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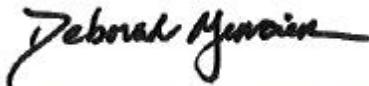


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TRANSFORMING INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY ON
THE IMPACT OF THE SERVANT LEADER ON THE CULTIVATION OF SELF-
ACTUALIZATION IN DIVISION I STUDENT ATHLETES

by

Ashley M. Davis

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education in
Educational Leadership
May 4, 2019

School of Education
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ABSTRACT

Why are the needs of Division I intercollegiate student athletes important in relation to their overall growth? Answering this question requires a consideration of the way in which student athlete needs continuously evolve and how the quality of leadership from the head coach plays a significant role in orchestrating a team environment that ensures needs are adequately met. The researcher was inspired to study servant leadership and its impact on student athlete personal development and fulfillment to address how Division I head coaches can skillfully serve the needs of their players, enabling them to grow towards self-actualization. Twenty Division I women's soccer student athletes and their head coach were interviewed and observed for four weeks during the fall 2018 season. To corroborate the qualitative data, a survey gauging the degree to which student athletes felt their head coach espoused servant leader behavior, was also deployed to all student athletes within this particular Division I athletic department.

Findings indicate that it is the head coach who creates an environment fostering peak experiences for the student athlete, allowing them to further identify their needs in and out of the practice setting. Findings also indicate the student athlete prefers a head coach that truly cares for them beyond their athletic identity, serving their needs as a person and not just a student athlete. Ultimately, servant leadership in Division I athletics is demonstrated through an intricate process of head coach balance between harder and softer approaches, identity symmetry, and the accommodation of student athlete needs, impacting the student athlete's overall university experience and their journey to personal fulfillment. Findings are presented as a cultural portrait, incorporating views of the participants and observational impressions from the researcher. This research validates demonstrates the importance of the head coach-student athlete relationship and its influence on the student athlete's self-concept through the espousal of servant leader behavior.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I complete this journey, I am truly humbled and grateful. The last three years have been marked by ups and downs, tears and laughter, purpose, and, at times, misunderstanding. In channeling my inner Oprah, one thing I know for sure is that through it all I have been guided and kept by my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In moments of weakness, His strength was made perfect. As Jesus communicated in His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:14, “I am the light of the world and just like a town built on a hill, the light inside of me cannot be hidden.” I am forever tasked with being a light for others and with God’s everlasting grace, I am committed.

To my dissertation chair, Dr. Belinda Karge thank you for your unwavering enthusiasm, support, and guidance! Your belief in my capabilities and the wisdom you have given are appreciated. You motivated me, you talked me down in moments of frustration, you explained when I did not understand, and you consistently advocated for me. I am forever thankful for you! To my committee members, Dr. Kent Schlichtemeier and Dr. Dean Vieselmeyer, thank you so much for agreeing to serve on my committee! You both provided experience and content specific knowledge that certainly added to the quality of my dissertation. To Dr. Doering and the entire Concordia Ed.D. Program staff, thank you!

To my parents, Mike and Anita, thank you for being my first example of servant leadership. I excitedly anticipate the days where I raise a family and give them all of the things you have given me. Thank you for teaching me how to love, how to take a joke, how to work hard, the importance of family, how to be resilient, what it means to sacrifice, how to show up and be great, and to never settle for less than I deserve. I love you! To my brothers, Bryan, Aaron, and Mikey, I love you three so much! You all inspire me to go harder and to be persistent in the pursuit of my goals. I am tough because of you three. It’s in remembering the simple days

where we would build forts or play basketball in the front yard or swim in the pool all day during the summer, that I have realized how lucky we all were to have one another. Those days shaped me into who I am today, and I am forever grateful!

To those that have been major inspirations in my life, Dr. Eric Bullard, Dr. Brandon E. Martin, USA Track & Field Champion, Dawn Ellerbe, and many more, thank you from the very bottom of my heart! Last but certainly not least, for anyone who decides to peruse the pages of this dissertation, may I encourage you to lean into your greatness and never be afraid to let the world feel your shine!

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The researcher was motivated to analyze the state of leadership within Division I intercollegiate athletics through the lens of servant leadership to effectively meet the needs of student athletes, cultivating self-actualization in their athletic pursuits and beyond. Dodd, Achen, and Lumpkin (2018) conducted a study on the impact of servant leadership in creating ethical environments within intercollegiate athletics. The researchers note that “Many leaders in intercollegiate athletics are under attack due to an overemphasis on winning and revenue generation” (p. 1). Dodd and colleagues’ conclusion closely aligns with the impetus behind the researcher’s study. The overemphasis on winning and the generation of revenue to support athletic departments in the pursuit of winning is sometimes referred to as the athletics arms race. As conveyed by Lanter and Hawkins (2013), the more revenue an athletic department can generate, the more state of the art their facilities become. Additional revenue means bigger and better, more cutting edge. More money for athletic departments means more notoriety and ultimately an increase in the ability to compete with their counterparts. The acquisition of bigger and better does not always equate to student athletes’ needs being met. Unfortunately, departments are increasingly missing the mark on demonstrating leadership practices that seek to grow the organization from the inside out by concentrating on the interests, needs, and aspirations of student athletes first. Stone, Russell, and Patterson (2004) conveyed that servant leadership’s refreshing approach to achieving organizational objectives is best achieved “on a long-term basis by first facilitating the growth, development, and general well-being of the individuals who comprise the organization” (p. 355). It is for this reason, the researcher conducted this transformative ethnographic study.

Statement of the Problem

Burton and Welty Peachey (2013) deemed servant leadership as the call necessary to tackle many of the ethical and moral issues faced by intercollegiate athletic departments. Athletic departments often resemble one another in the way business is conducted, as they succumb to the pressures of industry counterparts, athletic conferences, university leadership, stakeholders, and the lure of money. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), isomorphism is a process that occurs when one organization in a field starts to resemble other organizations facing the same set of environmental conditions. This is referred to as an iron cage, because it can inhibit change and the consideration of alternative courses of action. Burton and Welty Peachey detailed how isomorphic pressure can be mimetic, coercive, and normative in their nature. The coercive pressures are then perpetuated through legislative rules and laws or informally through cultural expectations that become hegemonic. Lanter and Hawkins (2013) asserted “The precedence that is being set by a few prospering conferences and institutions is placing unknown demands on other institutions that are residing in the shadows and striving to compete in the athletic arms race” (p. 87). Based on the concepts conveyed by Burton and Welty Peachey (2013) and Lanter and Hawkins (2013), the researcher hypothesized that the athletics arms race is a large factor contributing to the isomorphic nature of intercollegiate athletics. In linking the ideology of both sets of researchers, competitiveness is creating a level of pressure that ultimately trickles down to the student athlete, heavily impacting their time spent at the university. Considering the isomorphism of Division I intercollegiate athletic organizations and their zealous spending habits due to the arms race, it becomes challenging for coaches to be concerned about their athletes’ ability to reach a state of self-actualization because of the inherent pressure placed upon them to win. Orleans (2013) analyzed the effects of the economic

model of intercollegiate athletics on the student athlete experience. Orleans suggested athletic departments restructure their financial practices to mirror the mission of their university, shifting the focus back to the student athlete's overall educational and personal experience.

Burton and Welty Peachey's (2013) analysis of the isomorphic nature of intercollegiate athletics sheds light on the complex web of patrons athletic departments must navigate. Each set of stakeholders: the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA), the university, donors, alumni, staff, and student athletes, apply some sort of pressure on the athletic department, causing a yield to external expectations. In times of pressure, athletic leaders tend to make decisions that focus on the overall organization, negating individual needs. The mimetic nature of isomorphism causes athletic departments to rely on old paradigms within new contexts, leaving departments to employ leadership strategies they believe worked in the past but may not support follower needs of the present. Per the research of Burton and Welty Peachey (2009), transformational and transactional leadership are most often studied and employed within intercollegiate athletics. While both leadership styles yield organizational results, they inherently operate on a macro level, negating the value of athletics participation that should be demonstrated to student athletes on a micro level. Burton and Welty Peachey's (2009) research suggested that a continuous big picture focus clouds the role and value of intercollegiate athletics, leaving the personal development of the student athlete to become less individualized.

