International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 32-44, March 2014

# Autocratic and Participative Coaching Styles and Its Effects on Students' Dance Performance

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Abstract. Similar to sports, dancing is a skill that has to be mastered. Coaching styles, or the manner in which instructions are delivered, plays a factor in showcasing one's learning and mastery. Among the most commonly applied coaching styles are autocratic and participative. Autocratic style requires the coach to become directive and demanding. While participative style calls for a compassionate and considerate coach. The objective of this study was to determine which of the two coaching styles, autocratic and participative, significantly influence dancers' effectiveness in increasing dance performance. Samples of fourteen (14) college students who are interested in learning dancing, with mean age of 17.4, participated in the experiment. Two groups were formed with equal members obtained through random sampling. Then, they were exposed to their respective condition, autocratic coaching, or participative coaching, while learning dance performance. Effects of the condition to dance performance were gathered using the self-constructed evaluation instrument, which is made to measure the improvement of dance performance. Between-posttest research design was used to address the objectives. Effectiveness of the treatment to dance performance is thereby determined. The results of the study showed that the autocratic coaching style has a significant effect in influencing the performance of the individuals, who are still beginning to master a skill. In conclusion, autocratic coaching style affects the intrinsic motivation of an individual in increasing the person's dance performance. Other coaching styles were not significantly used in this study.

**Keywords:** coaching style; dance performance; autocratic; participative

## Introduction

Dance is a form of art that is very popular nowadays. People dance for many reasons. Through dancing, they can express their feelings and emotions, or represent and convey their own culture. It is a prime means of expression as human beings that may have originated in the form of rudimentary as early as 1.8 million years ago, when the bipedal anatomy of Homo ergaster can move the body fully which enhanced the communication and body language (Mithen, 2005 as cited in Sevdalis&Keller, 2011). Dance is a universal behavior which has a unique style (Niemitz, 2010 as cited in Fink et al, 2012). It is a complex sensor-action which comprises a set of rhythm, intentional, non-verbal body movements but culturally influenced (Fink, Weege, et. al., 2011).

There are different theories or perspective that support dance as a sport. According to the normative-descriptive point of view by Nastase (2012, page 888), "it is the summing of the standardized structures, explained biomechanically by the skills become execution patterns with technical efficiency (particular technical elements)". According to Piaget (1950; as cite in Nastase, 2012), "result of the personal experiences, an attitude transfers from the instructors to the performers, from the dancers to the spectators, knowledge of self and of the environment through the active intervention of the dance." Dance is an art-sport, which originates in the social group or couple dance based on a time limited complex motion activity and as execution rhythm, by a melody, and spatially by a dance floor (Nastase, 2012).

Coaching is a different occupation in the society because they are expected to give gentle and good persons to the society; this occupation needs different style in handling an individual or a team and a difficult job to master (Martens, 2004; as cited in Khalaj et al, 2011). Coaching is an organized-provision of assistance to a group or an individual to help them not only to develop but also to improve the performance in their chosen sport (Kent, 2005). Coaching is one of the issues in making a person perform better. There are two types of coaching types: Participation Coaching and Performance Coaching. Participation coaching is taking apart in the feelings of the team rather than preparing into the specific sport while the other type is focuses on long term goals for preparation in different competitions (Cross & Lyle, 2005). The success to achieve the goal and the preferred coaching types are supported by different coaching style or philosophies.

Coaching style is defined where descriptive categorization of an individual aggregates the behavior of a coach. This could be a useful mechanism in analyzing coaching practice or it may be a superficial way of caricaturing the most obvious elements of the behavior of a coach (Cross & Lyle, 2003). Coaching style also reflect the value frameworks of coaches (Lyle, 2006). There are different coaching styles, such as laissez-fair and humanistic approach. But the most common styles used in sports are participative and autocratic coaching style.

Autocratic coaching style or "intense style" is applied when the coach assumes authority and decision-making is centralized. An advantage of this coaching style includes a directive and dominating coach who prepares the group or the individual for any type of competition. However, the down side of this coaching style is its one-way learning process. The coach tends to show lack of empathy and he is the only one determining the rules, rewards, and the standards (Lyle, 2006).

