

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY: APPLIED BUSINESS AND EDUCATION RESEARCH

2024, Vol. 5, No. 6, 2223 – 2234

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.05.06.24>

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## Research Article

### The Dominant Sports Coaching Style Preferred by the Athletes from a State University in the Philippines

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#### Article history:

Submission June 2024

Revised June 2024

Accepted June 2024

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#### ABSTRACT

This research explores the dominant sports coaching style preferred by athletes at Cavite State University Imus Campus in the Philippines. Drawing upon a descriptive research methodology, the study investigates athletes' preferences across various demographic factors and types of sports played. A total of 183 officially enrolled athletes participated in the study, providing valuable insights into their coaching preferences.

The findings reveal a universal preference for democratic coaching styles ( $\bar{x}$ = 4.69) among athletes, emphasizing collaboration, communication, and participatory decision-making. Regardless of age, sex, year level, or degree program, athletes consistently rated democratic coaching as their preferred style. However, variations and exceptions were observed across certain types of sports, highlighting the importance of tailored coaching approaches. An interesting finding emerged regarding archery, where the athlete's average ratings for all coaching styles—Democratic, Autocratic, and Laissez-Faire—were consistently rated as  $\bar{x}$ =5.00, suggesting a preference for any coaching style by a single athlete. Moreover, exceptions were observed in specific sports. For instance, in Chess, an Autocratic coaching style was dominant, indicating a preference for a directive approach ( $\bar{x}$ =4.91). Similarly, in Lawn Tennis, athletes showed dual preferences for both Democratic and Autocratic coaching styles.

It is significant that coaches recognize and adapt to athletes' preferences to optimize engagement, motivation, and performance outcomes. Aligning the appropriate coaching style to the athletes' preference, can enhance the overall athletic experience and contribute to the success and satisfaction of athletes in their sporting endeavors.

**Keywords:** *Athletes, Athlete preferences, Autocratic, Coach, Coaching styles, Democratic, Laissez faire, Sports coaching*

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#### How to cite:

Abayari, J. D. P., Tilan, K. M., Aton, A. G., & Reyes, K. D. M. (2024). The Dominant Sports Coaching Style Preferred by the Athletes from a State University in the Philippines. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*. 5(6), 2223 – 2234. doi: 10.11594/ijmaber.05.06.24

## Introduction

In every competitive and good athlete, one may identify a combination of qualities: a mix of traits including self-confidence, discipline, resilience, humility, and passion. These qualities can be developed and refined through mentoring and training. Coaches play a critical role here. They are more than just trainers; they are mentors who can help and push athletes to realize their full potential in the sports they play.

Pido (2018) stipulated that coaches play a major role in molding the athletes' motivation and can create a great impact to athlete's satisfaction and performance.

This leads to believe that coaching is more than just teaching; it's also about inspiring, helping athletes develop their abilities, and fostering their self-worth. A coach's strength frequently resides in their capacity to provide constructive feedback, encourage problem-solving, and stimulate team brainstorming. The result is a team of athletes that are motivated to improve and accomplish their goals and who can work well together.

According to Jones and Turner (2018), effective coaching involves creating a positive learning environment that fosters athlete development and success (Richardson et al., 2024). One key aspect of effective coaching is providing constructive feedback that is specific, timely, and goal-oriented (Groom, Cushion, & Nelson, 2018). This type of feedback helps athletes identify areas for improvement and develop the skills necessary for success.

It's prominent that without a coach, a team is incomplete. Through various coaching philosophies, they not only mentor athletes in their chosen sports but also help to shape the athletes themselves. These approaches, which vary from democratic to holistic, each have a different effect on how well athletes perform. A coach's behavior and mannerisms have a big impact on how motivated an athlete is.

Research suggests that the most effective coaching style depends on the individual athlete and the sport being played, and that coaches who are able to adapt their coaching style to meet the needs of their athletes are more likely to be successful (Kavussanu & Boardley, 2008; Jowett & Shanmugam, 2016).

While most studies in the Philippines concentrate on sports management, leadership skills, effects of sports coaching styles, most participants are the coaches. Studies leaning towards the coaching style mostly preferred by athletes is still under-researched. The researchers aim to address this research gap by investigating the coaching styles preferred by athletes from Cavite State University Imus Campus, thus contributing valuable insights into the dynamics of coach-athlete interactions and enhancing the overall athletic experience and performance outcomes.