According to Maslow (1962), no self-actualization is possible unless the core of a person is fundamentally accepted, loved, and respected by others and themselves. Therefore, the self-actualization of the student athlete is fostered by a leadership system that values and prioritizes their growth and fulfillment, as well as the growth and fulfillment of those in leadership roles. Division I athletic departments have become so entrenched in responding to external forces that

the ethical and moral responsibility of athletic leaders to cultivate growth has become synonymous with wins and losses, financial gains, and program notoriety. Burton and Welty Peachey (2014) and Roby (2014) expressed the need for the emergence of moral managers within intercollegiate athletics who are “explicit in her or his communication of an ethics and values-based message” (p. 4). Roby and Burton and Welty Peachey advocated for the importance of leadership that is committed to follower growth by exemplifying one’s ethics and values.

Servant leadership is a people-centered approach to leadership that also includes an ethical component (Burton & Welty Peachey, 2013). Servant leaders execute leader behavior with a heightened moral grounding and make the identification of individual follower needs central to their mission. This personalized focus is what separates servant leadership from more popular forms of leadership found within intercollegiate athletics. Overall, this study sought to grow the budding body of research on servant leadership within intercollegiate athletics by demonstrating its ability to cultivate self-actualization in Division I student athletes through the formation of environments that enable them to identify with their needs for personal growth and development.

Purpose of the Study

Maslow (1965) stated, “self-actualization is not only an end state, but it is also the process of actualizing your potentialities at any time, in any amount” (p. 113). Self-actualization is ongoing and influenced by our choices that are made as a result of our peak experiences. Maslow advocated that conditions can be set up so that peak experiences are more likely. The researcher expanded on Maslow’s (1965) assertion, demonstrating how the orchestration of positive settings can strengthen the head coach-student athlete dynamic. Student athletes need to

have these conditions orchestrated for them by a servant leader coach committed to empowering and guiding them in more than athletics. Therefore, it is the head coach's overall leadership which determines if the team setting is an environment that fosters student athlete growth applicable to their overall life.

In April 2017, the researcher was afforded the opportunity to sit down with Mark Emmert, President of NCAA, during a luncheon held in his honor. The researcher asked his opinion on the type of programs or services the NCAA could provide to assist student athletes in reaching self-actualization. Unfortunately, Mr. Emmert did not have a succinct answer but it was clear that he cared, detailing the goal of adequately aiding student athletes in gaining a better understanding of their identity was a thought that often kept him up at night (M. Emmert, personal communication, April 12, 2017). The purpose of this transformative ethnographic study is to develop an answer to the very question asked of Mr. Emmert, demonstrating that the catalyst to self-actualization for Division I student athletes is servant leadership. For the purposes of this study, and because of the environment created by head coaches who espouse servant leader behavior, self-actualization was generally defined as a feeling of continuous personal development and the realization of one's potential. Institutions cannot wait for direction from the NCAA on how to cultivate self-actualization in the student athlete. The hesitation in taking action only reinforces the isomorphic nature of intercollegiate athletics and leaves the intricacies of student athlete personal development to remain a lesser priority. This study analyzes the importance of student athlete self-actualization, and what the head coach's role is in creating, what Dweck (2015) calls, contexts of growth, by espousing servant leader behavior in and out of the practice setting.

Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to narrow the researcher's purpose to several questions addressed in the study (Creswell, 2013). The following research questions were addressed in this transformative ethnographic study:

1. How is servant leadership exemplified by the head coach in and out of the practice environment in Division I intercollegiate athletics?
2. Do servant leadership behaviors espoused by the head coach affect student athletes' growth toward self-actualization?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study stemmed from Burton and Welty Peachey's (2013) work on servant leadership within intercollegiate athletics, Rieke, Hammermeister, and Chase's (2008) work on servant leadership in sport and its effectiveness on coaching, as well as Maslow's (1965) work on self-actualization. Burton and Welty Peachey proposed that athletic leaders who demonstrate servant leadership qualities provide a level of leadership necessary in creating environments that cultivate the development of student athletes, ethical awareness, and inspire the call to service. They also asserted that "There are unique elements to servant leadership, setting it apart from other forms of leadership and perhaps making it better suited to meet the espoused mission of intercollegiate athletics" (p. 357). More prominent forms of leadership within intercollegiate athletics, transformational and transactional, mainly focus on the health of the entire organization, whereas servant leadership aims to serve the potential of the individuals within the organization. Burton and Welty Peachey also determined that servant leadership's focus on follower needs provides a supportive organizational climate that leads to safe and strong relationships within the organization. Ultimately, Burton and Welty Peachey

(2013) call for a leadership paradigm shift that will “influence the entrenched leadership behaviors, philosophies, and operating principles inherent in present day intercollegiate athletics” (p. 364), undoubtedly influencing student athlete development.

Burton and Welty Peachey (2013) utilized the work of Rieke, Hammermeister, and Chase (2008), which emphasized the influence of the servant leader coach on student athletes. Through their work, Rieke et al (2003), concluded that “Coaches adhering to the servant leader model produce athletes with a healthier psychological profile for sport who also perform well” (p. 227). Essentially, the researchers asserted that:

Athletes who perceive their coach to be a servant leader, display higher intrinsic motivation, are more satisfied with their sport experience, are mentally tougher, and seem to perform better as a team and individually when compared with athletes coached by non-servant leaders (p. 238).

This study suggested that it is the population of student athletes coached by a servant leader who will recognize and value peak experiences, learn from them, and use them in realizing their potential, resulting in self-actualization. Maslow (1965) maintained that “self-actualizing people learn intrinsically, identifying processes that help them to become all that they are capable of becoming” (p. 110). Maslow’s work is an instruction on how to guide counselors and teachers in pushing students to grow towards self-actualization. Through serving the values, beliefs, learning and fulfillment of student athletes, servant leader coaches become quasi counselors. With this distinction, the coach’s responsibility includes, as supported by Maslow (1965), guiding student athletes to the awareness of what and who they can become.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that findings will provide direction in an area of student athlete development that the NCAA has not been able to adequately develop. There is an urgency, now more than ever, to use the athletics experience to help student athletes discover personal growth and fulfillment in preparation for life beyond the university. If the NCAA is not providing the complete framework for accomplishing this task, then institutions, athletic leaders, coaches, and researchers in the field must begin to seek the answer for themselves. Robert Greenleaf introduced the concept of servant leadership in the 1970's after being inspired by a novel, which detailed the journey of a group of travelers who were accompanied by a servant. This servant did chores for the travelers and sustained them along the journey with his spirit. It was not until the servant was separated from the group and the travelers could no longer go on, that they realized the servant led the group through his selflessness (Northouse, 2016). Servant leaders empower, are attentive to the concerns of their followers, and help them develop to their full capacity (Northouse, 2016). NCAA programming can be established by determining how Greenleaf's concept of servant leadership can be used as a model for effectiveness in the team environment to foster student athlete personal growth and fulfillment.

The significance of this study lies in its push for deeper student athlete self-exploration so that a true identity may emerge. The fast-paced nature of intercollegiate athletics does not always allow for reflection and similarly, higher education overall, as Davis (2014) conveyed, does not innately assist in higher understandings of personal power and purpose. Establishing grounds for the cultivation of servant leadership and demonstrating its benefits on intrinsic motivation, mental skills, satisfaction, and performance, intercollegiate athletic leaders will find confidence in the implementation of a concept that is still very new to the field. By turning the

tide and advocating for an ethical and servant-based approach to leadership, athletic departments can assist student athletes and staff in finding their own life path based on values and a strong sense of worth.

The Researcher

The researcher previously worked in a Division I athletic department closely aiding the director of athletics in day-to-day affairs. Over the course of two and a half years, through observation, conversation, and daily interaction with coaches, student athletes, and staff, the researcher believes there is an urgent need for servant leadership within intercollegiate athletics. While studies exemplifying the viability of servant leadership in this field exist, they do not address how it can increase the student athlete's propensity for success in life through the realization of their potential.

Definition of Terms

Athletic Conference: A group of colleges and universities that conduct competitions among its members and determines a conference champion in one or more sports in which the NCAA conducts championships for or is responsible for providing playing rules for intercollegiate competition (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2016).

Culture-Sharing Group: A group that interacts over time and whose shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language are studied, described, and interpreted by ethnographic researchers (Creswell, 2013).

