

# Coach Leadership Behavior and Student Athlete Performance: Towards A University Sports Leadership Program

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**Abstract:** This study investigated the correlation between coach leadership behavior and their performance in Huaihua University, Hunan Province, China with the purpose of proposing a University Sports Leadership Program. The participants in this study are college athlete athletes. Stratified sampling technique was used in the selection of participants. There was a total of 240 college athletes representing the various sports team in the university. The researcher used adapted questionnaires that assessed the leadership behavior of coaches and athlete performance respectively, using some constructs from the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS): training and instruction, democratic decision making, autocratic decision making, social support and positive feedback and A Cross-Sport Athletic Performance Rating Scale measuring Self-motivation, Self-confidence, Emotional Stability, Athletic Ability, and Character. The overall result suggests a strong relationship, as coach leadership behavior is significantly and highly correlated with student athletes' level of performance; and The Sports Leadership Program emerged as a result of an in-depth study that revealed a strong correlation between athlete performance and coach leadership behavior. The program aims to maximize team relationships and athlete development by addressing gaps in coaching techniques that have been discovered.

**Keywords:** Coach Leadership Behavior; Student Athlete Performance; University Sports Leadership Program.

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## 1. Introduction

The most valuable role of an effective university coach is to develop student athletes to improve their athletic performance in various tasks from the chronological progressive movements of a neophyte to the more broadened techno - scientific tactical and psychological grooming of an elite athlete. Effective student athlete performance evolves when a coach practices leadership behavior that effectively elicits appropriate behaviors from the athlete. The type of leadership behavior manifested by the coach can have a significant effect on the performance and psychological well-being of the athlete. In this quantitative study, the researcher will determine the relationship between coach leadership behavior and athlete performance in Huaihua University, Hunan Province, China. The researcher being a coach in this university believes it is best to evaluate their actions from the perspective of their student athletes.

As a team leader, a coach plays a notable role in assisting his players reach peak levels of performance and success. Therefore, a coach should embody leadership behaviors to successfully assist his athletes accomplish such challenging tasks.

Coach leadership in educational contexts has been a widely studied topic during the last three decades. Presentations of such literatures have shown that coach leadership is related to a wide range of positive and negative athlete outcomes such as burnout, coping, satisfaction with sports practice, emotions, collective efficacy, injuries and sport performance, (Cruz and Kim, 2017; Ekstrand et al., 2017).

Chelladurai's Multidimensional Model has been the most widely used and accepted in the sport field. This model purports that sport performance of the athletes greatly

depends on the congruence among required, current, and preferred coach leadership style (Fletcher and Roberts, 2013). In this model, coach leadership is a multidimensional construct comprising the dimensions of democratic, autocratic, training and instruction, social support, and positive feedback.

According to Williams & Krane, (2015), effective leadership in coaching occurs when athletes perform in accordance with the coach's intentions while finding their own needs satisfied. Effective coaches are concerned with maintaining good relations with athletes and winning a specific sporting match.

A coach's successful leadership changes an athlete's behavior as a function of the coach's effort and gets others to behave as the coach intends them to behave. The task may be completed and the coach's needs may be satisfied, but the players' needs are ignored.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

This study determined the assessment of the student athlete respondents on the relationship between coach leadership behavior and their performance in Huaihua University, Hunan Province, China with the purpose of proposing a University Sports Leadership Program.

Specifically, it found answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the student athlete respondents in terms of:

- 1.1 Sex
- 1.2 Age
- 1.3 Sports Team

2. What is the assessment of the student athlete respondents on their coach leadership behavior in terms of:

- 2.1 Training and Instruction,

- 2.2 Decision Making,
- 2.3. Social Support and
- 2.4. Positive Feedback
- 3. What is the student athlete respondents' assessment of their level of performance in terms of:
  - 3.1 Self – Motivation,
  - 3.2 Goal Setting,
  - 3.3 Mental Preparedness,
  - 3.4 Technical Skills,
  - 3.5 Athletic Ability and
  - 3.6 Competition Strategy
- 4. Is there a significant difference in the student athlete respondents' assessment of their coach leadership behavior when their profiles are taken as test factors?
- 5. Is there a significant difference in the student athlete respondents' assessment of their level of performance when their profiles are taken as test factors?
- 6. Is there a significant relationship between the student athlete respondents' assessment of their coach leadership behavior and their level of performance?
- 7. What program may be proposed to enhance coach leadership?

### 3. Research Design

This study is a descriptive, comparative – correlational

research. A correlational research is a study designed to discover relationships among variables and to allow the prediction of future events from present knowledge. (Stangor, 2019). In this study, the coach leadership style was correlated with athlete performance based on two adapted instruments. The collected data from the questionnaires were analyzed by quantitative survey tools, which ensured guarantee for the study to explore the significant relationship of the research variables. The purpose of this research is to propose a sports leadership program for Huaihua University.

### 4. Sample and Sampling Technique

The participants in this study are college athletes. Stratified sampling technique was used in the selection of the participants. There is a total of 240 college athletes representing the various sports teams in the university. Using the Qualtrics Survey Software, the researcher will target 148. This has a confidence level of 95% and 5% margin of error.

The table below presents the overall population of student athletes, coaches and sports category that serves as a guide for the researcher in the selection of the main participants in this study.

