



## Leadership Behavior and Challenges of Swimming Coaches in the Province of Albay

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the Leadership Behavior and Challenges of Swimming Coaches in the Province of Albay. The participants of the study include 30 swimming coaches in the 1st and 2nd district of Albay during the school year 2017- 2019. Purposive sampling was used in this study. The researcher utilized the mixed method of research, the Quantitative and Qualitative design. Findings showed that majority of respondents are typically married men in their late 30s. Most of the swimming coaches attended the same trainings and seminars in swimming. The most or strongly observed behavior among the coaches are the training and instruction behavior and positive feedback or rewarding behavior. It only shows that they focused more on the training process towards the athlete's improvement. Autocratic behavior ranked last among the leadership behaviors. Coaches who exhibit this type of behavior must concentrate on the training process in order to enhance their athletes' results. They must be able to teach an athlete/swimmer how to learn the requisite skills. The coaching leadership style should be suited to the situation. Excellent coaches can switch between styles automatically, depending on the behavior of the athlete and the task at hand. Among the five leadership behaviors, autocratic is the least effective and the most effective is the positive feedback followed by training and instruction, democratic and social support. The swimming coaches in the Province of Albay are less practicing the democratic nor the autocratic style of coaching. The level of effectiveness of the leadership behavior showed that coaches exhibited a higher leadership style in training and instruction followed by positive feedback, social support, and democratic and low in autocratic behavior. Swimming coaches should keep their swimmers motivated whether they are losing or winning. On the other hand, during the interview, the swimming coaches in the Albay Province enumerated several issues and concerns that need immediate action or attention. The researcher developed an action plan to address the challenges faced by the swimming coaches along with democratic behavior, autocratic behavior, training behavior, social support, and positive feedback.

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## Introduction

Engagement in sports, especially swimming, can foster personal growth. Coaches are there to help produce positive outcomes, whether that be a win or team development and

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athlete personal development (Andrew & Sanders, 2019; Adegbesan et.al., 2014; Chelladurai, 2014). They are supposed to be in a prominent position to promote active lifestyles, inclusion, and engagement in physical activity (Lambardi, 2015; Lee et.al., 2015; McNamara, 2014). This is something that takes time, which involves guidance and an understanding of the power of sports. Equipping excellent coaches to deliver these expectations and unlock athletes' potential is essential. Thus, providing trainings and resources to coaches are vital to the development and success of athletes (Wilson & Stephens, 2018; Kuuvas & Scurati, 2017; Coseteng, 2013; Vidic & Burton, 2010). The flip side is that a negative sports experience can also hinder development. Sports researchers link it with negative experiences and outcomes, such as stress, burnout, dropout and low self-esteem. That is why coaches have such an important role in the lives of athletes. It's important for athletes to understand their failures and to learn from them to reach their potentials. This makes the role of all coaches, including swim coaches, even more important (Susman, 2020; Tzetis et.al., 2018; Weathers, 2016; Torres, 2014).

Every year, United States research companies in sports industries publish research on the advances in swimming. These studies are the reason for the evolution of the sport. Kuuvas and Scurati (2017) concluded that knowledge gathered in swimming throughout the years is so great that the athletes themselves have a hard time knowing what is best for them. It is also difficult for athletes to stay up-to-date with modern advances in the sport (Cranmer et.al.,2016; Cruz, 2016; Enoksen et.al., 2014; Earhart & Kevins, 2017). In addition, some advances are so detailed that it takes a trained professional to determine if the swimmer's training and technique is ideal to reach his or her individual goals. Therefore, it stressed that a good coach has the ability and the resources to always know the latest advances in the sport (Lee et. al., 2015; Juan & Lopez, 2015) and has the skills to implement it in his athletes' training, but it takes an even better coach to have the foresight to develop his training before the rest. Coaching is integral to the success of today's athletes; thus, it is important to know how coaches can lead their teams effectively while maintaining a high satisfaction and performance rate within their swimmers (Damian, 2015; Demetriou, 2014; Ghildiyal, 2015; Goodsworth, 2018; Hanson, 2016).

In sports, leadership is also an aspect that coaches, sports leaders and heads should pay attention to. The researcher then considered it important to understand the styles and principles of leadership that coaches use. A coach must have received related knowledge on leadership and management competence (Susman, 2020, Reinhart et.al., 2017; Rodriguez, 2017; Sheldon, 2014). Coaching is also one of the fundamental pillars of the formation and development of sports teams, and their important role in the performance of the players cannot be left ignored. Coaches can create and cultivate an environment around the team that affects athlete development and team performance (Helling, 2021; Ganders, 2014; Ganoden, 2017; Hanson, 2016). Leadership behavior of coaches is a complex process and a very important strategic skill in today's society. In the sport field, coaches' leadership behavior is given with the critical value of decisive factor to the improvement of athlete and team performance (Ghildiyal, 2015; Janse, 2018; Javens, 2019; Kaya, 2015). Therefore, it is important for a coach to possess leadership ability in order to effectively guide a team.