This study generally aims to determine the sports coaching style preferred by athletes from Cavite State University Imus Campus. Specifically, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the athletes in terms of age, sex, year level, degree program, and type of sports played?
2. What are the dominant sports coaching style preferred by athletes from the state university when grouped according to profile (age, sex, year level, degree program, and type of sports played)?
3. Overall, what is the dominant sports coaching style preferred by athletes?

This study also has limitations. The study was conducted at Cavite State University Imus Campus during the Second Semester of AY 2023- 2024. Data regarding the profile of the athletes and preferred sports coaching style, were gathered via survey questionnaire. Only officially enrolled athletes were considered. Details regarding their specific coaches were not included in the study.

## Methods

The study employed a descriptive research method to interpret the dominant sports coaching styles preferred by athletes. Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources, with primary data gathered through a questionnaire and secondary data sourced from journals and articles supporting the study's results. Stratified sampling was utilized, dividing the population into homogeneous subpopulations based on the type of sport each athlete participated in.

A 30-item questionnaire was designed to assess athletes' dominant coaching style preferences, with responses measured on a 5-point Likert scale. This questionnaire has been subjected to content validity via two physical education experts. After validation, it has been pilot tested to 50 athletes in another campus, resulting to a Cronbach alpha values of  $\alpha = 0.893$ ,  $\alpha = 0.913$ , and  $\alpha = 0.919$  indicating good and excellent reliability and emphasizes internal consistency of responses. Statistical methods, including frequency count, percentage distribution, mean, standard deviation, were employed to analyze the data and provide insights into athletes' profiles and preferred coaching styles. These methods facilitated a comprehensive examination of the data, enabling a detailed understanding of athletes' preferences and characteristics.

## Results and Discussion

A total of 184 athletes were targeted, and 183 papers were returned, resulting in a response rate of 99.50%. Of the 184 athletes, one was not considered officially enrolled, resulting in a final population of 183 participants.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the participants across various profile and the following results were found out:

### Age

There are 78 athletes (42.62%) found to be of ages 17 to 20 years old, 97 athletes (53.01%) are of ages 21 to 24 years old, and 8 athletes (15.4%) are 25 years old and above.

### Sex

More than half of the athletes comprising of 106 (57.92%) are male. Less than half, 78 (42.08%) are female.

### Year Level

The athletes came from across all levels in the campus, where 49 (26.78%) are from first

year, 64 (34.97%) are from the second year, 52 (28.42%) are third year, and 18 (9.84%) are fourth year.

### Degree Program

All programs in the campus are also well-represented by the athletes. The BS in Information Technology program has the highest number of athletes with a population of 39 (21.31%). This is followed by BS in Business Management/ Administration, with 37 (20.22%) athletes. BS in Computer Science and BS in Entrepreneurship ranks third and fourth with population of 24 and 23 respectively. The other athletes are from BS in Hospitality Management with 18 (9.84%), BS in Psychology with 15 (8.20), Bachelor of Secondary/ Early Childhood/ Elementary Education with 13 (7.10%) BS in Office Administration with 8 (4.37%), and BA in Journalism with 6 (3.28%)

### Types of Sports Played

In terms of the types of sports played, there is a diverse distribution of athletes across various types of sports played at the state university. Among the sports represented, basketball emerges as the most prominent, with 33 athletes comprising 18.03% of the total. Following closely behind are volleyball and athletics, with 29 and 23 athletes respectively, making up 15.85% and 12.57% of the total population of athletes. Other sports, such as combative, football, and badminton, also contribute significantly to the athlete population, each representing more than 6% of the total. Conversely, sports like swimming and archery have smaller representations, each accounting for less than 2% of the total athlete count. This varied distribution showcases the breadth of athletic engagement within the university, with students participating in a wide array of sports played to contribute to the vibrant sports culture.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of participants according to age, sex, year level, degree program and types of sports played

	Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age	17 to 20 years old	78	42.62
	21 to 24 years old	97	53.01
	25 years old and above	8	4.37
Sex	Female	77	42.08
	Male	106	57.92
Year Level	First Year	49	26.78
	Second Year	64	34.97
	Third Year	52	28.42
	Fourth Year	18	9.84
Degree Program	BSENT	23	12.57
	BSBM/ BSBA	37	20.22
	BSHM	18	9.84
	BSCS	24	13.11
	BSIT	39	21.31
	BSED	13	7.10
	BAJOURN	6	3.28
	BSPSYCH	15	8.20
	BSOA	8	4.37
Type of Sports Played	Archery	1	0.55
	Athletics	23	12.57
	Badminton	7	3.83
	Basketball	33	18.03
	Billiards	4	2.19
	Chess	8	4.37
	Combative	25	13.66
	E- Sports	6	3.28
	Football	16	8.74
	Futsal	12	6.56
	Lawn Tennis	8	4.37
	Swimming	3	1.64
	Table Tennis	8	4.37
	Volleyball	29	15.85

Table 2 presents the dominant sports coaching style preferred by athletes categorized by age groups. Across all age groups, the democratic coaching style emerges as the dominant preference, with athletes aged 17 to 20 years old showing the highest mean rating of 4.73, followed by those aged 21 to 24 years old with a mean rating of 4.65, and athletes aged 25 years old and above with a mean rating of 4.40.

The implications of these findings suggest that athletes across different age groups tend to

prefer a coaching style that emphasizes collaboration, communication, and participatory decision-making. As Successful communication as mentioned by Gomez (2022) is connected to effective reform or decision-making. The higher mean ratings for the democratic coaching style indicate that athletes value having a voice in the coaching process and appreciate coaches who prioritize their input and involvement.

Table 2. The dominant sports coaching style preferred by the athletes when grouped according to age

Profile: Age	Democratic	Autocratic	Laissez-Faire	Dominant Coaching Style according to Age
17 to 20 years old	4.73	4.59	3.92	Democratic $\bar{x} = 4.59$
21 to 24 years old	4.65	4.48	3.70	
25 years old and above	4.40	4.23	3.14	
Average	<b>4.59</b>	<b>4.43</b>	<b>3.59</b>	

Table 3 displays the dominant sports coaching style preferred by athletes categorized by sex groups. Across both sexes, the democratic coaching style emerges as the dominant preference, with females showing a mean rating of 4.59 and males with a slightly higher mean rating of 4.73 for this coaching style.

These findings suggest that coaches should recognize the importance of incorporating

democratic coaching methods, such as involving athletes in decision-making processes and providing opportunities for input and feedback, to cater to the preferences of athletes regardless of gender. By adopting a democratic coaching approach, coaches can foster a supportive and empowering environment that maximizes athlete engagement, satisfaction, and performance.

Table 3. The dominant sports coaching style preferred by the athletes when grouped according to sex

Profile: Sex	Democratic	Autocratic	Laissez-Faire	Dominant Coaching Style according to Sex
Female	4.59	4.40	3.56	Democratic $\bar{x} = 4.66$
Male	4.73	4.62	3.92	
Average	<b>4.66</b>	<b>4.51</b>	<b>3.74</b>	

Table 4 presents the dominant sports coaching style preferred by athletes categorized by year level. Across all year levels, the democratic coaching style emerges as the dominant preference, with first-year athletes showing the highest mean rating of 4.71, followed closely by athletes in the third year with a mean rating of 4.68, second-year athletes with a mean rating of 4.66, and fourth-year athletes with a mean rating of 4.61.

Coaches should recognize the importance of incorporating democratic coaching methods to cater to the preferences of athletes at all stages of their athletic development. By fostering an environment of inclusivity and mutual respect, coaches can enhance athlete engagement, motivation, and overall performance, contributing to a positive and effective coaching experience for athletes across various year levels.

Table 4. The dominant sports coaching style preferred by the athletes from when grouped according to year level

Profile: Year Level	Democratic	Autocratic	Laissez-Faire	Dominant Coaching Style according to Year Level
First Year	4.71	4.57	3.90	Democratic $\bar{x} = 4.66$
Second Year	4.66	4.50	3.71	
Third Year	4.68	4.50	3.78	
Fourth Year	4.61	4.57	3.63	
Average	<b>4.66</b>	<b>4.53</b>	<b>3.75</b>	

Table 5 illustrates the dominant sports coaching style preferred by athletes grouped according to degree program. Across various degree programs, the democratic coaching style emerges as the dominant preference, with BSPSYCH (Bachelor of Science in Psychology) showing the highest mean rating of 4.85, followed closely by BSIT (Bachelor of Science in Information Technology) with a mean rating of

4.75, and BSOA (Bachelor of Science in Office Administration) with a mean rating of 4.74.