Division: The NCAA member institutions are divided into three separate divisions to align like-minded campuses in the areas of philosophy, competition, and opportunity. Institutions may be members of more than one division but must select one division for legislative and competitive purposes. Division I institutions often have the largest student

populations, manage larger budgets, and offer a larger number of scholarships (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2016).

Intercollegiate Athletics: For the purposes of this study, intercollegiate athletics is defined as a domain, valuing the process of cultivating rich traditions, which foster pride and psychological attachment and commitment to the athletic program on behalf of various stakeholders (Welty Peachey & Bruening, 2012). Within this study, intercollegiate athletics is also referenced in such a way that exemplifies the complexity of its nature being defined by competing values, which are winning at all costs and prioritizing the student athlete experience (Welty Peachey & Bruening, 2012).

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA): The NCAA was established in 1906 as the governing body for intercollegiate athletics for member colleges and universities. A basic purpose of the NCAA is to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral component of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student body (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2016).

Peak Experiences: Self-validating moments of highest happiness and fulfillment where the individual moves more closely to a perfect identity or uniqueness (Maslow, 1964).

Self-Actualization: Refers to a feeling of continuous personal development and of realizing one's potential. It is related to having self-respect and self-acceptance, to a positive attitude about oneself, and to accepting one's positive and negative qualities (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

Servant Leadership: A leadership style that is demonstrated by empowering and developing people; by expressing humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, and stewardship; and by providing direction. Servant leadership emphasizes the ideal of service in

the leader-follower relationship and prioritizes the personal growth of followers (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

Sequential Transformative Designs: A type of mixed-methods research, employing methods that best serve the theoretical perspective of the researcher and may give voice to diverse perspectives in order to better advocate for participants or to better understand a phenomenon or process that is changing as a result of being studied (Creswell, 2003).

Student Athlete: For this study, student athletes are defined as high school and university level full-time students that simultaneously engage in rigorous, structured, and competitive sport programs.

Transactional Leadership: Refers to the bulk of leadership models, which focus on the exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers. These exchanges ultimately result in expected outcomes but are not individualized according to the needs of followers (Northouse, 2016).

Transformational Leadership: A leadership style that often incorporates charismatic and visionary leadership and is concerned with the collective good. It creates influence that moves followers to accomplish more than what is expected of them (Northouse, 2016).

Limitations

The following limitations are exhibited within this study:

1. Results may not be generalizable to all athletic departments and student athletes, across the country, as the researcher conducted the study in only one department.
2. Results may also vary based on the NCAA division in which the athletic department competes, as well as the notoriety of the athletic program. Athletes in larger programs may require additional support.

3. Student athletes under the age of 18 and those unwilling to participate within the study affected the sample size. Only individuals over the age of 18 were asked to participate.

Delimitations

The delimitations used by the researcher were devised to ultimately understand how head coaches espouse servant leader behavior in the Division I setting and whether those behaviors impact the self-actualization of their student athletes. Division I athletics requires student athletes and coaches to perform at a higher level, demanding more output from everyone involved. Another delimitation is that the study only involved participation from a Division I athletic department. The pressure of Division I athletics would be most telling of the environment necessary for servant leadership to thrive.

Another delimitation of the study came in the practice setting which the participants were observed. While there are several settings coaches and student athletes navigate throughout their day, the practice environment offered the most detail on the team's culture. It is the practice atmosphere where the team dynamic is fostered and where the influences of leadership is birthed and often most influential. To add further depth, the researcher collected data outside of the practice environment, for a more robust understanding of how a team's overall culture was maintained. A final delimitation within this study was the researcher's decision to follow a team throughout one regular competition season. To gain the most accurate depiction of servant leadership at work, observing a team during the season, with its ups and downs, was of high importance.

Assumptions

The assumptions included in this study came mostly in the understanding of servant leadership and what it means to self-actualize. This study assumed the participants' lack of knowledge in servant leadership and self-actualization and attempted to thoroughly define both. This study also assumed that participants may not have been as apt to share their personal experiences if feeling pressured or that the researcher could not be trusted. By leaving the questions open-ended during interviews, the researcher allowed participants to formulate their own thoughts and feelings without being probed. The researcher also assumed that data collected from the surveys and the interviews were personal and distinct to each participant from their point of view. Therefore, in order to arrive at summative themes, the researcher understood the importance of the observational period in describing servant leadership's overall effect on the self-actualization of student athletes.

Organization of the Study

This research study contains five chapters. Chapter one includes a background to the study, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, as well as definition of terms. Also included is the study's theoretical framework, the research questions driving the study, the study's limitations and delimitations, and the assumptions of the study. Chapter two is the review of literature which is broken down into effective and ineffective modes of leadership within intercollegiate athletics, moral and ethical considerations, student athlete needs and the importance of self-actualization, and the future of athletics: a servant leadership perspective. Chapter three describes the methodology chosen for this study, including the selection of participants, instrumentation, the data collection process, as well as the steps taken to curate and analyze the data. Chapter four presents the study's findings with further insight on

the participants in relation to the research questions. Chapter five provides a summary of the overall study, further discussing findings, implications of the study, conclusions drawn, and suggestions for further research.

Summary

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) suggested that the “introduction of one’s dissertation provides an orientation to the study” (p. 112), highlighting select areas such as the background of the study, the problem to be researched, the purpose of the study, as well as the importance of the study. It was the researcher’s goal to outline the significance and necessity for research that prioritizes servant leadership as a catalyst in cultivating self-actualization in Division I student athletes. The reader is provided an impetus for the study which spans far beyond academia and comes to life using a sequential transformative methodology, allowing for the most accurate, honest, and authentic depiction of the population under study. Through the research presented in this study, the researcher firmly believes that athletic environments fostering peak experiences and serving the highest needs of student athletes will become more prevalent, filling a gap in the field and allowing the entire realm of intercollegiate athletics to experience unprecedented change.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of literature focuses on the need for servant leadership within intercollegiate athletics and the potential for creating systemic change within Division I intercollegiate athletic departments across the nation. Intercollegiate athletics is a unique facet of higher education, impacting university life for student athletes in a multitude of ways. Student athletes are expected to perform at high levels within their sport, while also performing at an optimum level academically to be deemed eligible for competition participation. The pressures can be magnified depending on the athletic program's visibility, the division in which they compete, the size of the conference, and the overall leadership permeating the department and university. By seeking to present intercollegiate athletics as more than just an extracurricular activity, Brand (2006) demonstrated the value intercollegiate athletic departments add to the university experience for all students. Brand (2006) asserted, "The values of hard work, striving for excellence, respect for others, sportsmanship and civility, team play, persistence, and resilience that underlie the ideal of sport should be brought into the developmental aspects of a college education affecting all students" (p. 19). Brand's stance demonstrated the need for sound leadership in intercollegiate athletics. He called for leadership that understands and does not take for granted the inherent values within athletic participation, steering student athletes to be leaders beyond the field of play.

Studies involving leadership within intercollegiate athletics have focused on transformational and transactional leadership methods, placing heavy focus on the leader and overall organizational goals, as Burton and Welty Peachey (2013) highlighted. While both leadership styles have proven to be beneficial, depending on the situation, they also tend to

neglect focus on the individual needs of followers. The overall organizational environment, as well as the leadership style of the head coach can nurture the athlete in light of their specific needs. Servant leadership is the catalyst that will enable student athletes to grow towards self-actualization by espousing leadership behavior that emphasizes their potential, as it encompasses more of a multi-dimensional approach increasing its probability for impact. In their research on developing an instrument in which to measure servant leadership, van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) explained that servant leaders do not use their power to get things done, rather they use persuasion, convincing followers by creating opportunities to help them grow. This persuasion is marked by an espousal of multiple characteristics, such as humility, empowerment, and authenticity, which lead to a high level of care and concern for followers. As shown by the research of Burton and Welty (2013) and van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), the depth at which servant leadership operates will enable servant leader coaches to provide a leadership style that opens the door for quality interactions, spanning far beyond the athlete's athletic ability.

Burton and Welty Peachey (2013) advocated for servant leadership being the call necessary for inspiring a higher level of service in intercollegiate athletics. Their research demonstrated the relational perspective intercollegiate athletics is shifting towards and why, as time goes on, more traditional leadership styles will no longer suffice. There are numerous pressures that impact the academic, personal, social, and overall growth of student athletes that must be considered by athletic leaders. Due to the immense number of hours athletes spend honing their craft in the presence of coaches and administrators, there is opportunity for life-changing leadership efforts when the relationship between leader and follower is viewed as influential and beneficial for both individuals. Servant leadership becomes a personal and

interpersonal investment inadvertently creating a setting for self-actualization which ideally becomes the common goal for everyone.