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The Philippines recognizes the importance of sports in developing the youth's great potential to become globally competitive citizens. The country puts a premium on the "Palaro" as a venue to showcase the talents of future world-class athletes. The Palarong Pambansa is an annual multi-sport event involving student-athletes from 17 regions of the Philippines. The event started in 1948, organized and governed by the Department of Education. Student-athletes from public and private schools at elementary and secondary levels can compete, provided they qualify by winning at their regional meets. For young Filipino student-athletes, Palarong Pambansa is the culmination of school sports competition, which start with local school intramural, followed by the congressional district, provincial, and regional athletic meets. The 1987 Philippine Constitution Article XIV stipulates the legal basis of the Palarong Pambansa. The Philippine constitution, Article XIV, Section 19, stipulates:

*"The state shall promote physical education and encourage sports programs, league competitions, and amateur sports, including training for international competitions, to foster self-discipline, teamwork, and excellence for the development of a healthy and alert citizenry. All educational institutions shall undertake regular sports activities throughout the country in cooperation with athletic clubs and other sectors."*

Considering the quick advances of sports in different competitions such as District Meet and Provincial Meet in the Province of Albay and Philippine National Events, the importance of coaching has grown significantly. However, coaching leadership behaviors vary, ranging from very strict coaches to egalitarian coaches who take the athlete's perspective highly into account. Certain leadership styles can lead to increased performance, fulfillment and commitment. Aside from these, there are several challenges or obstacles that usually come along prior or during the Palaro. This may affect the team's or athlete's performance. The present study aimed to identify the leadership behavior and challenges among coaches of elementary and secondary schools in the Province of Albay to assess the level of effectiveness of the leadership behavior of coaches and address the challenges they faced.

### **Research Methods**

The researcher utilized a survey questionnaire to gather the primary data. The researcher-made survey questionnaire was composed of four parts: the first part determined the profile of the swimming coaches in the Province of Albay, the second part pertained to their observed leadership behaviors, the third part tackles the effectiveness of leadership behaviors and lastly the fourth part are the challenges encountered by the swimming coaches.

### **Findings**

Based on the data gathered, the following are the findings of the study were presented in some important highlights. First, most of the coaches ages 30-39 years old, are most

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likely to be men, college graduates, less than 4 years in service, having a salary grade of between 9-16. Although the ages are comparable, the sex of the coaches is not comparable. This means that there is almost an equal number of male and female coaches in Albay. Being a coach does not affect whether you are a male or a female, and educational status as long as s/he is a college graduate. But age, civil status, years as a coach, and salary grade could be. Trainings or Seminars Attended Related to Swimming were: Regional Live-Out Seminar Training 91 on Coaching, Seminar on Sports Clinic during Palarong Panlalawigan, and Regional Training for Officiating Officials and Coaches.

The second findings is that observed leadership behavior of swimming coaches in Albay have autocratic behavior, democratic behavior, social support, positive feedback or rewarding behavior, including training and instruction behavior. But, the most or strongly observed behaviors on them is the training and instruction behavior and positive feedback. Every coach possesses a training and instruction behavior. S/he instructs an athlete how to gain the skills and teaching the techniques and the tactics of the sport he or she is coaching and recognize of swimming every contribution and accomplishment of his or her athletes.

The third findings is that the level of effectiveness of the leadership behavior revealed that Democratic, Autocratic, Training and Instruction, Social Support and Positive feedback are all effective leadership behavior according to the swimming coaches in Albay but among this five leadership behavior, autocratic is the least effective while the most effective is the positive feedback followed by training and instruction, and followed by democratic and social support. While to be a very effective leader, one must know how to give positive feedback among the athletes followed by training and instructional behavior, and must be democratic (Robert, 2015). Being an autocratic leader will not (most likely) be a very effective leader in swimming.

Furthermore, the researcher identified several challenges of swimming coaches, as follows:

1. Democratic Leadership Behavior

The majority of the respondents agreed that the swimmers become abusive, boastful, and overconfident that make the athletes weak because of higher expectations, also it is identified that some athletes do not have the sense of urgency and discipline in terms of training and the coach cannot make decisions without first consulting the group/ team. As it is mentioned that some athletes do not have a sense of urgency (Yust, 2008; ) and discipline in terms of training and some may lead to rebellious acts.

2. Autocratic Leadership Behavior

Moreover, the researcher observed most of the coaches commented that in the autocratic leadership behavior, there are gaps between the athletes and the coach, one-sided decision, and fear of the athletes in informing the coach with regards to the problems encountered. The coach might also lose the team and the respect of the athletes which may result in athletes' burnout. Athletes no longer follow the instructions of the coach and become hard-headed and tend to misbehave. Some athletes are afraid to be trained by an autocratic coach (Shohani, 2017). And the blame will always be on the coach's shoulders.