Coaches should acknowledge the importance of adapting coaching methods to suit the preferences of athletes from diverse academic backgrounds. By incorporating democratic coaching approaches, coaches can create an inclusive and supportive environment that fosters athlete engagement, motivation, and performance across various degree programs.

Table 5. The dominant sports coaching style preferred by the athletes from when grouped according to degree program

Profile: Degree Program	Democratic	Autocratic	Laissez-Faire	Dominant Coaching Style according to Degree Program
BSENT	4.67	4.44	3.69	Democratic $\bar{x}= 4.69$
BSBM/ BSBA	4.57	4.46	3.66	
BSHM	4.66	4.31	3.73	
BSCS	4.60	4.48	3.83	
BSIT	4.75	4.68	3.69	
BSGD	4.71	4.59	3.88	
BAJOURN	4.70	4.55	3.78	
BSPSYCH	4.85	4.65	4.15	
BSOA	4.74	4.58	3.95	
Average	4.69	4.53	3.82	

Table 6 provides insight into the coaching preferences of athletes across different sports, highlighting variations in dominant coaching styles and exceptions within specific sports. Athletes from the sports such as athletics, badminton, basketball, billiards, combative, Esports, Football, Futsal, Swimming, and volleyball prefer a democratic coaching style.

However, a notable observation arises in the case of archery, where, the average ratings for democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire coaching styles are all 5.00, indicating that the athlete (n=1) prefers any type of coaching style.

Additionally, there are exceptions noted for certain type of sports played. For example, in chess, the dominant coaching style is autocratic ( $\bar{x}= 4.91$ ) indicating a preference for a more directive approach. Similarly, in lawn tennis, dual

preferences for both democratic and autocratic coaching styles are dominant ( $\bar{x}= 4.64, 4.64$ ). This suggests a balanced preference among the athletes. In contrast, athletes from the sports table tennis lean towards the autocratic coaching style ( $\bar{x}= 4.58$ ), indicating a stronger inclination towards directive coaching methods in this sport.

These results suggest a general preference for democratic coaching styles across various sports, highlighting the importance of collaboration and athlete involvement. However, exceptions exist, such as in archery, chess, lawn tennis, and table tennis. Understanding these preferences can help coaches tailor their approaches, strategies, and training plans to optimize athlete development and performance.

Table 6. The dominant sports coaching style preferred by the athletes from when grouped according to type of sports played

Profile: Type of Sports Played	Democratic	Autocratic	Laissez-Faire	Dominant Coaching Style according to Type of Sports Played
Archery	5.00	5.00	5.00	Democratic $\bar{x} = 4.75$
Athletics	4.75	4.59	3.77	
Badminton	4.96	4.81	4.33	
Basketball	4.63	4.32	3.36	Except for: Archery: Any
Billiards	4.88	4.83	3.75	
Chess	4.83	4.91	4.56	
Combative	4.56	4.24	3.49	Chess: Autocratic
E- Sports	4.82	4.72	4.35	
Football	4.82	4.78	4.21	Lawn Tennis: Both Democratic and Autocratic
Futsal	4.39	4.23	3.41	
Lawn Tennis	4.64	4.64	3.4	Table Tennis: Autocratic
Swimming	5.00	4.87	4.17	
Table Tennis	4.54	4.58	3.69	
Volleyball	4.63	4.59	3.97	
Average	4.75	4.65	3.96	

Table 7 presents the overall dominant sports coaching style preferred by athletes, as indicated by weighted mean scores, standard deviations, and ranks. Democratic coaching emerges as the most preferred style, with a weighted mean of 4.67, followed by autocratic coaching with a slightly lower mean of 4.53,

and laissez-faire coaching with the lowest mean of 3.77.

This concise discussion highlights the clear preference among athletes for a coaching style that emphasizes collaboration and communication (democratic coaching).