The scope of this literature review covers effective and ineffective modes of leadership within educational spaces, specifically within intercollegiate athletics. This literature review also provides a thorough understanding of servant leadership, its ethical components, and how being a proponent of one's own self-actualization, as a leader, can have a profound impact on the self-actualization of others. The researcher ties all concepts together through literature to convey the current gap in intercollegiate athletics leadership research and practice. Furthermore, the literature review demonstrates why servant leadership should be of paramount focus when leading student athletes and how its implementation is the answer to combatting the isomorphic nature of Division I intercollegiate athletics. The literature presented is organized into four major sections: (a) effective and ineffective modes of leadership within intercollegiate athletics, (b) moral and ethical considerations, (c) student athlete needs and the importance of self-actualization, and (d) the future of athletics: a servant leadership perspective.

Effective and Ineffective Modes of Leadership within Intercollegiate Athletics

Beginning with effective and ineffective modes of leadership within the current literature enabled the researcher to paint a vivid picture of intercollegiate athletics' potential for systemic change. Branch (1990) conducted a study in which he sought to "gain empirical evidence from which to promote a better understanding of collegiate athletic administrator leadership behavior as it relates to the effectiveness of the athletic organization" (p. 164). Although this study is almost 30 years old, it is of vital importance. Branch's work shed light on a facet of intercollegiate athletics in which researchers are still striving to build a universal model of effectiveness. He referenced the work of Aceto and Rykman (1972). The researchers advocated

for intercollegiate athletic directors to possess more knowledge of themselves, their leadership style, and their interactions with followers.

For the study, Branch (1990) selected 105 Division IA athletic directors and randomly selected an associate or assistant athletic director from each intercollegiate athletics program involved. Three separate questionnaires were utilized, assessing organizational effectiveness as perceived by the participants. Multiple dimensions of leadership behavior from the viewpoint of both the leader and the subordinate were assessed, including initiating structure, consideration, and athletic organizational effectiveness. By gauging the perceptions of athletic directors and associate or assistant athletic directors, Branch (1990) found that the most effective athletic organizations emphasize goal and task accomplishment rather than cultivating sustainable interpersonal relationships. The researcher sought additional research in the area of interpersonal dynamics within intercollegiate athletic organizations. Organizations that prioritize goal and task orientation, as well as the development of good interpersonal relationships, ultimately become most effective. The lack of interpersonal relationships Branch (1990) uncovered, has reared itself in the way student athletes are led and the degree to which their needs are met by the athletic department and, most importantly, coaches.

Interpersonal relationships thrive in environments where leaders are concerned with the growth and development of the inhabitants. Branch (1990) ultimately concluded that to find the most success in intercollegiate athletics, leaders must deviate from outdated approaches. Branch suggested that task and relationship orientation should be demonstrated simultaneously, envisioning a new model of effectiveness. Branch's concept set a precedent for the work of Betts (1992), who advocated for the application of systems thinking in education. Betts discussed how years of piecemeal efforts and reliance on old models in public education have

left schools needing to play catch up. Betts attributed systemic change as being the only method for improvement in education. Betts stated, “Current approaches to solving problems in education are the same ones used by generations of educators and are stoutly defended as having worked in the past” (p. 38). Much like Branch (1990), Betts (1992) is calling for a discontinued use of old paradigms in new contexts. Betts’ argument can be attributed to many of the issues that still plague the present day higher education and intercollegiate athletics dynamic. Within systems thinking, organizational areas must be viewed as being dependent on one another. Then, a functional system, which is only as strong as the weakest component, results. Intercollegiate student athletes, like most students, require instruction and leadership that focus on the consistent improvement of all areas made accessible to them. Their success beyond the field of play heavily depends on the identification of paradigms that no longer serve a purpose. Employing leadership that considers tasks and relationships, as suggested by Branch (1990), will enable the athletes to find value in growing personally while also working for the greater good of their team.

The studies mentioned above allude to the necessity of effective leadership starting at the top of the organization. The athletic director undoubtedly sets the expectation as to what type of leadership will permeate the department. Coaches take a cue from the leader, ultimately, influencing their motivation to lead and their preferred style of leadership. The success of departmental leadership is gauged in a myriad of ways, but staff retention rates are most telling. Within the culture of intercollegiate athletics, it is almost expected that coaches and administrators will transition and find new institutions to call home every few years. However, the rate of employee turnover is the best symbol of leadership effectiveness.

Shaw and Newton (2014) conducted a study in which they sought to determine teacher retention rates in schools with a servant leader as principal. Using a sample of 234 teachers, the researchers structured their study around “three variables of interest: the level of perceived servant leadership characteristics present in a school principal, the level of job satisfaction of the teaching professionals within those schools, and the intended retention rate in that school” (Shaw & Newton, 2014, p. 103). By utilizing the Servant Leader Assessment Instrument, Shaw and Newton (2014) found significant positive correlation between all three variables. Shaw and Newton recognize that finding affordable ways to increase teacher retention is always a quest for many schools. By gaining the feedback of teachers led by a servant leader, the researchers exemplified why consideration should be given to the principal as a servant leader to increase teacher retention and employee job satisfaction. The researchers also advocated for the inclusion of servant leadership principles within leader preparation materials. In doing so, schools can be proactive in seeking to build a culture that prioritizes leading by serving and meeting the needs of others.

Although Shaw and Newton’s (2014) research specifically focused on classroom teachers and high school principals, the results are applicable to any leadership setting. Despite the environment or subject, servant leadership can permeate any organization. What ultimately surfaces is a deep-rooted ethics and a values-based loyalty, which money and resources cannot provide. Intercollegiate athletic departments must spread resources amongst several sport programs and, unfortunately, this is not always proportionate. It is often very common that flagship programs receive more funds. The presence of servant leadership would overshadow the lack of resources, bringing the focus back to the student athlete’s growth instead of the arm’s race.

Kihl's (2007) research on the morality of athletic administrators directly relates to the awareness and accountability necessary for intercollegiate athletics. The addition of servant leader ideology in leader preparation materials would build a foundation for athletic administrators who are rooted in loyalty to their values. There are similarities between Kihl's (2007) work and the research of Shaw and Newton (2014), as they both highlight the struggles of athletic administrators. Kihl demonstrated how internal conflict is common when making decisions that are guided by strict rules, conduct codes, and organizational regulations. Kihl (2007) contended, "Challenges arise when organizational standards and values contradict administrators' personal moralities. In such cases, administrators must learn how to weigh these different values and standards and make good decisions" (p. 1). Kihl utilized interviews from 10 highly experienced athletics compliance administrators and found that moral tension occurred when the participants had to decide right from wrong based on NCAA, conference, and institutional rules. The tension was also discovered in the participants having to communicate student athlete ineligibility. Kihl brought attention to the plight of administrators who strive to remain authentic to their own identity while also seeking to fulfill the duties inherent to their position. This paradigm may cultivate a leadership structure that is indecisive, creating a potentially destructive organizational environment that eventually impacts the student athlete.

The research of Powers, Judge, and Makela (2016) provided a more current context, concerning destructive leadership within Division I intercollegiate athletics. By utilizing the interpretive phenomenological analysis approach, the researchers focused on individual experiences and perceptions of events rather than objective statements of what occurred. Targeting an institution with 70 athletics employees and 460 student athletes, Powers et al. (2016) concluded that the two biggest destructive leaders were the university president and the

athletic director. Both individuals exemplified toxic behavior, which permeated throughout the department, influencing coaches and staff. Powers et al. adhered to the framework of Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser's (2007) toxic triangle theory, conceptualizing destructive leadership into three domains. According to Padilla et al. (2007), behaviors of destructive leaders, behaviors of susceptible followers, and conducive environments perpetuating susceptible behavior, allude to the reasoning for the permeation of ineffective leadership. Powers et al. (2016) affirmed, "High levels of perceived stress that result from subordination under destructive leadership clearly led to performance deficits, compromised physical health, and dark psychological issues" (p. 309). The researchers also suggested self-evaluation, empathy, and serving to benefit the greater good as methods of remediating damages caused by destructive leaders. The work of Powers et al. (2016) supported Kihl's (2007) research, demonstrating the harm created by athletic organizations continuing to cultivate a type of leadership that is unassured with no foundation in morals and values. With a lack of integrity, using fear and intimidation to dominate, unassured and destructive leaders hinder the relational aspect of the working environment, perpetuating the traditional goal and task accomplishment approach discussed by Branch (1990).

