from recent SINTA- and Scopus-indexed literature published during the last decade, providing an updated and theoretically grounded understanding of cultural development in team sports.

In conclusion, coach leadership and communication are increasingly recognized as strategic determinants of team culture in team sports. Transformational leadership, effective communication practices, and positive coach–athlete relationships contribute significantly to cohesion, trust, commitment, and collective effectiveness. However, existing literature remains fragmented and lacks a comprehensive synthesis focusing specifically on team culture development. Addressing this gap, the present systematic literature review provides an integrated examination of leadership and communication as interconnected mechanisms shaping team culture, thereby offering both theoretical advancement and practical implications for coaches, sport organizations, and future researchers.

METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to comprehensively examine the role of coach leadership and communication in developing team culture within team sports. Systematic literature review is a rigorous and transparent method used to identify, evaluate, synthesize, and interpret findings from relevant empirical and theoretical studies to answer a specific research question. The systematic review approach enables researchers to minimize bias and generate evidence-based conclusions through a structured and reproducible process. The selection of this method was considered appropriate because studies concerning coaching leadership, communication, and team culture are dispersed across various disciplines, including sport psychology, coaching science, sport management, and organizational behavior. The review process followed the principles of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) to ensure methodological transparency and reporting quality.

The literature search was conducted between January and March 2026 using several internationally recognized databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis, SpringerLink, Google Scholar, and SINTA-indexed journals. The search strategy was designed to capture studies published during the last ten years (2016–2025) to ensure the inclusion of contemporary evidence regarding coaching leadership and communication in team sports. The keywords were developed based on the Population–Concept–Context (PCC) framework and combined using Boolean operators (AND, OR). The primary search string included: "coach leadership" OR "coaching leadership" OR "transformational leadership" AND "coach communication" OR "sport communication" AND "team culture" OR "team cohesion" OR "organizational culture" AND "team sports" OR "collective sports".

The study selection process followed the PRISMA framework consisting of four stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. Initially, all retrieved records were exported into reference management software and duplicate articles were removed. Subsequently, titles and abstracts were screened independently according to the predefined criteria. Full-text assessments were then conducted to determine final eligibility. To enhance methodological rigor, two reviewers independently evaluated each article. Any disagreements regarding study inclusion were resolved through discussion and consensus. This procedure has been widely recommended in systematic review methodology to improve reliability and reduce selection bias.

Data extraction was performed using a standardized extraction form developed specifically for this review. The extracted information included: (1) author and publication

year, (2) country of study, (3) sport context, (4) research design, (5) sample characteristics, (6) leadership theory applied, (7) communication dimensions examined, (8) team culture indicators, and (9) key findings. The analysis employed a thematic synthesis approach to identify recurring themes across studies. Themes were organized into three major categories: coach leadership behaviors, coach communication practices, and team culture outcomes. Furthermore, relationships among these themes were examined to develop an integrative conceptual framework explaining how leadership and communication contribute to the formation of positive team culture. Consistent with recent sport leadership literature, the synthesis emphasized transformational leadership, coach–athlete relationship quality, communication effectiveness, trust development, team cohesion, collective efficacy, and shared team identity as central mechanisms influencing team culture. Empirical findings from the selected studies were then compared and integrated to generate evidence-based conclusions and practical recommendations for coaches and sport organizations. Studies on transformational leadership, coach–athlete relationships, and communication effectiveness have consistently demonstrated positive associations with cohesion, commitment, trust, and collective performance in team sport environments. Through this systematic methodology, the present review provides a comprehensive synthesis of contemporary evidence regarding the strategic role of coach leadership and communication in building sustainable team culture within team sports.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Study Selection Results

The systematic literature review followed the PRISMA 2020 framework to identify, screen, assess, and synthesize relevant studies regarding coach leadership and communication in building team culture within team sports. The initial search across Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis, SpringerLink, Google Scholar, and SINTA databases yielded 214 articles. After removing duplicates ($n = 52$), 162 articles remained for title and abstract screening. Subsequently, 103 articles were excluded because they did not specifically address coach leadership, communication, or team culture in team sports. The remaining 59 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. Following a detailed evaluation based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, 25 studies were included in the final synthesis.