While participative coaching style or "nice-guy style," focuses more on allowing high levels of participation with the members of the group. The advantageous outcomes of this coaching style includes: a cohesive team and a relaxed atmosphere, which makes members more involved in the teaching-learning process. Contrarily, the coach may be seen as weak and there is a tendency for members to ignore his directives (Lyle, 2006).

The effect of coaching style to dance performance is much related to, and may be supported by Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. Social learning theory focuses on learning through observation and modeling. In his experiment of Bobo Doll, Bandura concluded that children learn and imitate behaviors they have observed in other people. Modeling can be classified into three, namely: a live model, which involves an actual individual demonstrating or acting out a behavior; the verbal instructional model, which involves descriptions and explanations of a behavior; and lastly, the symbolic model, which involves real or fictional characters displaying behaviors in books, films, television programs, or online media. In this experiment, observation and modeling through a live model is done. Participants observed how their coach executes the dance routine and try to imitate it. There are steps involved in observational learning and modeling process, these are: (1) attention, (2) retention, wherein the participants retain the information that they are seeing, and (3) reproduction, after the participants have seen and retained the steps of the dance routine, it is now their time to execute the steps that their leader had shown; and lastly, (4) motivation, in order to learn through observational learning, the participants should be motivated to imitate the behavior that has been modeled. Thus, reinforcement and punishment is present (Bandura, 1971).

In the study, the four process of social learning as provided by the two coaching styles involve participative coaching style and autocratic coaching style. For the Autocratic Coaching style, the first process was undoubtedly seen during the workshop. The participants were attentive and focused on the dance steps that their coach was demonstrating. Worried that the coach might get angry if they will not focus on each steps that was being demonstrated made them attentive. Thus the second process was achieved. Retention was done when each members who were attentively listening to their coach's instructions retains the information in their memory. The third process, reproduction, was met when the members executed the dance routine taught by their coach. For these three (3) processes to happen, the participants must also undergo motivation. The motivation of the Autocratic Coach is through punishment, the participants of the workshop were not allowed to have a

water break, to lean or to even sit unless routines are properly executed. Hence, the participants were motivated to perform better for them to have a rest.

In the case of the participative coaching style, the four process of observational learning was also present. Attention was visible in the participants although some members may not be able to focus consistently because the coach was hardly strict. The routine taught by the coach was retained in the memories of each participant and was executed. For the Participative Group, it was the reinforcement that was done in the experiment. The coach praised his member as they executed the routine well and encourage them to perform better. This can be seen in the Participative Coaching style. While in the Autocratic Coaching style, the coach will not give the participants a time to rest until they memorized the routine and execute it well.

#### **Context of Current Research**

Research showed that one of the important foundations of influence in a group setting is leadership (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2002; Dirks &Ferrin, 2002. Indeed, Chemers (2001, p. 376) stated that leadership is a process of influence.

Autocratic coaching is a style of a leader that takes "command" without an "asking" approach to his team. The autocratic coaching styles were used in a state where the participant needs to learn a specific practice to further enhance their skills. This coaching style is usually adopted in sports, military and etc... autocratic style leaders will do whatever they feel is necessary to provide the common good. They decide which group members should contribute how much without asking anyone for input. (Van Vugt, Sarah F, Jepson, M. Hart, & De Cremer, 2004). Autocratic coaching encourages his team to have a good discipline, a task-oriented and a respect for their leader. Thus, research also showed negative effects of being an autocratic leader. The team being handled by autocratic leaders are grimly aroused, thus the people do not favor autocratic leader because those types of leaders do not motivate their followers to show loyalty and dedication towards the leader and the team. Followers were only motivated to make the task accurate to impress their leader. This conclusion is in line with a motivational account suggesting that followers' dedication and connectedness to the leader is only promoted if they are positively aroused (Bass, 1998).

The other coaching style is the Participative style, a leadership style where the leader takes "asking" approach to his team and adjust the routine if majority of the team can't get the right thing to do the task. Participative leaders also base their decisions on his team's opinions and approach. Research proven that being intrinsically motivated to follow the welfare of the team is necessary to improve the quality of performance and cooperation (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005). A team performance depends to a large extent on how happy and motivated to follow the collective welfare its members feel (Kelly &Barsade, 2001; Smith, Caroll, & Ashford, 1995). Research also shows that interactive result on motivation to work with the leader was interceding by followers' emotional reactions (De Cremer, 2006).