Roby (2014) is the former director of athletics at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. Roby provides a unique perspective based on his experiences in coaching and as a high-level executive at Reebok. Roby often incorporates observations from his day-to-day duties as a long time athletic leader and now a consultant in his writing. Amongst many important insights, Roby advocated for athletic administrators and coaches to operate with values of conviction. Roby stated, "We can't have values of convenience. We must have values of conviction. When the stakes are highest, we must not blink. That is the truest test of Values-Driven Leadership" (p. 35). Roby posed one of the most important questions leaders should ask

themselves, as he stated, “ethical leadership is influenced by the perspective we bring to it and answering the important question... “Why do I want to lead?” (p. 39). Roby’s call to lead with values of conviction forces leaders within athletics to choose a concrete set of values to stand upon, despite who is watching. His appreciation for ethical leadership and his support that it can be observed and learned over time, speaks directly to the ethical foundation of servant leadership. Roby ascertained that leading with ethics is simple and only requires perspective, a set of values, and purpose. Essentially, servant leadership is being mindful of one’s own behavior and striving to be a person of integrity, influencing the growth of the next generation.

Roby’s (2014) article is integral to the need for servant leadership within intercollegiate athletics because ethics is central to effective leadership. As Shaw and Newton (2014) advocated through their study, employee retention rates and job satisfaction are likely to increase when servant leadership is present. The ethical component of servant leadership and Roby’s recommendation for an increase of ethics in intercollegiate athletics, demonstrates servant leadership’s capacity in affecting change. Supporting Roby’s advocacy for a heavier presence of values and ethics in intercollegiate athletics, Welty Peachey and Bruening’s (2012) study on value congruence further supports the assertion. Highlighting the importance of person-organization fit, the researchers heavily focused on the congruence of organizational values and patterns of individual values. This congruence is what enables successful organizational change. The researchers chose to conduct a qualitative case study at a Division I institution between October 2008 and March 2009. At the time of the study, the athletic director was new, having only been at the institution for 15 months. Participants who were under the director’s leadership were deliberately chosen for the study. The new athletic director brought with him a new student-athlete centered focus that was drastically different from the previous leader. Although a

few coaches resisted the change and were ambivalent to the new departmental philosophy, the researchers uncovered a much-needed area of realignment within athletics. By putting the needs of the student-athletes first, employees were motivated to shift their focus, finding change based on a greater purpose. As the athletic director's new focus began to spread across the organization, those who could not find value congruence would eventually weed themselves out.

The research conducted by Welty Peachey and Bruening (2012) communicated the importance in possessing a set of firm values and the need for more discussion in effective intercollegiate athletics leadership grounded in ethical decision-making. The case study conducted by Welty Peachey and Bruening (2012) encompassed some of the same components from the research of Roby (2014) and Shaw and Newton (2014). All of their work displayed the success in motivating intercollegiate athletic departments to find greater purpose by serving others. Ultimately, the need for servant leadership within intercollegiate athletics is evident based on the literature presented regarding ineffective leadership, as well as the necessity for a strong emphasis on moral and ethical considerations.

Moral and Ethical Considerations

Moral and ethical considerations within intercollegiate athletics can heavily impact the ability of athletic administrators and coaches to discern their surroundings and not be overly reactive or overwhelmed by what is going on around them. Davis (2014) advocated for the use of mindfulness, heightened awareness of one's thoughts and feelings, within higher education, stating that it "serves as a strong tool in teaching, learning, and leadership processes within higher education settings" (p. 1). Mindfulness requires a focus on the present amid the stress caused by everyday life. The patience and stillness required create reflection and right action. Critical to leadership in any setting is understanding and connectivity. Davis (2014) stated, "The

empathy derived from mindfulness places leaders and learners in a space that illuminates their connection to others. Connection to others refers to understanding alternative perspectives and worldviews, as well as working effectively with them” (p. 2). Davis further advocated for mindfulness by detailing how holistic education simultaneously trains the heart and the mind to think and act for a larger purpose and a greater good. Leading to an introspective inquiry, mindfulness enables students to fare well, not only in their academic endeavors but also in their professional endeavors. Mindfulness can impact the ethical and moral considerations within intercollegiate athletics, as the capacity for ethical decision making may relate to individual ability to reflect upon experiences in relation to one’s self, others, and the world (Davis, 2014).

The moral and ethical conflicts seen within intercollegiate athletics have surfaced in a multitude of ways. Weekly time requirements, improper benefits, dishonest academic practices, domestic violence and sexual assault are strong concerns within intercollegiate athletics that can have an unfortunate impact on student athletes and further demonstrate the demand for moral and ethical decision-making. A servant leader is a mindful leader who strives to be cognizant of their actions. The servant leader understands they are setting an example for their peers and student athletes. The servant leader within intercollegiate athletics also understands the importance of ethical leadership and strives to infuse consciousness into the character building responsibilities inherent to their job. Mindfulness is an absolute requirement. Reflection can help ensure that the highest needs of others are adequately met.

A mindful leader creates an emotionally intelligent leader that can attune to the emotional needs of their followers. Possessing emotional intelligence allows a leader to guide their followers in times of stress and worry, causing them to feel safe and protected during times of change or uncertainty. Although intercollegiate athletics operates as its own entity on many

university campuses, it still plays a very important role in the university experience for students. Intercollegiate athletics operates under the umbrella of an academic institution and must seek to provide the same degree of emotional support that regular students receive to maturing student athletes. Parrish (2015) sought to determine the relevance of emotional intelligence for effective leadership in higher education. Through a university case study, Parrish (2015) ascertained that “emotional intelligence traits related to empathy, inspiring and guiding others, and responsibly managing oneself were most applicable for academic leadership” (p. 821). The researcher’s study asked participants to share positive experiences, insights into academic leadership and perceptions of how emotional intelligence can impact leadership practice. Parrish found that “leaders in higher education who possessed strong emotional intelligence were more respected by peers, colleagues, and subordinates and performed more effectively as leaders” (p. 829). Moreover, Parrish’s (2015) research identified empathy as the most significant emotional intelligence trait. Participants defined empathy as the need for leaders to accurately identify and understand a person, their needs, their concerns, as well as their abilities. Empathetic leaders then “appropriately manage followers, considering their understanding, to effectively promote productivity and success” (p. 829). Finding the relevance of emotional intelligence in higher education leadership creates the possibility for servant leadership to thrive and be a catalyst of change. Being mindful of one’s own emotional intelligence directly impacts a leader’s ability to inspire others and creates ethical and morally sound circumstances or environments that foster growth.

Athletic leaders have an ethical responsibility to create contexts for growth which are contingent upon the degree to which the growth mindset exists. As demonstrated by Dweck (2015), contexts for growth rely on the presence of the leader’s belief in their follower’s ability

to grow, as well the leader's belief in their own capabilities. Dweck ascertained that contexts for growth thrive when students and leaders are rewarded, praised, and evaluated in the proper way. Dweck communicated that contexts for growth are unlikely when leaders "do not believe that all students can grow their intellectual ability or if their praise, evaluation, and reward practices focused on current ability rather than the development of ability over time" (p. 244). Dweck's insights also convey that environments promoting growth only succeed when the leader receives the same type of support in relation to their own growth. Servant leadership is grounded in leaders understanding their own ability for growth and development, allowing their followers to experience the same type of realizations, creating a domino effect of growth. Based on their belief in the student athlete's ability to develop over time, athletic leaders create contexts for growth and exercise their responsibility in propelling the athlete to heights beyond their perceived limitations.