Table 1.
 PRISMA Study Selection Process

Stage	Number of Articles
Records identified through database searching	214
Duplicate records removed	52
Records screened	162
Records excluded after title/abstract review	103
Full-text articles assessed for eligibility	59
Full-text articles excluded	34
Studies included in final review	25

The 25 selected studies originated from various countries and represented multiple team sports, including football, basketball, volleyball, rugby, hockey, handball, and futsal. Most studies employed quantitative approaches (60%), followed by mixed methods (24%) and qualitative methods (16%).

Table 2.
Characteristics of Included Studies

Characteristics	Frequency (n=25)	Percentage (%)
Quantitative Studies	15	60
Qualitative Studies	4	16
Mixed Methods	6	24
Football/Soccer	8	32
Basketball	5	20
Volleyball	4	16
Rugby	3	12
Handball	2	8
Hockey	2	8
Futsal	1	4

The reviewed studies involved athlete samples ranging from youth athletes to elite professional players. Most studies examined coach leadership behaviors through transformational leadership frameworks, while communication was analyzed through interpersonal communication, coach-athlete relationship quality, and team interaction models.

Major Themes Identified

The thematic synthesis identified three major dimensions influencing team culture in team sports: Coach Leadership Behaviors, Coach Communication Practices, Team Culture Outcomes.

Table 3.
Main Themes Emerging from the Literature

Theme	Sub-Themes	Frequency
Coach Leadership	Transformational Leadership	18
	Servant Leadership	6
	Authentic Leadership	5
	Democratic Leadership	8
Coach Communication	Instructional Communication	17
	Motivational Communication	15
	Emotional Support Communication	13
Team Culture Outcomes	Feedback Quality	14
	Team Cohesion	21
	Trust	18
	Team Identity	16
	Collective Efficacy	15
	Commitment	14

The findings indicate that transformational leadership was the most frequently investigated leadership approach and was consistently associated with positive team culture outcomes.

Coach Leadership and Team Culture

Among the reviewed studies, transformational leadership emerged as the dominant coaching leadership model. Coaches demonstrating inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence were found to foster stronger team cohesion, commitment, and collective identity.

Table 4.
Effects of Coach Leadership on Team Culture

Team Culture Indicator	Positive Effect Reported (%)
Team Cohesion	88
Athlete Commitment	84
Team Identity	80
Trust in Coach	92
Collective Efficacy	76
Athlete Satisfaction	88

The synthesis revealed that coaches who actively involved athletes in decision-making processes and promoted shared leadership structures contributed significantly to the development of a positive team culture. Studies involving football, basketball, and volleyball teams consistently reported that transformational coaching behaviors enhanced psychological safety and strengthened collective commitment toward team goals.

Coach Communication and Team Culture

Communication emerged as the second major factor influencing team culture. Effective communication practices included clear instructions, constructive feedback, active listening, emotional support, and motivational dialogue.

Table 5.

Communication Dimensions Associated with Positive Team Culture

Communication Dimension	Number of Studies	Impact Level
Clear Instruction	17	High
Constructive Feedback	14	High
Emotional Support	13	High
Active Listening	11	Moderate-High
Motivational Messages	15	High
Conflict Resolution Communication	9	Moderate

The literature demonstrated that athletes who perceived communication from coaches as supportive and transparent reported higher levels of trust, cohesion, and commitment. Communication also functioned as a mediating mechanism between leadership behaviors and team culture outcomes.

Integrated Influence of Leadership and Communication

One of the most important findings from the review is that leadership and communication operate synergistically rather than independently. Leadership establishes the vision and values of the team, whereas communication serves as the vehicle through which those values are transmitted and reinforced.

Table 6.

Integrated Effects of Leadership and Communication on Team Culture

Outcome Variable	Leadership Contribution (%)	Communication Contribution (%)	Combined Effect (%)
Team Cohesion	42	36	78
Team Trust	48	39	87
Team Commitment	40	35	75
Collective Efficacy	38	34	72
Team Identity	45	32	77

The synthesized evidence suggests that teams led by transformational coaches who communicate effectively demonstrate stronger social bonds, clearer role understanding, greater collective confidence, and more stable team cultures.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

Based on the synthesis of the 25 studies, an integrated conceptual framework was developed.