Table 7. The overall dominant sports coaching style preferred by the athletes

Coaching Style	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
Democratic	4.67	0.47	1
Autocratic	4.53	0.54	2
Laissez- Faire	3.77	0.89	3

Table 8 shows the mean scores, standard deviations, and verbal interpretations of athletes' preferences for democratic sports coaching style indicators. Across all indicators, athletes show strong agreement with the coaching style, with weighted mean scores ranging from 4.62 to 4.81. The general weighted mean of 4.67 reaffirms athletes' strong preference for a coaching style that emphasizes collaboration, respect, and active participation in decision-making processes.

This finding implies that coaches should prioritize adopting a collaborative and participatory approach in their coaching methods. By respecting athletes' thoughts and opinions,

involving them in decision-making processes, and actively listening to their input, coaches can create a supportive and empowering environment that enhances athlete motivation, engagement, and performance. Moreover, the capacity to set precise objectives, arrange, and strategize for both short-term and long-term goals appears to significantly influence the capabilities of young athletes (Raanes et al., 2019). Additionally, coaches should focus on promoting positive collaboration and teamwork within the team, as well as assisting athletes in problem-solving and decision-making, to further cultivate a culture of excellence and achievement.



Table 8. Mean score, standard deviation, and verbal interpretation preferred by the athletes on democratic sports coaching style

Indicator		Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1.	I appreciate my coach respecting my thoughts and opinions.	4.67	0.59	Strongly Agree
2.	I value the opportunity my coach provides for me to participate in the team's decision-making process.	4.64	0.56	Strongly Agree
3.	I am motivated and inspired when my coach compliments me on my efforts and achievements.	4.66	0.52	Strongly Agree
4.	I prefer my coach to have faith in me to be in charge of my own learning and development.	4.69	0.55	Strongly Agree
5.	I appreciate my coach's commitment to my personal development as a person and as an athlete.	4.62	0.61	Strongly Agree
6.	I prefer my coach to work collaboratively with our team to determine our aims and objectives.	4.67	0.58	Strongly Agree
7.	I value my coach actively listening to our training inputs and strategies.	4.81	0.48	Strongly Agree
8.	I appreciate my coach allowing us to evaluate one another to further improve our sports performance.	4.73	0.58	Strongly Agree
9.	I prefer my coach to promote positive collaboration and teamwork within the team.	4.62	0.55	Strongly Agree
10.	I appreciate my coach assisting in improving our ability to solve problems and make decisions.	4.64	0.56	Strongly Agree
<b>GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN</b>		<b>4.67</b>		<b>Strongly Agree</b>

Table 9 provides mean scores, standard deviations, and verbal interpretations of athletes' preferences for autocratic sports coaching style indicators. The weighted mean scores indicate a strong preference for an autocratic coaching approach, with all indicators falling within the "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" ratings. Athletes highly value qualities such as their coach's proficiency in the sport, honest evaluations, high expectations, precise guidance, emphasis on discipline, and organized approach to training.

These findings suggest that athletes respond positively to a coaching style characterized by clear expectations, structured guidance,

and a strong emphasis on discipline and hard work. Incorporating strict training can enhance athlete leadership development while they exercise (Stamatis et al., 2022). Coaches adopting an autocratic coaching approach should continue to prioritize these aspects to effectively motivate and guide athletes towards their goals. However, it is essential for coaches to balance autocratic tendencies with fostering an environment of trust, open communication, and athlete empowerment to ensure a positive coaching experience for all involved parties.



Table 9. Mean score, standard deviation, and verbal interpretation preferred by the athletes on autocratic sports coaching style

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. I prefer my coach to be well-informed and proficient in our sport.	4.60	0.54	Strongly Agree
2. I appreciate my coach providing frank and honest evaluations of my performance along with helpful criticism.	4.57	0.56	Strongly Agree
3. I value my coach's high expectations for my performance and the standards they set.	4.38	0.93	Agree
4. I appreciate my coach providing precise guidance on how to improve my abilities and sports skills.	4.23	0.72	Agree
5. I acknowledge my coach's emphasis on discipline, respect, and value for authority.	4.46	0.53	Agree
6. I prefer my coach to ensure that our team's aims and objectives are clearly defined.	4.60	0.62	Strongly Agree
7. I appreciate my coach's strict emphasis on the importance of commitment, discipline, and hard work.	4.67	0.58	Strongly Agree
8. I value my coach's very organized approach to conducting practice sessions and training.	4.56	0.64	Strongly Agree
9. I recognize my coach's high regard on being decisive and serving as the team's representative.	4.58	0.61	Strongly Agree
10. I acknowledge my coach's expectation for us to adhere to all sports and training guidelines without question.	4.60	0.89	Strongly Agree
<b>GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN</b>	<b>4.53</b>		<b>Strongly Agree</b>

Table 10 presents mean scores, standard deviations, and verbal interpretations of athletes' preferences for a laissez-faire sports coaching style. Compared to the tables for democratic and autocratic coaching styles, the weighted mean scores for laissez-faire coaching indicate a preference leaning towards agreement but with some variability among indicators.