Followers were motivated because of the empathy being showed by participative leaders, its ability to listen to the team, understand their feelings and thoughts on things, and respond positively.

# **Research Objectives**

The objective of this study is to determine which of the two coaching style, specifically autocratic and participative, will best influence dancers in increasing dance performance. The focus of the study is only geared to these two coaching styles. Other styles of coaching are not included in this study (Bandura, 1971).

# **Hypothesis**

Taken together, autocratic and participative coaching styles will determine the outcome of the individual's performance after exposure to the conditioning done by both coaching style — how well one's exercised authority will determine its influence in group performance. To test its main effect is valuable.

Null Hypothesis: Either of the two types of coaching style in this study will have no significant difference on dance performance.

Hypothesis 1: Autocratic coaching style significantly increases dance performance.

Hypothesis 2: Participative coaching style significantly increases performance.

#### Research Simulacrum

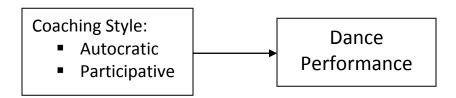


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

The paradigm illustrates the conceptual framework of the study and what coaching style is more effective in a dance performance. The basis of conceptualizing the effectiveness of coaching style in dance performance is to provide an opportunity of understanding factors that may affect group performance. In this study, coaching style is the umbrella of performance. The coaching styles used in this study focuses on autocratic coaching and participative coaching. The two coaching style was tested to see which will best influence dancers by significantly increasing their performance.

# Methods

#### A. Procedure

For the selection of participants, the sampling used was the Purposive Sampling, wherein the researchers set criteria on how they picked their participants. The criteria used were college students who were interested in dancing but have not joined any dance groups or dance competitions yet. The implementation of the experiment was done by conducting a free dance workshop to all college students with the fixed criteria. Recruitment of participants was done through posting. Twenty (25) students responded to the invitation. Number of members in each of the two groups was dependent on the number of participants who joined the said workshop, divided by two. It is to note that the number of participants must be even to have an equal distribution of samples. On the first day of experimental implementation, participants who have registered were assigned into two groups, namely: Group A (autocratic), and Group P (participative), through fishbowl method. Names of the participants were written on a piece of paper and handpicked for grouping. Those who fell under the first Group, Group A were handled by an autocratic coach. On the other hand, those who fell under the second group, Group P were handled by the participative coach.

Before the start of the workshop, the two leaders were oriented by the researchers on how they will play the role of the autocratic and participative coaches. For the coach of Group P, he was instructed to do the Participative coaching style. The participative coach was more approachable than task-oriented. The coaches of this type were more supportive to the members, they were instructive and ready to reinforce, encourage and give positive feedback information to their members than other coaches, thus increasing their members' sense of competence, independence, satisfaction and self-esteem (Chelladurai, 1993; Reimer &Toon, 2001; as cited in Baric &Busick,2009). The coach in Group A was also instructed to do the Autocratic coaching style. The coaches' coaching style was more oriented towards task accomplishment and outcome than towards people; they were highly oriented towards results and winning. They were less supportive, less instructive and less rewarding (Reimer &Toon, 2001; as cited in Baric &Burick,2009). The researchers oriented them on the characteristics of the two coaching style that they will portray in their respective groups during the dance workshop.

The dance workshop was held for two (2) days, each session has three(3) hours of practice. In the workshop, the coaches taught their respective group a modern dance, particularly a basic hip-hop dance, simultaneously. The dance routine was taught by the coaches with the use of their designated coaching style within the two-day period. On the last quarter of the second day, a "mock" dance competition was held wherein the two dance groups competed with each other by performing the dance routine taught by the two coaches. The dance performance of each group was measured using dance criteria that were filled-up by 2 judges or dance experts.

Using the given criteria, the winner of the mock competition was determined and announced.

# **B.** Participants

The workshop had 14 participants with a mean age of 17.21 and a ratio of 9:5 male and female who joined. All participants are college students who are interested in dancing but have not joined any dancing competitions or dance groups yet.