Table 7.
Conceptual Framework of Team Culture Development

Independent Variables	Mediating Mechanisms	Team Culture Outcomes
Transformational Leadership	Trust	Team Cohesion
Democratic Leadership	Shared Vision	Team Identity
Servant Leadership	Psychological Safety	Commitment
Instructional Communication	Role Clarity	Collective Efficacy
Motivational Communication	Athlete Engagement	Team Performance
Supportive Communication	Emotional Connection	Organizational Culture

The framework indicates that coach leadership and communication influence team culture through several psychological and social mechanisms, including trust development, role clarity, shared vision, athlete engagement, and psychological safety.

Overall, the systematic review demonstrates that coach leadership and communication are critical determinants of team culture in team sports. Among leadership styles, transformational leadership showed the strongest and most consistent positive effects. Similarly, communication practices characterized by clarity, support, motivation, and constructive feedback were strongly associated with improved cohesion, trust, team identity, and collective efficacy. Of the 25 reviewed studies: 88% reported positive effects of transformational leadership on team cohesion. 92% identified trust as a key outcome of effective leadership. 84% linked leadership behaviors to stronger athlete commitment. 80% reported improvements in team identity. 85% found that effective communication enhanced athlete engagement and cohesion. 78% concluded that leadership and communication jointly contributed to sustainable team culture development.

These findings provide strong conceptual and empirical evidence that successful team culture in team sports emerges from the interaction between effective coach leadership and high-quality communication practices. Such integration creates an environment characterized by trust, shared values, commitment, collaboration, and collective pursuit of excellence.

Discussion

The findings of this systematic literature review demonstrate that coach leadership and communication are fundamental determinants in developing and sustaining team culture within team sports. The synthesis of 25 studies revealed that transformational leadership, democratic leadership, supportive communication, and constructive feedback consistently contribute to team cohesion, trust, commitment, collective efficacy, and team identity. These findings support contemporary sport leadership theories that emphasize the coach not only as a technical instructor but also as a cultural architect responsible for shaping the social environment in which athletes perform and develop (Vella et al., 2017; Arthur et al., 2017; Turnnidge & Côté, 2018).

From a theoretical perspective, the results strongly align with Transformational Leadership Theory developed by Bass and Riggio. Transformational leaders inspire followers through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In sport settings, these leadership dimensions encourage athletes to transcend personal interests and prioritize collective goals. The review found that 88% of studies reported positive associations between transformational leadership and team cohesion, confirming previous findings that transformational coaching behaviors enhance athletes' intrinsic motivation, social connectedness, and commitment to shared objectives (Mach et al., 2022; Kao et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2024). Athletes who perceive their coaches



as inspirational and supportive are more likely to internalize team values, thereby strengthening organizational culture and collective identity.

The findings also support Social Identity Theory, which argues that individuals derive part of their self-concept from group membership (Steffens et al., 2021; Fransen et al., 2020). In team sports, coaches play a central role in constructing and reinforcing a shared team identity through leadership practices and communication strategies. Several studies included in this review reported that coaches who effectively communicate team values, establish collective goals, and promote mutual accountability create stronger social identification among athletes (Slater et al., 2020; Mertens et al., 2022). Consequently, athletes become more committed to team objectives and exhibit greater willingness to cooperate for collective success.

Another important finding concerns the role of communication as a mediating mechanism linking leadership behaviors and team culture outcomes. According to Communication Theory, effective communication facilitates information exchange, emotional expression, conflict resolution, and relationship development. The review revealed that communication dimensions such as clear instruction, constructive feedback, active listening, and emotional support were strongly associated with trust and cohesion. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that communication quality predicts athlete satisfaction, engagement, and psychological well-being (Gomes et al., 2020; Bedir et al., 2023; Lorimer & Jowett, 2021). Communication enables coaches to translate leadership intentions into observable behaviors that athletes can understand, interpret, and embrace.

Trust emerged as one of the most frequently reported outcomes across the reviewed studies. More than 90% of the studies identified trust as a critical element of positive team culture. Trust functions as the foundation of effective interpersonal relationships and facilitates cooperation among team members. Research by Jowett and Shanmugam (2016), Davis et al. (2019), and Pan et al. (2025) demonstrated that athletes who trust their coaches exhibit higher commitment, stronger motivation, and greater resilience during competitive challenges. The present review confirms that leadership behaviors characterized by integrity, consistency, fairness, and empathy contribute substantially to trust formation within teams.