**Table 1. SAMPLES**

SPORT CATEGORY	NUMBER OF ATHLETES	SAMPLES
1. Track and Field	24	15
2. Swimming	24	15
3. Basketball	28	17
4. Soccer	40	25
5. Volleyball	28	17
6. Ping Pong	10	6
7. Badminton	10	6
8. Tennis	10	6
9. Aerobics	46	28
10. Martial Arts	8	5
11. Taekwondo	12	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>148</b>

### 5. Research Locale

Established in 1958, Huaihua University is a non-profit public higher-education institution located in the medium city of Huaihua (population range of 250,000-499,999 inhabitants), Hunan. Officially recognized by the Department of Education of the Hunan Province, Huaihua University is a large co-educational Chinese higher education institution. Huaihua University offers courses and programs leading to officially recognized higher education degrees in several areas of study.

As of fall 2021, the university has 2 campuses, a combined student body of 18,057 students, 867 faculty members. The university consists of 21 departments, with 49 specialties for undergraduates.

At present, the university has 6 research institutions and research centers, including 1 national engineering research center and 1 key national discipline. The research will be conducted at Huaihua University.

### 6. Research Instruments

#### Survey Questionnaire

The researcher used adapted questionnaires that assessed the leadership behavior of coaches and athlete performance respectively, using some constructs from the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) and A Cross-Sport Athletic Performance Rating Scale.

The survey questionnaires have been adapted and were fitted with the objective of analyzing coach leadership behavior and athlete satisfaction. Since the questionnaires are pre-existing and are nearly verbatim, the reliability and validity of these instruments are unquestionable because previous research studies have been conducted using these instruments.

The first part aims to assess the leadership behavior of coaches as perceived by the athletes using some constructs from the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) tool: training and instruction, democratic decision making, autocratic decision making, social support and positive feedback. The LSS has

been used in a variety of contexts to measure leadership in sport and the relationship between leadership and other variables. The purpose of the development of the LSS (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980) was to attempt to deal with certain problems relating to leadership in the sport context.

The second part aimed to assess the level of athlete performance. Specifically, A Cross-Sport Athletic Performance Rating Scale was adopted by the researcher. This is an Athletic Performance Rating Scale, developed by Darhl M. Pedersen and Craig L. Manning in 2003 for comparing the characteristics of successful athletes across sports. It has 5-factor scale measuring Self-motivation, Self-confidence, Emotional Stability, Athletic Ability, and Character was developed using principal components analysis.

## 7. Data Gathering Procedure

For the data gathering, a letter of request to the president of Huaihua University was personally given by the researcher asking permission to conduct the study. Upon approval, the questionnaires were distributed to the target respondents for data collection. This study was conducted during the first semester of school year 2022-2023.

## 8. Results and Analysis

This section presents the data gathering process together with its outcomes and the researcher's analysis, all in line with the problem description. There will also be an explanation of his views and conclusions derived from actual situations and data.

### 1. Profile of the student respondents

**Table 2.** Frequency Distribution of the Student Athletes' Profile

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	96	64.9%
Female	52	35.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Age</b>		
8-20 years old	92	62.2%
21-23 years old	53	35.8%
Above 23 years old	3	2.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Sports Team</b>		
Track & Field	15	10.1%
Swimming	15	10.1%
Basketball	17	11.5%
Soccer	25	16.9%
Volleyball	17	11.5%
Ping Pong	6	4.1%
Badminton	6	4.1%
Tennis	6	4.1%
Aerobics	28	18.9%
Martial Arts	5	3.4%
Taekwondo	8	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100%</b>

The aforementioned data presents a significant proportion of male athletes (64.9%), the majority of them are in the 18 – 20 age range (62.2%) and compete in 11 different sports. With 18.9% of the participant pool, aerobics has the greatest percentage of all these events, followed by soccer at 16.9% and basketball and volleyball at 11.5%.

The high percentage of male athletes (64.9%), who are mostly concentrated in the 18 – 20 age group (62.2%) and compete in a wide variety of 11 sports, points to a unique demographic makeup among the participant demographic.

The most popular activity is found to be aerobics, which accounts for 18.9% of the total participant pool. Soccer comes in second at 16.9%, followed by basketball and volleyball at 11.5%. These ratios indicate varied levels of interest and involvement in various sports. Understanding these preferences can help with resource allocation, strategic planning, and customized activities that promote support, growth, and involvement within the designated sports categories.

2. The assessment of the student athlete respondents on the extent the coach leadership behavior being manifested in terms of training and instruction, decision making, social support and positive feedback

Student athlete respondents strongly agree that their coaches play special attention to correcting their mistakes which was given highest assessment of 3.71 interpreted as highly manifested. Furthermore, they strongly agree that their coaches give specific instructions to each athlete as to what to do in every situation, and that coaches explain how each athlete's contribution fits into the whole picture, however, it was given the lowest assessment of 3.64 respectively interpreted as highly manifested. The result shows that leadership behavior of coaches in terms of training and instruction was highly manifested as perceived by the athlete respondents. The overall result indicates that coach leadership behavior of the coaches in terms of training and instruction is very highly manifested as assessed by the student athlete respondents with a composite mean of 3.67. A good perception and support of the coaches' ability to guide and

instruct athletes is suggested by this high degree of manifestation.

**Table 3.** Student Athlete Respondents' Assessment on the Extent of Manifestation of Coach Leadership Behavior in Terms of Training and Instruction

Training and Instruction	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Ranking
1. The coach explains the techniques and tactics of the sport.	3.68	0.57	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	2.5
2. The coach pays special attention to correcting our mistakes.	3.71	0.54	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	1
3. The coach gives specific instructions to each athlete as to what do in every situation.	3.64	0.59	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	4.5
4. The coach explains how each athlete's contribution fits into the whole picture.	3.64	0.67	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	4.5
5. The coach considers training as part of game strategy.	3.68	0.74	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	2.5
Composite Mean	3.67	0.50	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/Highly Manifested; 2.51-3.50 Agree/Manifested; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Slightly Manifested; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Not Manifested at all

The implications encompass the possible enhancement of athlete performance, growth, and team dynamics in general. It's a sign that the players are responding well to the way the coaching staff is offering training and instructions. This favorable assessment might support improved team cohesiveness, skill development, and athlete motivation.

