

# Self-actualization and Managerial Effectiveness in Team Sport Situations

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## **Abstract:**

This paper examines the effect of self actualized managers on the team performance in the English premier league football. We find this by evaluating the managers using the 12 traits of self actualized people presented by Abraham Maslow and drawing conclusions from the statistics of their overall performance and results in the English premier league. We have taken Sir Alex Ferguson, Manager of Manchester United Football club for our study. He has won 38 trophies during his tenure which is not even close to other managers in the Premier league. We conclude from this that a self actualized manager does not only win trophies but also makes sure they build a team that is going to serve the club for many coming years with a mixture of young talents and experienced heads ,resolve conflicts and tend to stay in the club longer and reap benefits in the long run. Whereas, the managers who are not self actualized have been sacked many times by the clubs as they tend to make teams unstable and fail to build teams for the future.

## **Introduction:**

The English premier league was founded in 1888, it is considered to be one among the oldest such competitions across the world. It is divided into three divisions, which are currently known as The Championship, League One and League Two. Every season, the teams which finish in the last three places of the table will be relegated and the teams which finish in the first three spots in the league below will replace them. The 22 inaugural members of the new Premier League were Arsenal, Aston Villa, Blackburn Rovers, Chelsea, Coventry City, Crystal Palace, Everton, Ipswich Town, Leeds United, Liverpool, Manchester City, Manchester United, Middlesbrough, Norwich City, Nottingham Forest, Oldham Athletic, Queens Park Rangers, Sheffield United, Sheffield Wednesday, Southampton, Tottenham

Hotspur, and Wimbledon. The premier league has witnessed a scintillating 43 clubs participating since its inception. Seven clubs have been members of the Premier League for every season since its inception. This group is composed of Arsenal, Aston Villa, Chelsea, Everton, Liverpool, Manchester United, and Tottenham Hotspur. English Premier League clubs spend a lot on transfers (buying and selling players) every year. In fact, spending has reached record levels over the last few years, despite the recession. There is a firm belief that spending a lot of money on players will bring you success. Manchester City, an English club that was bought by the Abu Dhabi United Group in 2008, have spent over £300 million on transfers and have paid off £350 million of debt.

The amount of money spent and the increase in competition in the world of football, there has been immense pressure on the managers to bring out the best in their respective teams. There have been a lot of top managers sacked and many managers have quit management due to depression issues. As there are a lot of parameters that decide a team's performance, we found that a manager's character and his influence is one of the major parameter in determining team effectiveness. In this paper, we have taken Sir Alex Ferguson to create a case study on him. We have used Maslow's 12 traits of self actualized people as a scale to measure how self actualized they are and hence bring in statistics to prove that. We take each of the traits that have been mentioned by Maslow and collect secondary data about the managers from articles, autobiographies, biographies and player testimonials.

## Literature Review:

Abraham Maslow defined self-actualizing people in the following way: Self-actualizing people are gratified in all their basic needs embracing affection, respect, and self-esteem. They have a feeling of belongingness and rootedness. They are satisfied in their love needs, because they have friends, feel loved, and love-worthy. They have status, place in life, and respect from other people, and they have a reasonable feeling of worth and self-respect. Self-actualizing people do not for any length of time feel anxiety-ridden, insecure nor do they have crippling feelings of inferiority or worthlessness. Thus the self-actualizing person is the healthiest person psychologically. Maslow offered a comprehensive theory of human motivation levels which form a hierarchy. Maslow held that physiological needs are most potent, but once gratified, security becomes the most potent need. Once security needs are satisfied, belongingness and love needs become most urgent. The self-esteem needs come next.

Maslow found that self-actualized people had satisfied their basic and self-actualizing needs and many had transcended their own egos to become motivated by metaneeds, needs for cross-cultural values. This is called metamotivation, an individual's search for a cosmic consciousness, for a holistic sense of understanding, beauty, wholeness, justice, and meaningfulness in life. This metamotivation leads to the ability to transcend one's own ego and develop a oneness with nature and humanity. Not having the metaneeds met can lead to psychological problems such as disintegration, insecurity, and depression. Even nonself-actualizing people can be attracted to the metaneeds. It is the degree of attraction which is important. The self-actualizing person has more freedom to be attracted to the metaneeds.

**Rodney B. Farmer** has done a study on self actualized teachers and their effectiveness. He has come up with a theory that, Degree of teacher self-actualization is positively and significantly related to effective teacher cognitive behavior of the secondary social studies teachers and Degree of self-actualization in combination with increasing teacher age and increasing teacher religious non

fundamentalism are significantly and positively related to effective teacher cognitive behavior.