Considering the moral and ethical obligations of leaders in creating environments of growth, athletic leaders must understand the reach of the growth mindset and their role in creating future leaders who live to their fullest potential. Dweck (2016) stated, "students with a growth mindset are not as worried about looking intelligent, and so they take on more challenges, persist longer and are more resilient in the face of setbacks" (p. 38). In contrast, Dweck goes on to explain the harm in possessing a fixed mindset, which can be easily passed on from leaders to their followers. In the fixed mindset, challenges are seen as risky. Effort and setbacks are deemed as a lack of talent. Perhaps the most significant factor of the growth mindset is its ability to mobilize large groups, which can ultimately make an impact in large athletic organizations. As Dweck conveyed, environments that promote growth because of leaders who employ the growth mindset, are comprised of words and actions that positively

shape the way students and adults view their propensity for growth. The growth mindset can transcend athletic organizations, enabling student athletes and athletic leaders to find success beyond the realm of intercollegiate athletics. Servant athletic leaders make the future success of their followers a top priority and believe that it is their moral duty to foster environments that fully support followers in striving for more.

Servant athletic leaders build an infrastructure that will enable student athletes to find their way beyond the playing surface. Essentially, servant athletic leaders view the potential of their followers through the lens of systems thinking and understand the distinct web of multi-faceted channels they must navigate. Fletcher, Benschhoff, and Richburg (2003) stated, “Athletes must function within a multilevel system that includes NCAA rules and regulations, university policies, athletic department standards, and team dynamics” (p. 36). The researchers gave a noteworthy analysis regarding the team system and how coach leadership behavior plays a vital role in the achievement of the student athlete. Coaches have control over many aspects such as training and competition. Coaches must also understand that their leadership style can positively or negatively impact the athlete’s attitude, mental state, and performance. Fletcher et al.’s conclusion suggests that it is the ethical and moral duty of the athletic leader to be a source of motivation for the student athlete, pushing them to find alignment within every area of their life. The athletic leader must use the team dynamic as a microcosm of the balance and synergy required by adulthood. Servant athletic leaders acknowledge the need for a comprehensive understanding of the various levels of intercollegiate athletics and how through systems thinking better interventions for athletes can be implemented. Change within intercollegiate athletics begins with the athletic leader’s acceptance of their role in the growth of their followers.

The ethical and moral considerations within intercollegiate athletics seem to increase as our society continues to advance and further innovate. Each new class of student athletes entering a university brings a different perspective, requiring athletic leaders to constantly adjust. Leadership style and adaptability are important when striving to lead a new group of athletes and integrate them into a living system, while also striving to tend to their specific needs and motivate them to grow. Using Patterson's (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership, Durden (2016) sought to explore the motivational efficacy of servant leadership, displaying its effectiveness as a philosophy for coaching. Patterson's seven constructs are altruism (a), empowerment (b), humility (c), agape love (d), service (e), trust (f), and vision (g). While Durden's study utilized high school student athletes, the implications suggest servant leadership can be effective at any level within athletics. This assertion is supported by trust being regarded as the most significant motivator of student athlete success within Durden's (2016) study. Love, empowerment, and vision also proved to be important to the athletes surveyed. As stated by Durden (2016), "young people desire leaders who are trustworthy, who love them, who have the ability to develop them as people and athletes, and who see innate potential in them" (p. 69). To lead ethically and morally involves leadership that other people feel comfortable believing in. Student athletes want to be led in the right direction and want to know they are in the care of a leader who deems their development important. Coaches "occupy a prominent platform with the potential to be life changing transformational influences for young people" (p. 69).

Roby (2014) provides an informed perspective on the ethical and moral considerations within intercollegiate athletics as a former Director of Athletics. As previously stated, ethics is central to effective leadership and should serve as the foundation from which leadership decisions are made. Student athlete welfare is most often the first point of impact when changes

ensue. Therefore, athletic leaders must comprehend the magnitude of their choices on a day-to-day basis. Roby stated, that athletic leaders “must practice ethical leadership so they are prepared to make good thoughtful choices when confronted with them” (p. 37). It is no longer practical to use ethical leadership intermittently. Navigating from an ethical and moral perspective involves deliberate action and intentionality. The servant leader within intercollegiate athletics is called to be a real-life example of ethics-based living, building credibility with followers by clearly exercising their moral judgment in fast-paced, high performing environments. The work of Melchar and Bosco (2010) conveyed the success of servant leadership in high performing organizations where employees are expected to perform their duties at a very high level. The most significant outcome of Melchar and Bosco’s (2010) work was the revelation that servant leadership, when modeled by strategic level managers, can “create an organizational culture in which servant leaders develop among lower level managers” (p. 84). By staying cognizant of the ethical and moral considerations within intercollegiate athletics, leaders can create change and introduce new styles of leadership that will enhance the overall growth, development, and mission of their department, enabling the organization to effectively tend to the individual needs of student athletes.

Student Athlete Needs and the Importance of Self-Actualization

According to Maslow (1965), “Self-actualizing people are, without one single exception, involved in a cause outside their own skin, in something outside of themselves” (p. 110). Maslow went on to further explain that people who have reached self-actualization are devoted to a calling or a vocation that is very precious to them. Self-actualized people love their work and, in turn, devote their lives to searching for what Maslow (1965) calls the “Being” values. Ultimately, this being is a sense of authenticity that allows an individual to identify with their

own intrinsic needs necessary for personal development and fulfillment. Maslow explains that it is the deprivation of these intrinsic needs in the extrinsic which creates “the sickness of the soul” (p. 110). An authentic being is the meaning of life for many, but most people do not even realize the requirements for their intrinsic needs until they are made aware by someone else. Maslow urges that it is a part of every counselor’s job to awaken people to these specific needs within themselves.

Although Maslow (1965) was addressing counselors, his message is applicable to the field of intercollegiate athletics, the unique nature of student athlete wellbeing, and the responsibility of athletic leaders in fulfilling the needs of student athletes. Athletic leaders should respond to the needs of student athletes in such a way that increases their propensity towards self-actualization and success. As Beam (2001) demonstrated, the leadership preferences of student athletes may differ based on the division in which they compete. Student athletes still have needs that must be served regardless of the level of competition. Needs become greater as the level of competition rises, as additional pressures and expectations are placed on the student athlete. Beam (2001) stated, “The pressure to win may lead Division I student athletes to a daily preoccupation with practice and competition” (p. 116). The preoccupation Beam (2001) spoke of, leaves more room for the personal needs of student athletes to fall lower in priority. Brand (2006) suggests that intercollegiate athletics possesses a great deal of potential in contributing to the overall success of universities. It is critical that this same viewpoint is communicated to student athletes as they mature and navigate their way to adulthood. Fulfilling the needs of student athletes must be accompanied by words and actions that make their value explicit.

One of the best ways to serve student athlete needs while being cognizant of their self-actualization is to meet the maturation process with systems thinking. Maslow (1965) explained that self-actualization is an ongoing process influenced by one's own choices. Maslow's work demonstrated how everyone, including student athletes, should be encouraged to make choices out of growth and not fear, inching closer to self-actualization. Applying systems thinking to the needs of student athletes is supported by the work of Betts (1992). Although Betts' (1992) work is in relation to education overall, the strategies offered can benefit any facet of education at any level. Intercollegiate athletic departments operate under the umbrella of institutions of higher education and must seek to provide student athletes with an experience that is synergistic. "The relationship among the elements of a system should be maintained by an exchange of energy" (Betts, 1992, p. 39). Betts' also stated, "To continue to exist, a system must be able to import energy across its boundary or have a capacity to create new sources of energy" (p. 39). Creating new sources of energy lies in athletic leaders identifying processes that no longer serve the whole being of the student athlete. New processes that empower the student athlete to make growth choices in the spirit of their authenticity take precedence. Administrators and coaches must seek to meet the highest needs of the student athlete by discontinuing the practice of applying older ideals in newer circumstances. While there are many processes within intercollegiate athletics that have fostered success for generations of student athletes, there are also dozens of defects. These defects are what add to the Standard View of intercollegiate athletics on university campuses, as conveyed by Brand (2006). Brand contended that the Standard View "discredits intercollegiate athletics, ignoring its educational value and relegating it to mere extracurricular activity" (p. 19). Addressing and supporting the specific needs of student athletes is best supported by using systems thinking to identify outdated practices that disrupt the overall

synergy of properly serving student athletes. As asserted by Brand (2006), intercollegiate athletics is not merely just an extracurricular activity of university campuses. Thus, athletic leaders must strive to create an energy surrounding athletics which fits into the overall synergy of the University, garnering the most transformative level of support for the athlete.