In the study of Otte et al (2020), feedback and instructions are acknowledged as instructional restrictions in the context of training and instruction as coach behavior. Learners commonly receive enhanced feedback, which is an external

source of feedback, during practice and instruction. The kind of instructional limitations that are present in representational training environments are not the same as the intrinsic feedback mechanisms that naturally arise in persons participating in self-directed learning and externally guided learning situations. While research shows that receiving intrinsic feedback is essential for learning, coaches can also effectively support, direct, and enhance the learning process by properly applying external feedback and instructions as instructional boundaries.

**Table 4.** Student Athlete Respondents' Assessment on the Extent of Manifestation of Coach Leadership Behavior in Terms of Decision Making

Decision Making	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Ranking
1. Our coach does explain his action plans.	3.55	0.70	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	3
2. Our coach compromises when making a decision.	3.64	0.63	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	1.5
3. Our coach asks opinions of us athletes when making a decision.	3.52	0.69	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	5
4. Our coach speaks in a manner that gathers opinions.	3.53	0.72	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	4
5. Our coach values collective decision making.	3.64	0.64	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	1.5
Composite Mean	3.58	0.57	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/Highly Manifested; 2.51-3.50 Agree/Manifested; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Slightly Manifested; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Not Manifested at all

Student athlete respondents strongly agree that their coaches compromise when making a decision, and that their coaches value collective decision making which were given the highest assessment of 3.64 respectively interpreted as highly manifested. While respondents strongly agree that their coaches ask their opinions when making a decision, it was given the lowest assessment of 3.52 also interpreted as highly manifested. The overall result indicates that leadership behavior of coaches in terms of decision making are highly manifested as perceived by the athlete respondents with a composite mean of 3.58.

A positive assessment of the coaches' decision-making abilities by the student athletes is indicated by this highly manifested rating. Long-term impacts on team cohesion, performance, and overall athlete happiness can result from

coaches' decision-making being positively perceived. Good decision-making affects strategy, results of games, and the athlete experience in general, and it is essential to a sports team's success and cohesiveness.

It was highlighted in the study by Soto et al (2021), that the coach may think it is easy to make decisions about the roles that players are given and how much time they play. But the athlete's possible perception of unfair treatment could lead to internal conflicts that interfere with both teaching and competitive success. Similarly, players' overall sports experience is greatly impacted by the perceived fairness of assigning players to starting or substitute positions, which directly affects playing time. As a result, this impression has a significant impact on how satisfied clients are with the coach.

**Table 5.** Student Athlete Respondents' Assessment on the Extent of Manifestation of Coach Leadership Behavior in Terms of Social Support

Social Support	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Ranking
1. Our coach helps us with our personal problems.	2.45	1.26	Disagree	Slightly Manifested	5
2. Our coach helps us settle our internal conflicts in the team.	2.63	1.13	Agree	Manifested	3
3. Our coach looks out for our personal welfare.	2.76	1.20	Agree	Manifested	2
4. Our coach encourages close and informal relations among us.	2.81	1.10	Agree	Manifested	1
5. Our coach is like a friend to us.	2.47	1.17	Disagree	Slightly Manifested	4
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.62</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Manifested</b>	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/Highly Manifested; 2.51-3.50 Agree/Manifested; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Slightly Manifested; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Not Manifested at all

Student athlete respondents agree that their coaches encourage close and informal relations among them which was given the highest assessment of 2.81 interpreted as manifested. On the other hand, respondents do not agree that their coaches are like a friend to them, and that their coaches help them with their personal problems which was given the lowest assessment of 2.47 and 2.45 respectively both interpreted as slightly manifested. The overall result shows that leadership behaviors of coaches in terms of social support are manifested among them as perceived by the student athlete respondents with a composite mean of 2.62.

The findings indicate a moderate degree of perceived social

support from coaches. This suggests that coaches are currently offering a certain level of social support, yet there is potential for enhancement. In a recent research, Sullivan et al. (2020) explored the correlation between social support and symptoms of depression among 238 NCAA Division I collegiate athletes. The results revealed a weak, negative association between various types of social support and depressive symptoms. As levels of social support decreased, the frequency of reported depressive symptoms increased. It can be deduced that one potential inclusion in the program is an element that enhances social support among coaches.

**Table 6.** Student Athlete Respondents' Assessment on the Extent of Manifestation of Coach Leadership Behavior in Terms of Positive Feedback

Positive Feedback	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Ranking
1. Our coach compliments us for a good performance in front of others.	3.47	0.78	Agree	Manifested	3
2. Our coach gives credit when credit is due.	3.52	0.71	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	2
3. Our coach sees to it that we are rewarded for a good performance.	3.37	0.85	Agree	Manifested	4
4. Our coach expresses appreciation when we perform well.	3.09	1.06	Agree	Manifested	5
5. Our coach always boosts our confidence.	3.65	0.65	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	1
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Manifested</b>	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/Highly Manifested; 2.51-3.50 Agree/Manifested; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Slightly Manifested; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Not Manifested at all

Student athlete respondents strongly agree that their coaches always boost their confidence with the highest assessment of 3.65 interpreted as highly manifested, while expressing the coaches' appreciation when the athletes perform well was given the lowest assessment of 3.09 interpreted as manifested. The overall result indicates that the leadership behavior of coaches in terms of positive feedback are manifested among them as perceived by the student athlete respondents.