# C. Sampling Procedures

Purposive sampling was done in this study to set limitations on selecting participants. To be consistent with the procedure, purposive sampling via fishbowl method was done in dividing and distributing participants into groups for the conditioning of the experiment. This was to avoid bias and randomizing participants through subjective selection. This was also used to ensure that they were distributed "equally" ---- without intentionally putting specific individuals together by means of the researchers' own judgment.

# D. Research Design

The researchers conducted a posttest, between participants design. This design is used to determine the effect of treatments to two different groups. It does not employ pretest measures when participants are randomly assigned to conditions considering some of the characteristics that they have. Since participants in the study satisfied the research parameters, they were randomly assigned into two groups and were exposed to different experimental treatment conditions: autocratic coaching and participative coaching style dance groups, respectively. These conditions were accounted for/by the definition of the independent variable which was leadership style. Then the difference in their performance after the treatment is determined.

## E. Measures

In judging dance performance, researchers made a self-constructed evaluation instrument. The following criteria were included in the instrument: overall performance, moves execution, originality, and uniformity of the group. Its content of this was validated by two (2) dance experts who have already judged in different dance contests. After validating the content, it was decided that the criteria be altered by focusing on the criteria for each individual. The criteria after validation were changed into: foundation and self-confidence. Foundation is operationally defined as the way in which the individual has established the execution of moves in the routine. While self-confidence is also operationally defines as the process by which the individual delivers his self during the dance.

Measures for coach selection for the experiment were not included. Instead, confederates were oriented on how they will portray the character of the coaching style assigned to them. The researchers explained the main purpose of the study to the confederates and had them familiarized on the characteristics of the type of

leadership that they were to portray. To facilitate the display of participative coaching, the confederate was told to exhibit a light atmosphere among the participants and to build a relationship with them. This is to promote high level of participation among the members of the group. It also allows them to voice out their opinions and suggestions with regard to their coach's approach to instruction. For the delivery of the autocratic coaching style, the confederate was encouraged to exercise a directive and dominating interpersonal behavior, maintain discipline, and employ task-oriented approach to the members of the group.

# F. Data Analysis

The Researchers used the non-parametric test specifically, Mann-Whitney U-Test. It is seen as more applicable than T-test of independent samples considering the small number of samples used in the study, which ranges from 5 to 20. The test is appropriate because of the two condition of the study in coaching style (Autocratic and Participative). The criteria to rate each sample will be used to determine which coaching style is more statistically effective. The mortality rate of the participants caused the sample to decrease in size, with a total of fourteen (14) for the two conditions.

## Results

Table1. Hypothesis testing

Variable	Mean	p-value	Level of significance	Decision rule
Autocratic Participative	9.79 5.21	0.040	$\alpha = 0.05$	Reject Ho

The results of the study shows that there is a significant difference between the two coaching style that employs 0.040 at 0.05 level of significance, which meets hypothesis 1: there is a significant increase on the performance of dancers in using autocratic coaching style.

## **Discussion and Interpretation**

The results obtained in the hypothesis testing showed that there is a significant difference between the two (2) coaching style used in the dance performance of Filipino adolescents. This shows that appropriate coaching style must be implemented to improve dancers' performance. Some of the related studies used in the present research pertained to sports and since there is a dearth of literature on dancing and coaching style. However, Nastase (2012) has indicated that dance is an art-sport, which originates in the social group or couple dance based on a time

limited complex motion activity and as execution rhythm, by a melody, and spatially by a dance floor. Hence, literature on coaching styles and its relevance to sports have been used.

Results of the experiment performed in the present study show that autocratic coaching style is better than participative coaching style in increasing dance performance. In addition to the statistical evidence, participants reported that they have perceived their coach's strict stance in implementing rules and greater demand in compliance positively. Through that approach, they became motivated to learn the routine well. Some of the dancers in the autocratic group were very intimidated with their leader. But rather than be combative, they became cooperative so they performed better. Additionally, the possibility of appraisal from their coach once they perform better than the other group reinforced them to execute the dance routines competitively. From this statement, it can be concluded that dancers in the autocratic group depend on the rewards that may be given by their coach.