*Cengiz's* findings are about the general and the dimensional level of self-actualization which is found to be high for participants. This has been found from self actualization level of participants in Lifelong education centers.

*G M Donovan's* study intends to assist employees to enhance satisfaction, productivity, and work-life balance towards employee development. This lets us to determine specific employees who can flourish more and be productive in the modern work places.

*Plax, et al. (1986)* in his study contributes to the level of influence that a teacher has among the students through prosocial, reward oriented compliance gaining strategies to increase learning among their students . A model is inferred in which the compliance gaining strategy is indirectly associated with the effective learning of students

*Ramūnas Vanagas's* work aims at combining the logic of classical A. H. Maslow's motivation conception with F. Taylor and M. Weber's management theories, for framing organizational culture and values for all the members in an organization. This also discusses about the problems pertaining to Maslow's hierarchy to find out these traits in staff members for evaluation purpose.

*Robert Wood* compares the fundamental prospects of a self actualized person with 15 attributes to the seven fundamental philosophies of capitalism, to deduce that, all the 7 philosophies exert a negative impact on every individual prospect of a self actualized person. It is also found that, the characters that are impacted the most includes, spontaneity, simplicity and naturalness.

## **Characteristics of self actualized people**

**Self-actualized people embrace the unknown and the ambiguous.**

**Sir Alex Ferguson** had the ability to see something that other managers failed to notice. He was instrumental in bringing up some legendary players such as Ryan Giggs, Paul Pogba, Wayne Rooney and the legendary Cristiano Ronaldo at a very younger age. He signed all these players when they were just seventeen years old and the rest is history.

He signed Ryan Giggs at the age of 17 and he went on to win 34 major trophies and that is nine more than the entire number of trophies won by Manchester City in their entire history. He also holds the record of Premier League assists with 162 to his name. He was the first player to win the young player award for two consecutive years (1991/92 and 1992/93). The other player Pogba is one of the world's highest transfer worth \$89 million. Wayne Rooney went on to become the all-time highest goal scorer for the club.

There is an interesting story about how he signed Cristiano Ronaldo. It was during the pre-season match in which Manchester United went on to play Sporting Lisbon and that was when Ferguson saw the hidden potential of Cristiano Ronaldo. What came next is something extraordinary. Alex Ferguson called up the CEO of Manchester United and told him that I'm not leaving this place before signing this kid. He stayed up there in Lisbon that night, completed the deal of \$13 million which was a record transfer fee for a youngster and brought Ronaldo to his dressing room and introduced him to the players and he left Sporting Lisbon. From then Ronaldo has gone on to become the world's best player alongside Lionel Messi.

**They accept themselves, together with all their flaws.**

There was a match between United and their rivals Manchester City. It was a very intense game in which United lost to City by a huge margin (6-1). Usually, managers tend to shift the blame to the players or to the referees in modern football but what came out of Ferguson was something astonishing. He said "I'm an attacking manager and I would like to be the same. There was a tactical mistake in this match

and that does not have to do anything with the players. You can always blame me. I would like to apologies to the fans.

There are also many other instances where he took the pressure off the players and put the blame on himself which many managers would hesitate to do so. This kind of behaviors not only improved the aura of the team but also improved the morale of the players after a bad match and they would give their full potential the next match.

### **They prioritize and enjoy the journey, not just the destination.**

**When** Alex Ferguson was appointed as the manager of the team, the team had frequent drinking habit due to which many players will be late or will miss out on the training next day. The weather I'm England and due to their culture in itself drinking was popular among them but Ferguson was there to make certain changes for the greater good and that he was a person who beloved in discipline and process.

Even though it was against the culture of them, he changed the drinking habits of the team and he brought in a strict diet plan and made the team to follow it. There were many instances in which he has proved the game always comes first and not the players. He showcased the importance of discipline by benching united star player Rooney in some important matches. There was a controversy about David Beckham in which Beckham put forth his stardom more than a player and hence Ferguson was very unhappy with him and did not name him in the squad for few matches until his attitude changed. Ferguson was a person who was always motivated by the growth and not by sparkles of short term pleasures.

### **They are motivated by growth, not by the satisfaction of needs.**

Even though Alex Ferguson have won his first premier league title, he did not shy away from learning. In his autobiography, he would have mentioned that he was very much interested in the advent of analytics during the late 2000's and hence he would sit with the technical person and study his players and create a training session accordingly. When there was a controversy with beckham, he was angry not

because of Beckham's stardom but because he thought that Beckham had stopped growing as a player and hence that is a very bad attitude according to him.