To put it succinctly, the results indicate that athletes who responded to the survey believe coaches demonstrate strong positive leadership behavior, especially when it comes to giving athletes more confidence. According to the respondents, there is still need for improvement in the way that athletes are consistently appreciated for their accomplishments.

A sports team's efficacy frequently depends on the coaching style used, and different theories have been developed to determine the most effective coaching tactics, as Jowett (2017) highlights. According to Kim et al. (2021), a cornerstone of situational leadership in sports is the leader's ability to adjust to the unique requirements and conditions of the players. Because athletes' skill development and psychological development will inevitably fluctuate, coaches need to take into account the dynamic nature of the connection and work to find the best strategies for the people they are coaching. Because situational leadership involves a complex set of behaviors rather than a single ability or strategy, coaches may find it difficult to become proficient in a variety of coaching strategies that are specifically tailored to different situations.

**Table 7.** Summary of the Student Athlete Respondents' Assessment on the Extent of Manifestation of Coach Leadership Behavior

Coach Leadership Behavior Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Ranking
1. Training and Instruction	3.67	0.50	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	1
2. Decision Making	3.58	0.57	Strongly Agree	Highly Manifested	2
3. Social Support	2.62	0.99	Agree	Manifested	4
4. Positive Feedback	3.42	0.64	Agree	Manifested	3
<b>Over-all Mean</b>	<b>3.32</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Manifested</b>	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/Highly Manifested; 2.51-3.50 Agree/Manifested; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Slightly Manifested; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Not Manifested at all

The results indicate that training and instruction, and decision making were the most highly manifested leadership behavior of coaches based on the assessment of the student athlete respondents. Social support and positive feedback were also manifested among the coaches, although the former is perceived to be the lowest.

Overall, the student athlete respondents' assessments indicate a general manifestation of coaching leadership behaviors, with an overall mean score of 3.32. The findings suggest that, according to athlete respondents, coaching behaviors related to training and instruction, as well as decision-making, were highly manifested. Additionally, social support and positive feedback from coaches were also perceived as manifested, although to a slightly lesser extent.

Since social support is perceived as manifested but may have room for improvement, providing coaches with communication skills training could be beneficial. This could include strategies for building rapport, fostering open

communication, and creating a supportive team environment. Furthermore, as the expression of appreciation received a comparatively lower assessment, interventions could focus on providing coaches with training on recognizing and acknowledging athletes' performances. This may involve workshops or seminars emphasizing the importance of positive reinforcement and constructive feedback.

Leadership plays a crucial role in sports performance, with both athletes and coaches emphasizing its significance for success in the field (Bucci et al., 2012; Cotterill, 2013; Fransen et al., 2016; Fransen, Haslam et al., 2015). The behavior of a coach in terms of leadership has been demonstrated to have a significant impact on various outcomes (Hampson & Jowett, 2014).

3. The assessment of the student athlete respondents of their level of performance in terms of self-motivation, goal setting, mental preparedness, technical skills, athletic ability, competition strategy

**Table 8.** Assessment of the Student Athlete Respondents' Level of Performance in Terms of Self-Motivation

Self-Motivation	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Ranking
1. Having a desire to play.	3.52	0.68	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	4.5
2. Having the attitude to succeed.	3.78	0.48	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	1
3. Maintaining high level of physical conditioning.	3.52	0.73	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	4.5
4. Having a high developed work ethic.	3.69	0.58	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	2
5. Striving for perfection in my sport.	3.68	0.60	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	3
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Very High Level</b>	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/ Very High Level; 2.51-3.50 Agree/High Level; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Low Level; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Level

Student athlete respondents strongly agree on having the attitude to succeed which was given the highest assessment of 3.78 interpreted as very high level. Though they also strongly agree on having a desire to play, and in maintaining high level of physical condition, however, these were given the lowest assessment of 3.52 but still interpreted as very high level.

A composite mean of 2.62 indicates that student athletes generally rate their performance level in terms of self-motivation at a very high level. It is implied that athletes are continuously meeting and surpassing their objectives, demonstrating a consistent degree of motivation and commitment to their preparation and competitions. A high degree of self-motivation may also be indicated by the outcome if there is a favorable and optimistic attitude during training and competition.

The importance of motivation is a factor that has been extensively studied in the context of athletics. Several research works, cited by Lindahl et al. (2015) and Clancy et al. (2016), have investigated motivation in the setting of

sports. According to the definition given, motivation is the psychological force at work in an individual and is what drives their action. It also clarifies that motivation is a major factor in determining whether or not someone would participate in a certain activity. This viewpoint essentially highlights the psychological factor that either motivates or dissuades an athlete from engaging in a certain activity.

Athlete respondents strongly agree that setting goals to help them be a successful athlete with the highest assessment of 3.51 interpreted as very high level. From this, it can be inferred that athlete respondents express a strong consensus in believing that setting goals is crucial for achieving success. As per Fletcher (2023), possessing talent alone is insufficient for reaching the pinnacle of sports and sustaining success over time. Developing a roadmap and setting goals alongside athletes eliminates uncertainty, enhances involvement in the process, and maintains adaptability during challenging and changing circumstances.

