

# Association of Preferred and Perceived Coaching Leadership Behaviour Congruence with Playoff Attainment

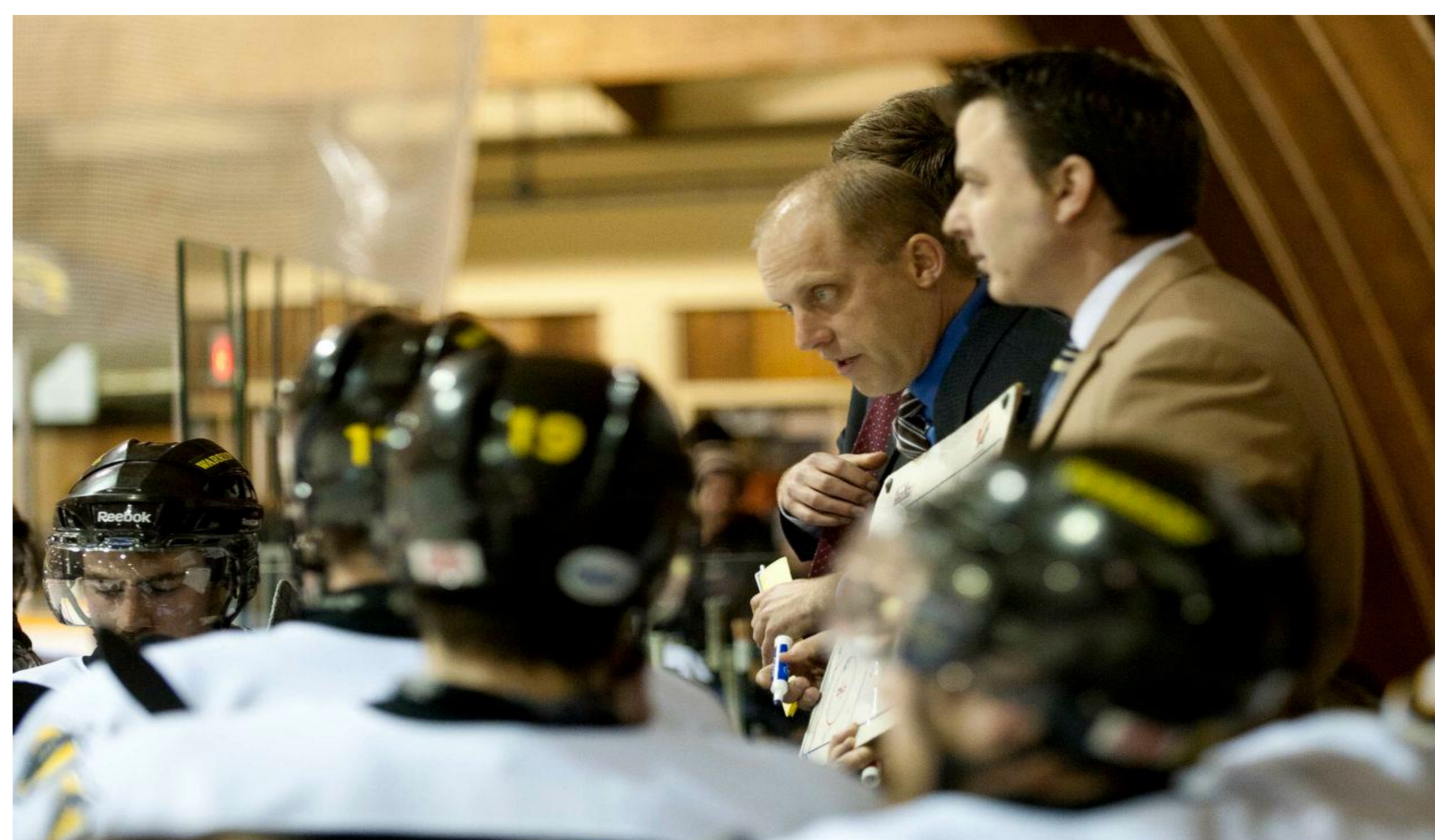
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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was to explore the relationships between coaching leadership styles (i.e., behaviours) and team performance. Our paper was guided by the congruency hypothesis, which suggests that athletes' satisfaction and performance are optimized when there is a match between perceived and preferred leadership behaviours exhibited by a coach (Rierner & Chelladurai, 1998). Specifically, we expected differences to exist in the extent of congruence observed between preferred and perceived leadership behaviours between athletes who participated on teams that made the playoffs and those who participated on teams that did not make the playoffs. Our congruence hypothesis was examined using each dimension of Chelladurai and Sellah's (1980) Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS). Specifically, dimensions of the LSS include: positive feedback, democratic behaviour, autocratic behaviour, social support, and training and instruction.

## METHODS

Participants were varsity athletes attending a large Canadian university in southern Ontario (n=61). The LSS perceived and preferred questionnaires were completed through an online survey engine. After the results were collected, a hybrid independent variable was created by subtracting perceived leadership behavior scores from preferred leadership behavior scores for each dimension of the LSS. These "discrepancy" scores were then associated with the team performance outcome variable (i.e., whether athletes participated or did not participate on playoff teams).



## RESULTS

Four initial descriptive findings emerged from our analysis. Athletes who participated on teams that did not make the playoffs desired more democratic coaching behaviour ( $t = -2.83$ ;  $p < .01$ ); believed their coach exhibited too much autocratic behaviour ( $t = 2.11$ ;  $p < .05$ ); desired more social support from their coach ( $t = -3.17$ ;  $p < .01$ ); and desired more positive feedback from their coach ( $t = -2.31$ ;  $p < .05$ ) than athletes who participated on teams that made the playoffs.

LSS Dimension <sup>1</sup>	Team Performance		t	df
	Made Playoffs	Did Not Make Playoffs		
Teaching/Instruction	.36 (.57)	.31 (.56)	.30	52
Democratic Behaviour	.39 (.70)	.94 (.71)	-2.83**	53
Autocratic Behaviour	-.23 (.66)	-.69 (.94)	2.11*	53
Social Support	.11 (.52)	.55 (.50)	-3.17**	53
Positive Feedback	.61 (.96)	1.23 (1.04)	-2.31*	54

Note: 1 = discrepancy variable created by subtracting perceived leadership behavior scores from preferred leadership behavior scores for each dimension of the LSS, \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , SD is in parenthesis under mean.]



## DISCUSSION

Although our initial findings are descriptive in nature, they appear to suggest that this University's varsity coaches may be able to improve their team's performance by attempting to match their leadership behaviors to those desired by team members. We plan on further validating the results of our investigation by creating discrepancy scores using regression analysis techniques suggested by Rierner and Toon (2001). We feel our study may make an important contribution to the literature with respect to the use of our "playoff attainment" performance variable. Playoff attainment might be better suited than measures of wins/losses often employed in previous investigations. In the context of intercollegiate athletics, teams often make playoffs despite having losing records.



## REFERENCES

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