### ***Ferguson-Beckham Brawl:***

David Beckham was then a famous figure in Manchester United. It was also rumored that he was closing in on a move to Real Madrid the next transfer window. The coach and the support staff can clearly see that Beckham's intensity that saw him rise to stardom was clearly missing.

Manchester United lost the FA Cup in 2003 and Ferguson was furious with his side's performance. In his autobiography he has written that :

*“In his final season with us, we were aware that David's work rate was dropping and we had heard rumours of a flirtation between Real Madrid and David's camp,” Ferguson explained. “The main issue was that his application level had dropped from its traditionally stratospheric level.*

*”He was around 12 feet from me. Between us on the floor lay a row of boots. David swore. I moved towards him, and as I approached I kicked a boot. It hit him right above the eye. Of course he rose to have a go at me and the players stopped him. 'Sit down,' I said. 'You've let your team down. You can argue as much as you like.’”*

*Although the matter happened in the changing room away from the prying eyes of the public, it wasn't long before the cut was – predictably – picked up on, first by the media, and then by fans worldwide with a bust-up immediately reported between player and manager.*

*“The next day the story was in the press,” Ferguson continued. “In public an Alice band highlighted the damage inflicted by the boot. It was in those days that I told the board David had to go.*

*“My message would have been familiar to board members who knew me. The minute a Manchester United player thought he was bigger than the manager, he had to go. I used to say, 'The moment the manager loses his authority, you don't have a club. The players will be running it, and then you're in trouble.’”*

### **Self-actualized people have purpose.**

The very first interview of Alex Ferguson was not taken seriously by the footballing community, but now if we look back about what he has told, we can easily see that he has had a purpose. He would have told in his first interview that "people are not enjoying football in here and I would like to change that". He changed the style of play and played very attacking football and revolutionized the way it is played in England. He was not just winning games but he had a vision to make football a game that people should enjoy and hence he was very much instrumental in doing so.

### **They are not troubled by the small things.**

During his tenure as a coach, he has had a lot of criticisms and comments from media, public, and fans and sometimes his own players but he would always absorb all that into him and deliver in the matches. We cannot see him being provoked by anyone.

### **Self-actualized people are grateful.**

There was a defender who played under Ferguson called Fletcher. It was during the champion's league semi final he has had an injury and was asked to rest for a month. The final was very near and United did not have a proper center back as the backup was a youngster who has had no experience of playing in a big stage. Fletcher, who has almost respect for his manager with pure determination and will came out in the press and told he will be playing the final and he will not care even his footballing career is over after that. He played and United won the match and with the kind of character Fletcher was, Alex Ferguson took care of all the expenses of Fletcher and never let Fletcher change clubs even when he was out of form. After his playing career, Fletcher was appointed youth team assistant coach and all that was because of Alex Ferguson.

He writes to his retired players often to ensure that they are still a part of the Manchester family and emphasize in his letters what that player gave his team and his wishes for them.

His letter to Eric cantina is as follows:

Dear Eric

*Some months have passed since we last spoke and I felt that I should write to you as a mark of respect and esteem in which I hold you.*

*When we re-started training, I kept waiting for you to turn up as normal but I think that was in hope not realism and I knew in your eyes when we met a Mottram your time at Manchester United was over. Although, I still feel you should have taken both your Father's and my advice and taken a holiday before making such a major decision.*

*One thing, I would like you to remember is to remain active and fit. I always remember when I finished at 32 and I started management, I was more concerned about organizing training and he coaching of players that I forgot about my own fitness and then when I realized about six years later what was happening, I started to train again to recapture my fitness and it was murder, so you do need to keep your fitness.*

*I am sure you have been keeping an eye on our results and as you can see we are doing quite well as you know we have signed Teddy Sheringham to replace you but at the moment he is finding it difficult to find the space he got at Tottenham and is playing deep so we have some adjusting to do. Players sometimes don't realize how difficult it is to play at our level as every game is a Cup Final for our opponents so I just hope he can do it for us.*

*Our pre-season tour wasn't too bad. The Far East tour was better than expected and our games against Inter Milan were very good. The Charity Shield wasn't a great performance but we were better than Chelsea and deserved to win, even though it went to penalties.*

*I still feel as we discussed at the end of the season that a top class striker is what is needed and that is always going to be the problem at our club as the financial restraints will always stop us getting the past because of our wage structure and it is such a pity because when you are at the top you should buy the best to stop the others getting to you. If I was younger, I suppose I would look at it differently, but from a personal point of view, I have not won the European Cup and it does get to me at times. However I just carry on and not put up a mental barrier and I have*