**Table 9.** Assessment of the Student Athlete Respondents' Level of Performance in Terms of Goal Setting

Goal Setting	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Ranking
1. Setting goals towards self-improvement.	2.81	0.94	Agree	High Level	5
2. Setting goals to help me be a successful athlete.	3.51	0.63	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	1
3. Setting goals to track my progress.	3.34	0.80	Agree	High Level	4
4. Setting meaningful goals for the future.	3.49	0.62	Agree	High Level	2
5. Believing I can achieve my goals.	3.46	0.68	Agree	High Level	3
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.32</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>High Level</b>	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/ Very High Level; 2.51-3.50 Agree/High Level; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Low Level; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Level

Conversely, while respondents agree that setting goals towards self - improvement is important, their relatively low score of 2.81 suggests that this belief is somewhat diminished but still significant. It suggests that they acknowledge and support the significance of establishing clear goals for one's own personal growth, and that athletes actively show that they comprehend the significance of establishing these kinds of goals as well as their dedication to them. Their evaluation shows a palpable and noticeable support for the idea that self-improvement goals are important for their sports endeavors.

According to Baghurst et al (2015), gaining insight into the

reasons behind setting goals is crucial for the self-improvement of student-athletes. The achievement of specific milestones not only serves as tangible proof of their progress in the athletic journey but also acts as a constant reminder of the goals yet to be attained. This approach enables student-athletes to continuously assess their advancements, providing the opportunity to fine-tune their plans for optimal effectiveness in both academic and athletic pursuits. The next crucial step involves understanding a tailored and structured approach for student-athletes to set and pursue their goals effectively.

**Table 10.** Assessment of the Student Athlete Respondents' Level of Performance in Terms of Mental Preparedness

Mental Preparedness	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Ranking
1. Having a belief in oneself and abilities.	3.43	0.70	Agree	High Level	5
2. Showing a competitive edge.	3.47	0.71	Agree	High Level	3
3. Developing a plan of attack.	3.45	0.70	Agree	Manifested	4
4. Having mental focus.	3.51	0.65	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	2
5. Getting my mind ready to cope with stresses in a crucial game situation.	3.52	0.67	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	1
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>High Level</b>	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/ Very High Level; 2.51-3.50 Agree/High Level; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Low Level; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Level

Student athlete respondents strongly agree on getting their mind ready to cope with stresses in a crucial game situation with the highest assessment of 3.52 interpreted as very high level. On the other hand, though they agree on having a belief in oneself and abilities but it was given the lowest assessment of 3.43 interpreted as high level. The overall result shows that student athlete respondents exhibited a high level of performance in terms of mental preparedness with a

composite mean value of 3.47.

Coaches fulfill various roles within a team, some of which differ from those of athletes or sports leaders. They provide guidance to athletes of different age groups, as indicated by Misasi, Morin, & Kwasnowski (2016). Additionally, coaches exert influence on athletes, with effective coaching not only motivating them to achieve personal goals but also fostering positive psychological outcomes (Misasi et al., 2016).

**Table 11.** Assessment of the Student Athlete Respondents' Level of Performance in Terms of Technical Skills

Technical Skills	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Ranking
Perfection in dribbling or controlling the ball.	3.68	0.51	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	1
Accuracy in serving.	3.62	0.56	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	5
Efficiently carrying out the required the movement.	3.64	0.56	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	3
Ideally executing motor actions as instructed.	3.63	0.62	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	4
Sufficient knowledge and competence to perform sports tasks to the best of their ability	3.67	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	2
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Very High Level</b>	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/ Very High Level; 2.51-3.50 Agree/High Level; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Low Level; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Level

Student athlete respondents strongly agree on the perfection in dribbling or controlling the ball which was given the highest assessment of 3.68 interpreted as very high level.

While respondents strongly agree on the accuracy in serving, however, it was given the lowest assessment of 3.62 still interpreted as very high level. The overall result shows that

the performance level of student athletes in terms of technical skills was of very high level with a composite mean score of 3.65.

This suggests that student athletes' technical skill competency has been assessed with strength and positivity. The number value indicates that the athletes generally showed a higher degree of proficiency in the technical areas associated with their sport. The resulting inference emphasizes the players' superior technical skill execution, highlighting their talent and competency in this crucial area of athletic performance.

Coaches emphasize the importance of technical-specific strength for sports performance. According to Burnie et al. (2017), non-specific strength training is crucial for enhancing athletes' muscle size and strength. In the context of sports, talents are individuals exhibiting exceptional ability compared to reference groups with similar biological developmental stages, lifestyle habits, and completed training. This suggests that these individuals have the technical skill or potential for outstanding athletic performance in the long run (Baker, Cobley, Schorer, & Wattie, 2017).

**Table 12.** Assessment of the Student Athlete Respondents' Level of Performance in Terms of Athletic Ability

Athletic Ability	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Ranking
Having athletic talent.	3.28	0.82	Agree	High Level	5
Possessing physical strength.	3.37	0.74	Agree	High Level	4
Moving quickly.	3.47	0.64	Agree	High Level	2
Integrating movement skills using a combination of balance, coordination, speed, and endurance.	3.45	0.71	Agree	High Level	3
Manifesting movement of athleticism.	3.51	0.64	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	1
Composite Mean	3.42	0.64	Agree	High Level	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/ Very High Level; 2.51-3.50 Agree/High Level; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Low Level; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Level

Student athlete respondents strongly agree on manifesting movement of athleticism with the highest assessment of 3.51 interpreted as very high level. On the other hand, they agree on having athletic talent but it was given the lowest assessment of 3.28 interpreted as high level. The composite result shows that the performance level of student athletes in terms of athletic ability was of high level as perceived by the respondents, with a mean score of 3.42.

