

## Preferred Leadership Behaviour of Coaches by Athletes in Individual and Team Sports in Nigeria

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**Abstract :** This study examined the coaching leadership behaviours preferred by athletes in individual and team sports in Nigeria that may lead to increased satisfaction and performance. Six leadership behaviours were identified; these are democratic, training and instruction, situational consideration, autocratic, social support and positive feedback. The six leadership behaviours relate to the preference of coaches by athletes that leads to increased performance were the focus of this study. The population of this study is comprised of male and female athletes of states sports councils in Nigeria. An ex-post facto research design was employed for this study. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the sampled states according to the six geo-political zones of the country. Two states (North Central (FCT, Nasarawa), North East (Bauchi, Gombe), North West (Kaduna, Sokoto), South East (Anambra, Imo), South west (Ogun, Ondo), South South (Delta, and Rivers) were selected from each stratum. A modified questionnaire was used to collect data for this study, and the data collected were subjected to a reliability test using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to analyse the data. A two sample Z-test procedure was used to test the significant differences because of the large number of subjects involved in the different groups. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha value. The findings of the study concluded that: Athletes in team and individual sports generally preferred coaches who were more disposed towards training and instructions, social support, positive feedback, situational consideration and democratic behaviours. It was also found that athletes in team sports have higher preference for coaches with democratic behaviour. The result revealed that athletes in team and individual sports did not have a preference for coaches disposed towards autocratic behaviour. Based on this, the following recommendations were made: Democratic behaviour by coaches should be encouraged in team and individual sports. Coaches should not be engaged in autocratic behaviours when coaching. These behaviours should be adopted by coaches to increase athletes' satisfaction and enhancement in performance.

**Keywords :** leadership behaviour, preference, athletes, individual, team, coaches'

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