Student athletes dedicate hours of hard work and effort to their sport, developing many of the same skills non-student athletes gain while working a job. Countless student athletes go their entire four to five years at a university never holding a form of paid employment. Reform in relation to student athlete time demands is an important topic of discussion within many conferences across the nation, as the NCAA is attempting to facilitate balance. Student athletes should be empowered, as well as educated, on the ways in which their sport participation is preparing them for the future. The transferable skills provided by athletics is paramount to the self-actualization of the student athlete, but it is up to the athletic leader to shed light on their development. Through utilization of the Attribution Theory, Chalfin, Weight, Osborne, and Johnson (2015) surveyed 50 employers regarding their perceptions on intercollegiate athletes and the attributes that make them preferable in the workplace. Chalfin et al. conveyed that the employers surveyed attached meaning to the student athlete experience and attributed competitiveness, goal-orientation, ability to handle pressure, strong work ethic, confidence, coachability, ability to work with others, self-motivation, mental toughness, and time management skills to these athletes. The qualities favored are dispositional, as they speak to the spirit of the athlete and shed light on their natural outlook. The researchers concluded their study by asserting that an understanding of the benefits provided by the student athlete experience can assist in quantifying the value of intercollegiate athletics, as well as strengthen facets of the current culture that translate into marketable skills. In addressing the needs of student athletes,

athletic leaders can develop a framework that enables their athletes to tap into their dispositional qualities. This will allow the athlete to identify with whom they truly are beyond their athletic talent, moving from a two-dimensional student-athlete to a multi-dimensional human capable of success beyond the field of play. Servant leaders make the career development of their followers a priority and aim to be a catalyst for their future success.

In addition to highlighting the value in transferable skills provided through athletic participation, serving needs to foster self-actualization also requires athletic leaders to recognize their responsibility for inspiring change within the athlete. No leader can be their absolute best without a following of individuals who identify with their mission. Followers are loyal to their leader because of the inspiration they give and the leader's credibility in being exactly who they claim to be. Figgins, Smith, Sellars, Greenlees, and Knight (2016) conducted a two-fold study in which participants were asked to write about an instance where they had been inspired in sport. According to Figgins et al. (2016), the athletes described being inspired by a range of sources which were categorized under three umbrellas: thoughts and accomplishments regarding personal performance, observing and interacting with role models, and demonstrations of leadership. Building on the conclusions of the first half, the second half of the study involved an interview where participants were asked to recall inspirational leaders they experienced throughout their career, the moments these leaders inspired them and the impacts of those moments. The research of Figgins et al. (2016) demonstrated how in all the inspirational experiences described by each athlete, it was a leader that orchestrated their impactful moments. This allowed for a positive shift in the athlete's initial concerns, an increased awareness of possibilities, and an increase in the motivation to maximize their own potential. The servant athletic leader possesses a people-centered focus which they use as a source of empowerment not

only for themselves but for their followers as well. Supporting the needs of student athletes means creating an environment that allows them to make sense of the inspiration in their lives through their athletic participation.

Athletic participation is one of the best tools used to teach team dynamics. For intercollegiate student athletes, a cohesive team dynamic is not only useful in finding success on the playing surface, it is also useful in teaching leaders what qualities foster that success the most. To properly support student athlete needs, leaders must learn their athletes collectively and individually, as it is not practical to treat every athlete the same. While the overarching mode of leadership is the same, it is the nuances of day-to-day interaction that vary. It is essential for leaders to learn and demonstrate the level of empowerment necessary to motivate their athletes. Heidari, Ghasemi, and Heidari (2016) studied the relationship between empowerment and servant leadership when comparing successful and unsuccessful athletic teams. This study took place outside of the United States, possessing cultural intricacies that are inherently different from American culture. Nevertheless, due to its people-centered nature, the effects of servant leadership and empowerment transcend culture, adding to their effectiveness. The research of Heidari et al. (2016) demonstrated that leaders can enhance the capabilities of their followers by employing servant leadership. Servant leadership increases the leader's level of empowerment, fostering teams to not only find success but coherence as well. Realization of one's own potential is often preceded by the support of a leader who provided empowerment and vision. Recognizing the needs of student athletes in support of their self-actualization heavily depends on the leader's ability to adequately serve the needs of each athlete, even when in the team setting. If empowerment stays central to the leader's overall approach, servant leadership thrives and increases the probability of student athlete success in life and in the game.

The Future of Intercollegiate Athletics: A Servant Leadership Perspective

The future of intercollegiate athletics is promising, as there is a tremendous opportunity for growth. There are many facets of the industry that require attention and a fresh perspective on how to drive change. Servant leadership is the missing piece and its implementation will simultaneously foster the development of the athletic leader and the student athlete. Rieke, Hammermeister, and Chase (2008) sought to discover a correlation between coaches who were perceived to exhibit servant leader qualities and their athletes' use of mental skills, level of satisfaction, and performance. Utilizing the Revised Servant Leadership Profile for Sport with 195 high school basketball players, Rieke et al. (2008) concluded that "athletes who perceived their coach to possess servant leader qualities also displayed higher intrinsic motivation, were more task oriented, were more satisfied, were mentally tougher, and performed better than athletes coached by non-servant leaders" (p. 227). Through their study, the researchers also concluded that coaches who employ the servant leadership model produce athletes that demonstrate a higher psychological profile for sport and perform better. It is of paramount importance to note that the findings of Rieke et al. (2008) support an earlier study conducted by Hammermeister (2008) where 250 intercollegiate athletes comprised the research population. By producing similar results, Rieke et al. (2008) demonstrated the practicality and usefulness of servant leadership implementation, as its effectiveness transcends different levels of sport. When coaches witness their leadership style influencing the performance and mental strength of their student athletes, naturally they will continue to espouse a set of behaviors that work. Change requires an awareness of one's own capacity. Servant leadership inherently provides this awareness and motivates the leader and the follower to a higher level of interaction, fostering success. Rieke et al. demonstrated the student athlete's preference for a servant leader and the

outcomes that result in an overall positive athletic experience for the coach and the student athlete.

As Rieke, Hammermeister, and Chase (2008) demonstrated, athletes want to be led in a manner that positively enhances their mental toughness, as well as their intrinsic motivation. When student athletes feel confident in who they are as people and understand that their needs are being supported by a leader who genuinely cares, the athlete can focus on being the best version of themselves. Burton and Welty Peachey (2013) supported the necessity for servant leadership in intercollegiate athletics by demonstrating how current leadership is moving towards a relational perspective. Interactions between the student athlete and the athletic leader are becoming even more central to the overall growth of the athlete. Burton and Welty Peachey eloquently explain servant leadership's place within intercollegiate athletics by stating, "athletic directors demonstrating servant leadership will provide the leadership necessary to support the development of student athletes, cultivate an ethical environment that best supports this development, and inspire the call to service for employees within their athletic departments" (p. 354). Traditional forms of leadership commonly employed and researched within intercollegiate athletics, particularly transformational and transactional, no longer suffice. Both forms of leadership focus heavily on the leader and organizational needs, leaving room for follower neglect, as supported by Burton and Welty Peachey (2009). Servant leadership possesses a people-centered approach and includes an ethical component where the whole individual is engaged. Employing servant leadership within intercollegiate athletics is certainly a deviation from the standard, but as the research of Rieke et al. (2008) conveys, it will allow student athletes the opportunity to grow into their capacity as human beings. Unlike many other forms of leadership, servant leadership is reciprocal in its benefits. By espousing servant-like behavior,

leaders begin to understand their own distinct style and can grow into the type of leader that gets the most out of their followers by building them up. In servant leadership, everyone wins.

Intercollegiate athletic departments are learning organizations inside larger university systems. There must be a collective capacity where the potential, as well as the expertise, of everyone, is cultivated for the organization to operate at its greatest. Athletic leaders must also understand the cliques that inevitably form within organizational and team culture potentially hindering collective progress and individual advancement. These cliques can result in a silo mentality, preventing individuals from truly understanding their role in the overall success of the organization or team. Martin, Wilson, Blair Evans, and Spink (2015) examined intercollegiate athletes' perception of cliques by conducting interviews with current student athletes. According to Martin et al. (2015), the "Athletes described the formation of cliques as an inevitable and variable process that was influenced by a number of antecedents (e.g., age/tenure, proximity, similarity) and ultimately shaped individual and group outcomes such as isolation, performance, and sport adherence" (p. 82). The researchers noted that the student athletes described cliques as being both positive and negative, with exclusionary being a recurring theme. Not only do the findings give insight into student athlete culture, within some athletic departments, Martin et al.'s (2015) findings may implicate the larger organizational culture as problematic. Cliques can cause harm to any type of change a leader is striving to implement, as cliques become a subset of the larger group, intentionally drawing themselves away. By providing the space for self-actualization, servant leadership delivers understanding, self-awareness, and a sense of worth, allowing student athletes to know who they are as valued individuals. Implementing servant leadership allows athletic leaders to combat the potentially harmful effects of team culture by

demonstrating the capacity every human possesses. Servant athletic leaders make their student athletes feel worthy and useful in a setting that may sometimes show them they are not.