The result indicating positive feedback from athletes regarding the importance of strength and conditioning, as well as their satisfaction with the performance of their strength and conditioning coach (as observed in Elder et al.'s 2014 study), suggests a potential connection with the student athletes' perception of their own abilities. Student athletes who value

and appreciate the role of strength and conditioning may be more likely to attribute their athletic development and performance improvements to the influence of these training practices.

Student athletes' positive perceptions of their strength and conditioning coach, including beliefs in the coach's knowledge and effectiveness, could contribute to an enhanced sense of confidence and trust in the training process. This, in turn, might positively influence their self-perception of athletic abilities. If athletes view their strength and conditioning regimen as integral to their success and trust the guidance provided by their coach, it could potentially contribute to a more positive and confident outlook on their own capabilities within their respective sports.

**Table 13.** Assessment of the Student Athlete Respondents' Level of Performance in Terms of Competition Strategy

Competition Strategy	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Ranking
Praying before, during and after the competition.	3.66	0.52	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	5
Having the spirit of sportsmanship.	3.76	0.48	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	1
Showing citizenship within the team.	3.72	0.51	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	3.5
Possessing loyalty to team, coaches and the sport.	3.72	0.48	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	3.5
Being humble and coachable.	3.73	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	2
Composite Mean	3.72	0.43	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/ Very High Level; 2.51-3.50 Agree/High Level; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Low Level; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Level

Student athlete respondents strongly agree on having the spirit of sportsmanship with the highest assessment of 3.76 interpreted as very high level. It implies that the student athletes have a strong and widespread dedication to good sportsmanship. This favorable evaluation suggests that the student athletes value integrity, fair play, and a courteous demeanor in their athletic pursuits. The very high level of agreement on competition strategy suggests that student athletes understand and uphold the principles of good sportsmanship, which supports the development of a positive and sportsmanlike culture within the athletic community.

However, in the context of Chinese athletes, it is

noteworthy that despite a strong agreement, the practice of praying before, during, and after competitions received the lowest assessment of 3.66. While this is still interpreted as a very high level, the slight discrepancy may indicate a nuanced aspect of athletes' practices or beliefs. It could suggest that while the athletes highly value sportsmanship and ethical conduct, the act of prayer may not be as uniformly emphasized or practiced among them.

The overall result indicates that the performance level of athletes in terms of competition strategy of very high level with a composite mean of 3.72.

According to a Sport Journal article entitled "The Effects



of Competitive Orientation on Performance in Competition” published in The Sport Journal on June 2, 2020, a competition is generally defined as a situation in which two or more participants compete with one another to achieve a particular objective or object, usually with one being crowned the victor and the other as the loser. Competition has been shown to have a motivating effect on improving individual

performance in a variety of contexts, most notably sports. Exercise intensity is naturally higher during competitions than during rehearsals or training sessions. As such, adding a competitive component to practice sessions accomplishes two goals at once: it simulates real game strategy and increases the total amount of work that is put into the exercises.

**Table 14.** Summary of the Assessment of Student Athlete Respondents’ Level of Performance

Athlete Performance Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Ranking
Self-Motivation	3.64	0.50	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	3
Goal Setting	3.32	0.54	Agree	High Level	6
Mental Preparedness	3.47	0.60	Agree	High Level	4
Technical Skills	3.65	0.48	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	2
Athletic Ability	3.42	0.64	Agree	High Level	5
Competition Strategy	3.72	0.43	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	1
Composite Mean	3.54	0.43	Strongly Agree	Very High Level	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/ Very High Level; 2.51-3.50 Agree/High Level; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Low Level; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Level

A mean score of 3.72 indicates that athlete respondents performed at a very high level in competition strategy, according to the data. This implies that athletes possess a good aptitude and comprehension for formulating and executing successful plans in competitive situations.

However, it's important to highlight that goal setting, with a score of 3.32, obtained the lowest evaluation. This suggests that athletes might focus less on goal-setting techniques or have room for growth when compared to competitive strategy. The lower goal-setting assessment score might point to possible areas for improvement in terms of defining precise aims and targets for either personal accomplishments or performance enhancement.

In an article by Metrfit dated March 16, 2022, titled "The Importance of Goal Setting for Athletes," the significance of goal setting in boosting performance was underscored. It was highlighted that goal setting stands out as an immensely potent technique, making it one of the pivotal strategies for achieving success in any setting. The article emphasized that goal setting plays a crucial role in directing attention and is instrumental in sustaining and elevating motivation. By providing direction in both the short and long term, goal setting allows individuals to witness success as they attain

their short-term objectives.

In the final analysis, even though the athletes showed a remarkable aptitude for competitive strategy, their lower goal-setting assessment suggests that there may be room for improvement in their entire approach to training and competition. Additional investigation into the particular elements impacting these athletes' goal-setting behaviors may yield insightful information for focused enhancements.

With a composite mean score of 3.72, the results collectively imply that athletes' performance levels are assessed at very high levels.

Such high evaluation ratings suggest that athletes execute to a respectable standard across the range of criteria or aspects assessed. This suggests that athletes are probably skilled, productive, or successful in their particular sports or pursuits, which may be a reflection of their commitment, aptitude, regimen, or coaching assistance. Positive evaluations like this could also speak well of the general level of competition and excellence of the sports programs or competitions these athletes take part in.