*always had that belief and trust in my players and wish to continue to do so. I keep hoping that I will discover a young Cantona! It is a dream!*

*As I close this letter, I would like to hope that we will have a chat, a drink, or a meal together soon. I know the club has written to you about the forthcoming dinner and I hope you will manage it, but that is not the most important thing, for it is to remind you how good a player we were for Manchester United and how grateful I am for the service you gave me. I will never forget that and I hope you won't either. You are always welcome here and if you just pop in unexpectedly for a cup of tea, no fanfare, just for a chat as friends that would mean more to me than anything. Eric you where I am if you need me and now that you are no longer one of my players, I hope you know you have a friend.*

*Good luck and God bless,*

*Yours sincerely*

*Alex Ferguson CBE*

#### Career Statistics of Sir Alex Ferguson:

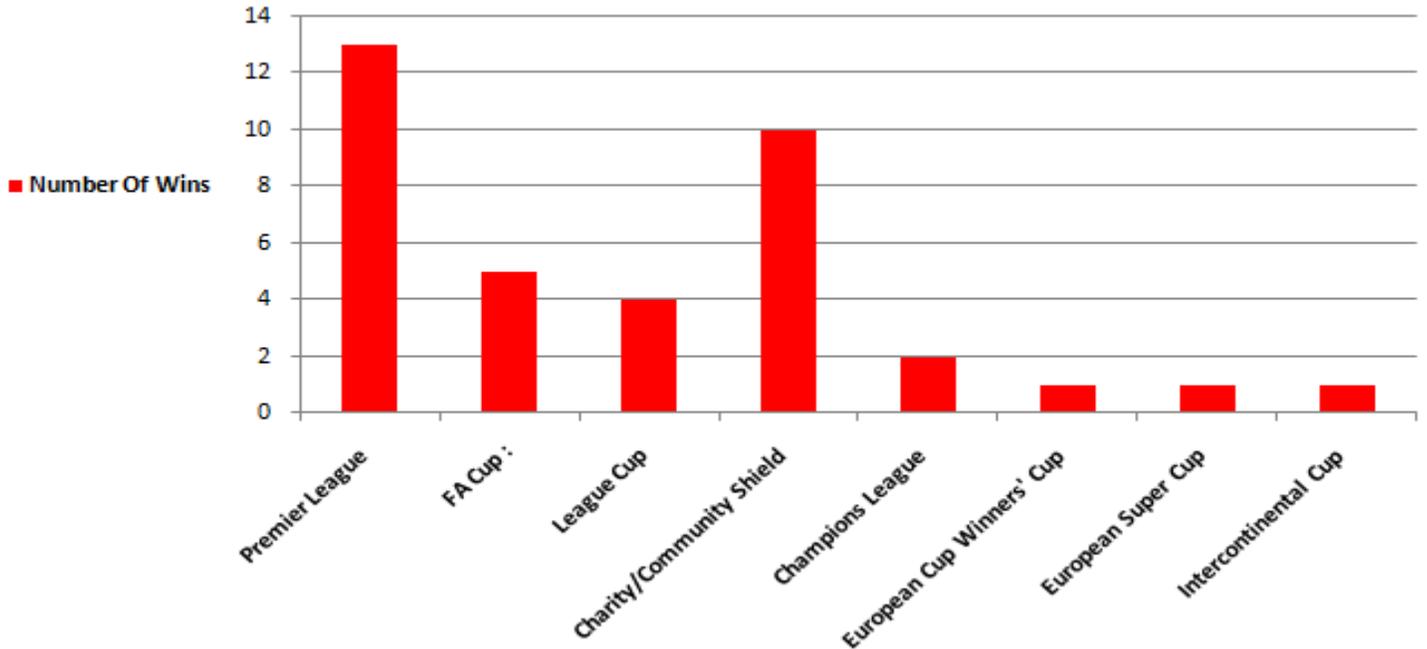
1	<b>Premier League (13)</b>	1992-93, 1993-94, 1995-96, 1996-97, 1998-99, 1999-2000, 2000-01, 2002-03, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2010-11, 2012-13.
2	<b>FA Cup (5):</b>	1989-90, 1993-94, 1995-96, 1998-99, 2003-04.
3	<b>League Cup (4)</b>	1991-92, 2005-06, 2008-09, 2009-10.
4	<b>Charity/Community Shield (10)</b>	1990 (shared), 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997, 2003, 2007, 2008, 2010, and 2011.
5	<b>Champions League (2)</b>	1998-99, 2007-08.
6	<b>European Cup Winners' Cup (1)</b>	1990-91.
7	<b>European Super Cup (1)</b>	1991
8	<b>Intercontinental Cup (1)</b>	1998