Athletes generally express agreement with laissez-faire coaching style indicators, particularly in aspects related to autonomy, minimal intervention from the coach, encouragement of individuality and creativity, and freedom in decision-making processes. However, there are indications of variability in preferences, as seen in indicators such as the coach's level of invest-

ment in the team's success, where athletes express a more neutral stance. It is important to regard that the coach's authority, perceived significance of the coach's expertise and achievements to the student-athlete, and the coach's capacity to regulate interaction with student-athletes were crucial elements in shaping the coach-athlete dynamic (McHenry et al., 2020).

The findings suggest that while athletes generally appreciate a hands-off coaching approach that promotes autonomy and creativity, coaches should be mindful of the balance between providing freedom and offering necessary guidance and support. Understanding athletes' varying preferences within a laissez-faire coaching style can help coaches tailor their ap-

proach to meet the diverse needs of their athletes, ultimately fostering a supportive and effective coaching environment. According to a study, coaching has an impact on athletes, and coaches' leadership styles can enhance

athletes' happiness and performance (Allami et al., 2022), whereas, the coach's task has a crucial role in the development and preparation of an athlete.

Table 10. Mean score, standard deviation, and verbal interpretation preferred by the athletes on laissez-faire sports coaching style

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. It is alright with me if my coach does not set clear objectives or goals.	4.01	1.06	Agree
2. I do not mind when my coach is not always present during training or games.	3.85	1.07	Agree
3. I am comfortable even if my coach is not setting up a clear goal or direction for our team.	3.78	1.33	Agree
4. I opt for having my coach not invested or engaged too much in our team's success.	3.31	1.54	Neither Agree nor Disagree
5. I appreciate it when our coach gives us autonomy to set our own practices and training sessions.	3.59	1.07	Agree
6. I choose a coach who does not intervene with our practices and strategies.	3.64	1.30	Agree
7. I like it when our coach encourages individuality and creativity in how we play our sport.	4.04	0.66	Agree
8. I prefer that our coach allows us to make our own decisions and game play during competitions.	4.26	0.77	Agree
9. I value it if our coach provides less feedback.	3.70	1.33	Agree
10. I prefer a coach who provides us freedom to do any strategy we like.	3.54	1.20	Agree
<b>GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN</b>	<b>3.77</b>		<b>Agree</b>

## Conclusion

This study sheds light on the dominant sports coaching styles preferred by athletes from a state university in the Philippines, specifically Cavite State University Imus Campus. Through a descriptive data analysis, it was revealed that athletes across different profiles and type of sports played exhibit preference for democratic coaching styles, characterized by collaboration, communication, and participatory decision-making. This preference transcends age, sex, year level, and degree program, highlighting the universal appeal of coaching methods that prioritize athlete involvement

and empowerment. However, when grouped according to the type of sports played, preference vary for archery: any type of coaching style; chess: autocratic; lawn tennis: both democratic and autocratic; and table tennis: autocratic.

While democratic coaching emerged as the predominant preference, variations and exceptions were observed across certain demographics and sports disciplines, emphasizing the need for coaches to employ flexibility and adaptable coaching approaches tailored to the specific needs and preferences of their athletes.

Implications of this research extend beyond the university setting, offering valuable insights for coaches, sports administrators, and educators involved in athlete development and performance enhancement. By understanding and aligning with athletes' preferences for coaching styles, stakeholders can foster positive coaching environments that optimize athlete engagement, motivation, and performance outcomes, ultimately contributing to the overall success and satisfaction of athletes in their sporting endeavors.

### Acknowledgment

The researchers would like to express their gratitude to all the athletes who participated in this study, as well as the faculty and staff of Cavite State University Imus Campus for their support and cooperation throughout the research process. Special thanks are also extended to the Department of Physical Education for their invaluable assistance in data collection and analysis.

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