

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate key aspects of coaching and leadership roles for elite female soccer players in Norway.

Method

The dissertation consists of two sub-studies with different methodological approaches. The first sub-study (article 1) used a quantitative method with a questionnaire (Sports Mental Toughness Questionnaire) to examine players' mental toughness (MT). The respondents consisted of 298 players distributed across three different performance levels (elite, second and third leagues). The second sub-study (articles 2, 3 and 4) used a qualitative method of conducting interviews with 10 elite soccer coaches for women.

Conclusion

This dissertation identified three key aspects that may contribute to better understanding of elite female soccer players in Norway: a holistic athlete approach, the coach-athlete relationship and team culture. It concluded that coaches should adapt their behaviors and leadership styles to players' genders, backgrounds, psychological characteristics and coaching preferences. Adapting coaching behavior to these factors may help increase players' motivation, mental toughness, confidence, overall performance and improve team culture. Furthermore, cultural architects are important contributors to their coaches, fellow players and teams. Recruitment or development of cultural architects can be crucial for the coach's job and team performance.