On the other hand, this result negated previous literatures. Amorose and Horn (2000), in their research about athlete's intrinsic motivation and its association with coaches' behavior strengthened the hypothesis that higher intrinsic motivation stems from a leadership style that emphasized training and instruction with high democratic coaching behavior. Similarly, Jayasingam (2009) has proven that a participative and nurturant-task leader behavior is more effective than that of autocratic. Group members prefer supportive and considerate leaders to become more cooperative and functional in achieving group goals. Quality of performance and cooperation will be at its greater peak when the coach is compassionate and empathic (De Cremer, 2006; Kelly &Barsade, 2001; Smith, Caroll, & Ashford, 1995).

Participative style of leadership, as used in this study focused on allowing high level of member participation, inspirational motivation, and very low intensity during practice. Statistical proof from this study stressed its insignificant effect on dance performance. The dancers' attention was hardly focused on their coach. Rather, they were more into each other's concerns. Simultaneously, the coach was lenient so dance routines were not accordingly executed as expected. Supported by the interview and observation made, researchers had generalized that participative coaches tend to give vague goals compared to autocratic leaders, who state more defined goals for accomplishment. Thus, this coaching style has not significantly improved dance performance. Although the autocratic coach was very strict, it increased the group members' focus of attention in learning the dance routines. Moreover, they became more goal-oriented since goals were clearly set.

An autocratic leader is a leader who is very strict, directive, and makes use of his power of influence from his position to control rewards and force the followers to comply with his instructions (Blau& Scott, 1963; Daft, 2005; Jogulu& Wood, 2006). This style of leadership is most appropriate for participants who are still in the process of learning and developing their skills (Van Vugt, Sarah F, Jepson, M. Hart,

& De Cremer, 2004). Given the sample parameters in this study, autocratic coaching style worked better in improving their dance performance. Since participants are still on the first stages of developing their dance skills, with only their interest to learn as their initial investment, task-oriented coaching style worked. Participants valued discipline and obedience so they were geared towards enhancement of their dance skills (Bass, 1998).

Researchers also found out that Zone of Proximal Development or the ZPD, conceptualized by Lev Vygotsky, also has an association in the learning of the dancers. "The common conception of the zone of proximal development presupposes an interaction between a more competent person and a less competent person on a task, such that the less competent person becomes independently proficient at what was initially a jointly-accomplished task (Chaeklin, page 2)." The interaction between a more competent person to a less competent one have a direct impact on the latter on a specific field. Relating this aspect to the present study, it was evident that the dance masters and all the dance learners achieved harmony in order to finish a common task. In addition, people who have the willingness to learn or have the "properties of the learner" can focus on the task at hand. The participants' interest to learn dancing has made a significant effect on dance performance in the present study. Their interest in dancing facilitated easier understanding of instructions and lessons given by the dance masters. They have ruled out the way in which it was delivered; that is, despite the autocratic style of coaching shown. Apparently, their readiness to learn inspired them to further their knowledge and skills in dancing.

The limitations of this study provide some opportunities for future research. In this study, there was limited number of participants with only fourteen (14) college students. Age range was also limited to 16-19 years of age. Greater number of participants and another set of age range must be considered to generate better data and results. It will be of interest to employ a comparative study on the effect coaching styles on dance performance with age ranges as its point of comparison. Additional leadership styles in the future studies may provide more evidences to prove the effect of leadership style in dance performance. Thus, to enhance generalizability of findings, future research should examine how learning goal orientation and different genre of dance relate to leadership styles.

## **Conclusions**

Coaching style is an important factor for leaders of dance groups. This serves as their guide in instructing dance routines and providing motivation to their group to improve the performance. Based from the results, autocratic coaching style is an effective way to enhance performance of individuals who are still on the initial stages of skills development. Therefore, to facilitate beginners' dance skills, a dance master should display a directive approach in delivering instructions. Beginners consider their master as a competent person who will most likely lead them to betterment. And so, they show effortless obedience to instructions. Alternatively,

participative coaching is less effective to beginners despite presence of interest to learn. When one's current level of knowledge and skills on a certain task, particularly dancing, still falls short on the average, it results to mediocre input; thereby generating poor performance. A coach who shows high leniency to beginners may misdirect them towards goal accomplishment. Hence, aspects of the Zone of Proximal Development and processes of social learning involved in the facilitation of successful learning outcomes must be observed.

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