4. The difference in the student athlete respondents’ assessment of the coach leadership behavior when profiles are taken as test factors

**Table 15.** Differences in the Assessment of Student Athlete Respondents on Coach Leadership Behavior When Sex is Taken as Test Factor

Coach Leadership Behavior	Sex	Mean	SD	Computed t-value	Sig	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Training and Instruction	Male	3.68	0.53	0.29	0.77	Accepted	Not Significant
	Female	3.65	0.46				
Decision Making	Male	3.61	0.58	0.88	0.38	Accepted	Not Significant
	Female	3.52	0.57				
Social Support	Male	2.80	0.98	3.04	0.00	Rejected	Significant
	Female	2.30	0.94				
Positive Feedback	Male	3.46	0.64	1.11	0.27	Accepted	Not Significant
	Female	3.34	0.64				
Over-all	Male	3.39	0.54	2.11	0.07	Accepted	Not Significant
	Female	3.20	0.46				

The results indicate that male and female student-athlete respondents have similar assessments of their coaches' leadership behavior in training and instruction, decision making, and positive feedback, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis in these areas. However, there is a significant difference in perceptions of social support, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis in this aspect.

The similarity in assessments across various leadership dimensions suggests a consistent perception of coaching effectiveness between male and female athletes in areas such as training, decision-making, and positive feedback. This uniformity may reflect a coach's ability to provide equitable guidance and support, irrespective of gender.

The significant difference observed in social support implies that coaches may exhibit distinct behaviors or approaches in fostering a supportive environment for male

and female athletes. Understanding and addressing these differences could contribute to enhancing the overall coaching experience and support system, ensuring that both male and female athletes receive tailored encouragement and assistance in their athletic pursuits.

In examining the coach-athlete relationship and its gender dynamics, Norman (2016) suggests that the prevalence of male coaches and the influence of masculinized norms in youth sports may impact certain coaching behaviors. Considering the patriarchal context in which athletes and coaches operate, with women being consistently underrepresented across all levels of the sports structure, and coaching being predominantly dominated by men, it becomes pertinent to investigate whether existing male coaching practices contribute positively to women's experiences in sports (Norman, 2016).

**Table 16.** Differences in the Assessment of Student Athlete Respondents on Coach Leadership When Age is Taken as Test Factor

Coach Leadership Behavior	Age	Mean	SD	Computed F-value	Sig	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Training and Instruction	18-20 y/o	3.69	0.47	0.22	0.81	Accepted	Not Significant
	21-23 y/o	3.63	0.57				
	Above 23 y/o	3.67	0.31				
Decision Making	18-20 y/o	3.58	0.56	0.14	0.87	Accepted	Not Significant
	21-23 y/o	3.56	0.61				
	Above 23 y/o	3.73	0.46				
Social Support	18-20 y/o	2.69	0.98	0.68	0.51	Accepted	Not Significant
	21-23 y/o	2.52	1.02				
	Above 23 y/o	2.27	1.10				
Positive Feedback	18-20 y/o	3.46	0.60	0.78	0.46	Accepted	Not Significant
	21-23 y/o	3.37	0.72				
	Above 23 y/o	3.07	0.58				
Over-all	18-20 y/o	3.36	0.49	0.55	0.58	Accepted	Not Significant
	21-23 y/o	3.27	0.57				
	Above 23 y/o	3.18	0.28				

The finding suggests that student athlete respondents, irrespective of their age, share similar evaluations of their coaches' leadership behavior in key aspects such as training and instruction, decision-making, social support, and positive feedback.

The implication of this result is that coaches are perceived consistently across different age groups, indicating a uniformity in their leadership approach regardless of the athletes' age. This may suggest that coaches demonstrate a capacity to adapt their coaching style to effectively cater to the needs of athletes across various age ranges. It also implies a potential strength in the coaching program, as the positive assessments are consistent across different age cohorts, contributing to a cohesive and inclusive coaching environment that resonates well with athletes at various stages of development.

Each coach has a unique style of coaching, and how that style is used has a significant impact on how well their athletes do. Athletes' psychological requirements can be met or neglected by different coaching techniques, which can have a noticeable and significant impact on an athlete's motivation and performance. According to Marcone's (2017) summary of recent studies, coaches that emphasize autonomy support meet the demands of their athletes, which improves their overall performance and growth. Jones (2020) has also

investigated the effects of different coaching philosophies on players in a similar manner.

The implication of the result is that regardless of the specific sports team to which the athletes belong, there is a consistent and similar assessment among them regarding the leadership behavior of their coaches.

This similarity is observed across various aspects, including training and instruction, decision making, social support, and positive feedback. Essentially, the coaches' leadership behavior is perceived similarly by athletes, suggesting a uniformity in their evaluations across different sports teams.

According to Ignacio et al. (2017), coaching sports has difficult responsibilities. Athletes' physical performance is not the only thing that coaches work to maximize; they also develop and refine athletes' talent and talents. They must also take into account their own personal traits, which may have a favorable or unfavorable influence on their coaching style. Feelings of pleasure or, on the other hand, burnout in their involvement in sports is greatly influenced by athletes' opinions of their coach's leadership behavior. The findings have shown the enormous impact that coaches' perceived and preferred leadership behaviors have on athletes' happiness levels. Perceived leadership behaviors also play a significant role in predicting players' professional achievement and

general satisfaction in sports.