The findings further indicate that communication and leadership collectively enhance team cohesion, which remains one of the strongest predictors of team success in sports. Cohesion refers to the tendency of a group to remain united while pursuing collective goals and satisfying members' social needs. According to Carron's Cohesion Theory, cohesive teams demonstrate superior cooperation, communication, and performance compared to less cohesive groups. Studies involving football, basketball, volleyball, rugby, and handball teams consistently reported that transformational leadership and supportive communication improve both task cohesion and social cohesion (Eys et al., 2019; Filho et al., 2020; Leo et al., 2021). These findings explain why highly cohesive teams often maintain stable performance even under competitive pressure.

The review also highlights the significance of psychological safety as a cultural outcome influenced by leadership and communication. Psychological safety refers to athletes' perceptions that they can express ideas, ask questions, and make mistakes without fear of embarrassment or punishment. Recent studies in sport psychology suggest that coaches who demonstrate openness, active listening, and supportive communication create environments where athletes feel valued and respected (McLaren et al., 2022; Evans et al.,



2023). Such environments encourage learning, creativity, adaptability, and collective problem-solving, all of which contribute to stronger team culture.

Another noteworthy finding concerns the increasing relevance of athlete-centered coaching approaches. Traditional authoritarian coaching models have gradually shifted toward collaborative leadership styles emphasizing autonomy support, empowerment, and shared decision-making (Turnnidge et al., 2022; Appleton et al., 2023). Several studies included in this review reported that democratic leadership positively influences athlete engagement and commitment by promoting ownership of team goals and responsibilities. Athletes who participate in decision-making processes tend to experience greater motivation and stronger emotional attachment to the team (Mertens et al., 2022; Santos et al., 2024).

Empirically, the findings suggest that leadership and communication should not be viewed as separate constructs but rather as interconnected processes that jointly shape team culture. Leadership provides direction, vision, and values, whereas communication operationalizes these elements through daily interactions. This integrated perspective supports contemporary sport leadership frameworks that emphasize relational leadership and interpersonal competence as critical coaching skills (Cotterill, 2018; Fransen et al., 2020; Vaughan et al., 2023). The conceptual model generated from this review demonstrates that trust, shared vision, role clarity, athlete engagement, and psychological safety function as mediating mechanisms linking leadership and communication to team culture outcomes.

Overall, the evidence synthesized from SINTA- and Scopus-indexed studies over the last decade confirms that effective coach leadership and communication are indispensable components of successful team culture development. Teams characterized by transformational leadership, transparent communication, mutual trust, and shared identity are more likely to achieve sustainable performance excellence, athlete satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness. Therefore, coaches should be trained not only in technical and tactical competencies but also in leadership development, interpersonal communication, emotional intelligence, and team-building strategies to cultivate high-performance cultures in team sports.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review examined the role of coach leadership and communication in building team culture within team sports by synthesizing evidence from 25 studies published between 2016 and 2025 in reputable SINTA- and Scopus-indexed journals. The findings demonstrate that coach leadership and communication are fundamental components in shaping positive team culture, influencing team cohesion, trust, commitment, collective efficacy, and team identity. Empirically, the review revealed that transformational leadership was the most dominant and effective leadership approach, with approximately 88% of studies reporting positive effects on team cohesion, 92% highlighting improvements in trust, and 84% indicating stronger athlete commitment. Furthermore, communication practices characterized by clear instruction, constructive feedback, emotional support, active listening, and motivational messaging were consistently associated with enhanced athlete engagement and stronger interpersonal relationships within teams. The evidence also showed that leadership and communication operate synergistically, with their combined influence contributing to improved team culture outcomes in approximately 78% of the reviewed studies. Conceptually, the findings support Transformational Leadership Theory, Social Identity Theory, and Coach Athlete Relationship Theory, emphasizing that coaches function not only as technical instructors but also as

cultural leaders who shape team values, norms, and collective behaviors. Therefore, successful team culture development in team sports depends on the integration of effective leadership and high-quality communication, which together create an environment characterized by trust, shared vision, collaboration, psychological safety, and sustained team performance.

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