Track records of Premier League Managers:

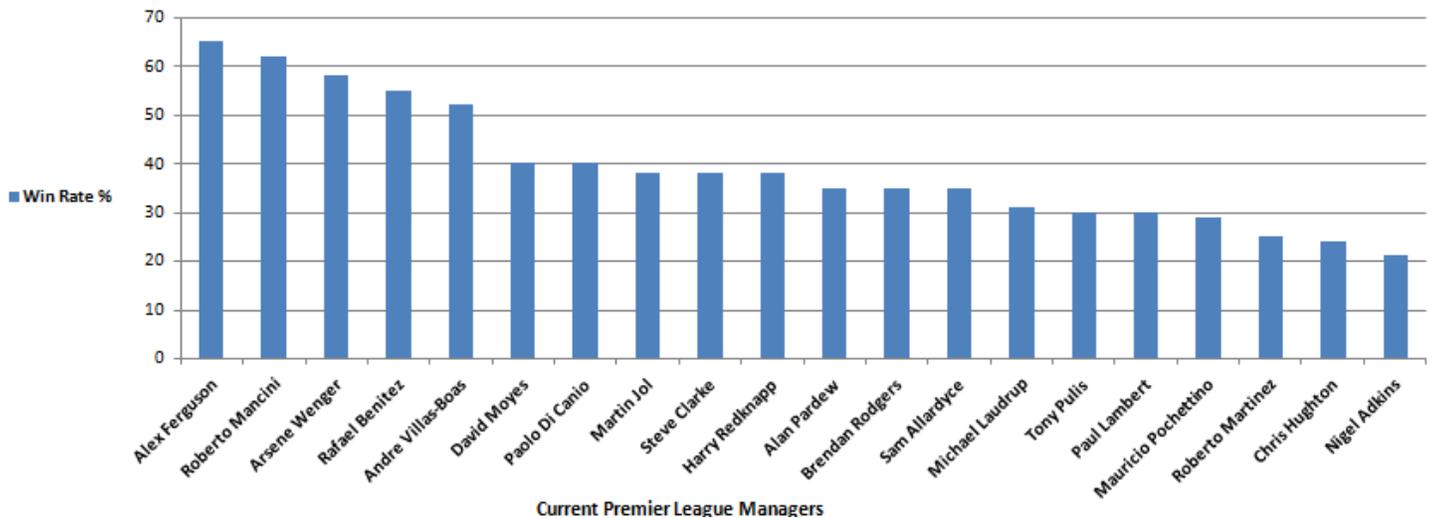
<b>CURRENT MANAGER S</b>	<b>GAME S</b>	<b>WIN S</b>	<b>DRAW S</b>	<b>LOSSE S</b>	<b>GOAL S FOR</b>	<b>GOALS AGAINST</b>	<b>WIN RAT E %</b>
Alex Ferguson	808	527	167	114	1620	697	65
Roberto Mancini	133	82	27	24	255	111	62
Arsene Wenger	636	366	160	110	1201	598	58
Rafael Benitez	251	139	60	52	416	205	55
Andre Villas-Boas	62	32	15	15	108	75	52
David Moyes	425	172	123	130	565	501	40
Paolo Di Canio	5	2	1	2	7	9	40
Martin Jol	187	71	50	66	262	254	38
Steve Clarke	37	14	6	17	49	53	38
Harry Redknapp	616	231	163	222	793	801	38
Alan Pardew	170	60	41	69	214	255	35
Brendan Rodgers	74	26	24	24	111	93	35
Sam Allardyce	359	124	102	133	429	491	35
Michael Laudrup	36	11	13	12	46	46	31
Tony Pulis	188	56	56	76	186	246	30
Paul Lambert	74	22	21	31	96	131	30
Mauricio	14	4	5	5	17	18	29

Pochettino							
Roberto Martinez	150	38	42	70	163	269	25
Chris Hughton	59	14	20	25	67	96	24
Nigel Adkins	28	6	9	13	36	50	21

### Career Statistics of Sir Alex Ferguson



### Winning Percentages of Premier League Managers



## Conclusion:

Sir Alex Ferguson is considered the most successful manager in the history of football and hence by comparing his characteristics with Maslow's traits of self actualized people, he satisfied seven out of the twelve. Although there may be a lot of managers involved for success through this study we prove you that a self actualized manager will not only show results but also bring the whole culture of the team together and hence build resources for the future.

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