**Table 17.** Differences in the Assessment of Student Athlete Respondents on Coach Leadership When Sports Team is Taken as Test Factor

Coach Leadership Behavior	Sports Team	Mean	SD	Computed F-value	Sig	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Training and Instruction	Track & Field	3.71	0.69	0.79	0.64	Accepted	Not Significant
	Swimming	3.84	0.34				
	Basketball	3.82	0.26				
	Soccer	3.59	0.58				
	Volleyball	3.78	0.30				
	Ping Pong	3.73	0.24				
	Badminton	3.50	0.52				
	Tennis	3.47	1.03				
	Aerobics	3.60	0.49				
Decision Making	Track & Field	3.77	0.53	0.74	0.68	Accepted	Not Significant
	Swimming	3.56	0.68				
	Basketball	3.68	0.40				
	Soccer	3.50	0.62				
	Volleyball	3.65	0.52				
	Ping Pong	3.90	0.17				
	Badminton	3.47	0.62				
	Tennis	3.30	1.02				
	Aerobics	3.50	0.57				
Social Support	Track & Field	2.56	1.08	0.80	0.63	Accepted	Not Significant
	Swimming	2.76	0.92				
	Basketball	2.51	1.06				
	Soccer	2.53	0.99				
	Volleyball	3.01	0.96				
	Ping Pong	2.00	1.23				
	Badminton	2.57	0.93				
	Tennis	2.83	1.05				
	Aerobics	.76	0.96				
Positive Feedback	Track & Field	3.55	0.63	0.96	0.48	Accepted	Not Significant
	Swimming	3.33	0.57				
	Basketball	3.71	0.35				
	Soccer	3.40	0.71				
	Volleyball	3.54	0.63				
	Ping Pong	3.43	0.75				
	Badminton	3.40	0.57				
	Tennis	3.03	1.13				
	Aerobics	3.31	0.60				
Over-all	Track & Field	3.40	0.58	0.57	0.84	Accepted	Not Significant
	Swimming	3.37	0.43				
	Basketball	3.43	0.35				
	Soccer	3.26	0.60				
	Volleyball	3.49	0.51				
	Ping Pong	3.27	0.46				
	Badminton	3.23	0.48				
	Tennis	3.16	0.85				
	Aerobics	3.29	0.51				
Martial Arts	3.11	0.49					
Taekwondo	3.18	0.53					

## 9. Conclusion

The findings presented in the study inspired the researcher in formulating the subsequent conclusions:

1. Male participants in the 11 sports events make up the majority of the student athlete responses, who are primarily between the ages of 18 and 20. But a large percentage comes from the sport of aerobics, closely followed by soccer.

2. Based on the assessments of the student athlete respondents, the results show that the coaches' most strongly exhibited leadership behaviors were training and instruction

and decision-making. Positive feedback and social support were also evident among the coaches. This further suggests that, according to the respondents' assessments of the student athletes, coaches typically exhibit leadership behavior among them.

3. All of the data point to the assessment of student athletes' performance being done at a very high level. Such high scores for assessment imply that athletes perform to a reasonable level in relation to the variety of criteria or elements assessed. This implies that student athletes are most likely proficient, effective, or successful in the sports or activities they participate in, which could be a result of their commitment,

skills, training, or coaching support.

4. The findings indicate that while there is a considerable difference in social support, male and female athlete respondents evaluate their coaches' leadership conduct in terms of decision-making, training and instruction, and positive feedback relatively similarly. Furthermore, the results suggest that athletes consistently and similarly assess their coaches' leadership behavior, irrespective of their age or the particular sports team they play for.

5. The findings indicate that, in terms of self-motivation, goal-setting, technical proficiency, and competition strategy, male and female athletes had comparatively similar assessments of their performance levels. On the other hand, there are significant differences concerning mental preparedness and athletic ability.

6. The overall result suggests a strong relationship, as coach leadership behavior is significantly and highly correlated with student athletes' level of performance. This indicates that the way coaches lead and guide their athletes has a substantial and positive impact on the overall performance of the athlete students.

7. The Sports Leadership Program emerged as a result of an in-depth study that revealed a strong correlation between athlete performance and coach leadership behavior. This program, which is based on empirical facts, aims to maximize team relationships and athlete development by addressing gaps in coaching techniques that have been discovered.

## 10. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the current study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Given that the majority of student athletes are in the 18-20 age range, designing training programs that cater specifically to this demographic can optimize their athletic development and performance.

2. Although social support was manifested, there is room for enhancement. Coaches can proactively seek ways to strengthen the social support they provide to student athletes. This may involve fostering a positive team culture, promoting open communication, and implementing team-building activities.

3. Balance academic and athletic commitments by working with academic support services. This can include one-on-one or group tutoring sessions tailored to meet athletes' academic needs. By doing so, student athletes can excel in both their sports and academic pursuits.

4. Despite high performance levels, individualized support can be beneficial. Coaches and support staff should assess each athlete's specific needs, offering tailored guidance, training programs, and resources to further enhance their skills and success.

5. Design holistic athlete development programs that not only focus on enhancing physical skills but also address mental, emotional, and nutritional aspects. A well-rounded approach contributes to overall performance excellence.

6. Introduce sports psychology support services to assist athletes in managing stress, maintaining focus, and developing mental resilience. This can contribute to sustained high-level performance under varying conditions.

7. Based on the evidenced correlation between coach leadership behavior and athlete performance discovered in this study, the immediate adoption of the proposed Sports Leadership Program is being recommended to address coaching gaps and optimize team dynamics.

## 11. Rationale

The Proposed University Sports Leadership Program is born from the recognition that effective coach leadership profoundly influences athlete performance. Grounded in empirical research, this program addresses identified gaps in coaching techniques, aiming to create a holistic coaching approach that maximizes team relationships and fosters athlete development.

## 12. General Objectives

1. Train coaches to integrate physical, mental, and emotional aspects of coaching to foster comprehensive athlete development.

2. Equip coaches with the skills and knowledge to build strong, cohesive relationships within their teams, encouraging effective communication and collaboration.

3. Focus on strategies that enable coaches to guide athletes to their full potential, improving performance both on and off the field.

4. Offer advanced training in leadership principles and techniques, empowering coaches to be inspiring, motivating, and impactful leaders.

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