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### 3. Training and Instruction Coaching Behavior

It is identified that in this coaching behavior, athletes/ swimmers are too confident wherein they no longer listen to the instruction of the coach. The athlete neglects his or her duties once he or she already knows the techniques, the time, venue, and equipment of the game. An overconfident athlete that refuses to adapt new techniques and tactics. They became disobedient, hardheaded, and lack self-discipline (Chelladurai & Saleh; 2014). Also, the equipment to be used is sometimes unavailable. And some athletes do not adapt well during the training.

### 4. Social Support Behavior

The swimming coaches learn that the athletes are too dependent on the coach that sometimes it is already being abused and use it as an excuse for them to be considered regarding their favors asked to the coach. They are too dependent that they can no longer decide on their own. Also, the lack of training in terms of handling the social problems of athletes (Blick, 2019). Lastly, as a coach, the time for his/her own family is consumed in attending to the needs of the athletes.

### 5. Positive Feedback Behavior

It is observed that the athletes become too confident and boastful because of the feedback given to them. Positive feedback makes the swimmer comfortable with what he or she is doing. And because of that they no longer exert more effort in the training knowing that they are already rewarded by their coach. Some of the athletes/ swimmers just swim because of the rewards, it is instilled in their minds that if they do their best, they will receive some rewards (Abierra, 2016; Sanchez & Anggono, 2016; Tzetis et.al,2018). Positive feedback makes the swimmer comfortable with what he or she is doing. And because of that they no longer exert more effort in the training because they know that they are already being rewarded by their coach. As a coach he/she sometimes forgets to recognize the efforts of other athletes.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher draws the following conclusions:

1. Majority of respondents are typically married men in their late 30s who have recently developed an interest in coaching swimming. To coach in any sporting event, they must be college graduates or have completed their baccalaureate degree. Furthermore, the majority of respondents received Php. 16,986.00 to Php. 30,044.00 a month, which is the salary of DepEd Teachers 1 to 3 who had worked in public schools for 5 years or less. The majority of swimming coaches attended the same preparation and seminars on swimming except at the division level. Swimming coaches focused more on the training process towards the athlete's improvement. Autocratic behavior ranked last among the leadership behaviors (Kiosoglous, 2013; Kim & Cruz, 2016; Lacy, 2014). The researcher concluded that most of the swimming coaches are less practicing the democratic nor the autocratic style of coaching. The level of effectiveness of the leadership behavior showed that coaches exhibited a higher leadership style in training and instruction followed by positive feedback, social support, and democratic and low in autocratic behavior.
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2. The researcher discovered the following major issues in the leadership behaviors in the Province of Albay which are as follow:
  - a. A democratic coaching leadership model involves athletes in decisions on group strategies, preparation plans, game planning, and tactics for coping with the athletes' behavior. The coaches have a few problems when it comes to democratic behavior.
  - b. Autocratic leadership behavior involves differences between the athletes and the coach, one-sided decisions, and athletes' fear of telling the coach about problems they experience. Athletes become hard-headed and misbehave because they no longer follow the coach's orders. The coach may also lose the team's and the athletes' confidence, resulting in burnout among the athletes.
  - c. In terms of social support coaching leadership style, swimming coaches in the Province of Albay excel at advising team players and showing support to players during times of conflict. However, due to a lack of training and workshops in this field, they are not effective at promoting local and personal issues.
  - d. This study's findings suggest that coaching leadership styles are linked to athlete satisfaction. There are difficulties in using a set leadership style that better suits the happiness of athletes. Not all, but the vast majority of athletes need training and instruction, additional social support, and the coach must employ a positive feedback leadership style to aid in their progress.
  - e. The present undertaking proposed an action plan to address the challenges encountered by the swimming coaches.

Based on the findings of the study, the following are the possible areas of intervention suggested as recommendations that might improve the behavior and challenges of coaching leadership behaviors of the swimming coaches in the Province of Albay.

1. Swimming coach credentials should be reviewed by the Department of Education. New swimming coach candidates must be carefully screened and picked. Swimming coaches must continue to receive instruction and attend regional and national training and seminars.
  2. The coaching leadership style should be appropriate for the circumstances. Excellent coaches sometimes switch between styles unconsciously, depending on the athlete's actions and the task at hand.
  3. Among the rooted problems, as indicated by this research challenge to use the best and effective leadership behaviors. Coaches who exhibit this type of behavior must concentrate on the training process in order to enhance their athletes' results. They must be able to teach an athlete/swimmer how to learn the requisite skills.
  4. Swimming coaches should keep their swimmers motivated whether they are losing or winning. Coach must listen to what the swimmers/athletes have to say in order to better their performance. Swimming coaches should aim to improve the athletes' success as well as the team's objectives. Coaches who are good are not only self-driven and intrinsically motivated, but they also instill that passion in their athletes.
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