Burton and Welty Peachey (2016) advocate for the use of servant leadership in advancing sport as a means for development and peace. Wells and Welty Peachey (2016) also advocated for servant leadership's use in using sport for development, as their research contrasted servant leadership's effectiveness against more traditional forms of leadership found in sport, transactional and transformational. Research concerning sport organizations as a means of development is scarce but provides invaluable insight, as sport is viewed as a way to achieve positive impacts on society in a number of ways. As conveyed by Brand (2006), the conceptualization of sport participation, especially at the intercollegiate level, is still widely held to the standard view. The standard view deems intercollegiate athletics as more of an extracurricular activity, negating the level of commitment, mental focus, and physical training required by such a higher level of competition and stripping it of its ability to add value and meaning to one's university experience through personal growth. Seeking to restore value to sport participation, Burton and Welty Peachey (2016) stated, "We opine that servant leaders in sport for development and peace will empower followers, lead to more sustainable and effective organizations and participant outcomes, facilitate psychological needs satisfaction, and diffuse issues of power and control" (p. 125). In the same respect, Wells and Welty Peachey (2016) found servant leadership behavior to be a natural fit in the sport for development sphere. Their research revealed that an "important implication of servant leadership for sport for development is the significance of building relationships that empower followers and contribute to long-term follower motivation" (p. 21). Intercollegiate athletics has the capacity to unite individuals from different backgrounds, religions, socio-economic statuses, and countries, ultimately aiding in the

personal growth and development of athletic leaders and student athletes. With dedication, a new way can be created for intercollegiate athletics where seeking to serve the innermost being of student athletes and athletics personnel becomes the priority.

Intercollegiate athletic departments can become sport organizations for development and peace by prioritizing servanthood and demonstrating the necessity for self-actualization. Essentially, Burton and Welty Peachey (2016) and Wells and Welty Peachey (2016) advocate for the proper management of sport and deem correct leadership as the most paramount way to increase its personal development power. By espousing compassion, gratitude, humility, forgiveness, and altruism, even amid uncertainty or adversity, servant athletic leaders restore authenticity to athletics, resulting in a generation of student athletes who are self-aware and value their own individuality. Transforming sport organizations into organizations for development and peace involves empowerment and a selflessness that a servant leader is ready and willing to provide.

Blazing paths for a new way within intercollegiate athletics requires a deviation from the abuse of power and control that can plague athletic organizations. As Powers, Judge, and Makela (2016) demonstrated via the work of Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser (2007), it is the intersection of dysfunctional leaders, susceptible followers, and environments conducive to negative outcomes that create destructive leadership in athletic departments. Padilla et al.'s toxic triangle theory supports the idea that "followers' levels of averseness and whistle-blowing intentions will change depending on characteristics of the leader" (Powers et al., 2016, p. 298). Servant athletic leaders will seek to understand this dynamic and use their focus on the needs of followers to create peace and development within athletic organizations. Pushing the envelope within intercollegiate athletics to create positive environments that foster success, involves

capacity building and the deconstruction of abusive power. Implementing servant leadership within intercollegiate athletics translates into empowering student athletes and leaders for lifelong learning and development beyond sports. The most beneficial investment servant leaders will provide athletics lies in their ability to propel all individuals to heights that span far beyond wins and losses. Servant leaders will seek to serve dreams and aspirations, enabling student athletes and fellow colleagues to view themselves as multi-faceted individuals.

It is capacity building within intercollegiate athletics that will ultimately allow all stakeholders to grow and develop, capitalizing on a self-actualized identity. Andrassy, Bruening, Svensson, Huml, and Chung (2014) conducted in-depth interviews with student athlete life skills coordinators from nine institutions regarded as being dedicated to service. Each university implemented programs from the NCAA's Challenging Athletes' Minds for Personal Success (CHAMPS), an initiative recognizing student athlete involvement as a top academic priority. Andrassy et al. found that the athletic departments "were characterized by strong organizational capacity for engaging student athletes in meaningful service efforts" (p. 218). It was the critical role of coaches and the mutual values shared by the department's internal stakeholders that heavily influenced the department's ability to cultivate capacity. By deeming an unwavering commitment to service as important, the athletic departments within Andrassy et al.'s (2014) study "leveraged external relationships, promoted a participative decision-making culture, and prioritized student athlete development" (p. 240). All nine athletic departments were demonstrating servant leadership behavior without explicitly stating their intention to do so. Andrassy et al.'s study gave a clear picture on the overall organizational benefits of servant leadership and how it can inadvertently change the lives of student athletes. When student athletes consistently witness leaders modeling behavior and living through a set of values that

motivates them to be better people, they are given the opportunity to raise their own personal standards. When led by a cause greater than ourselves we recognize our own ability to flourish and the intrinsic needs we require to live a self-actualized life full of purpose and intention. In summation of the power of the servant athletic leader and the self-actualization their support will foster, Powers, Judge, and Makela. (2016) eloquently state:

As we shape meaning in our lives, anxiety and fear can be transformed into imaginative enthusiasm and focus. Our struggles can help us come to terms with and create new important symbols through which we can better understand the world we live and affect (p. 309).

Summary

Branch (1990) examined the leader and follower relationship seen within every level of intercollegiate athletics. Branch's insights are central to this study, as they provided a sound foundation in explaining the importance of strengthening the interpersonal dynamic within intercollegiate athletics. Branch highlighted an area within intercollegiate athletics that researchers are still trying to build a model of effectiveness around. According to Branch (1990):

The problems facing intercollegiate athletic programs indicate a need to examine in still more depth those leader behaviors that could have a positive influence on the relationships between athletic directors and their subordinates, as well as those behaviors that influence the entire organizations' health and effectiveness (p. 172).

Branch called for further study that reinforces the desired positive behavior necessary for the interpersonal dynamic of intercollegiate athletics to thrive at all levels. Though one must first identify undesired behavior to suggest a positive solution, what is necessary for intercollegiate

athletics are constructive studies which seek to not only identify undesired behavior but also provide an overall positive tone in the spirit of optimism and growth. As Davis (2014) supported, it is our mindful focus that establishes the patience and stillness necessary for reflection and right action. Through a review of the literature, the researcher has sought to identify four key areas of examination that can aide, and possibly hinder, the success of servant leadership within athletics. The capacity to cultivate servant leadership within intercollegiate athletics begins with an understanding that it is the most prevalent leadership style within any organization that often prevails. Servant leadership can indeed be the remedy for many of the undesired aspects of athletics, but only when athletic leaders view themselves as integral components of follower growth and become dedicated to deviating away from the comfortability of doing things the way they have always been done.

When examining effective and ineffective modes of leadership, it is important to consider systems thinking, in determining how to guide followers to self-actualization. Betts' (1992) research on the necessity of systems thinking within education is applicable to creating change within intercollegiate athletics, as the use of old paradigms in new contexts no longer enable student athletes to experience consistent improvement. Leaders who commit themselves to cultivate all programs and services accessible to the student athlete support the student's overall maturation. Creating new paradigms within new contexts also involves listening to the student athlete, allowing them to communicate their leadership preferences which Beam (2001) supported. Empowering followers within intercollegiate athletics to find their voice and express their needs will positively impact the interpersonal dynamics. This will allow athletic leaders and their followers to find common ground based on value congruence within the midst of change, as Welty Peachey and Bruening (2012) supported.

The work of Shaw and Newton (2014) demonstrated an increase in staff retention rates when a servant leader is at the head of an organization. The researchers conveyed servant leadership's ability to permeate an organization, creating a values-based environment. There are numerous ethical and moral considerations within intercollegiate athletics that may lead to undesired leadership if not properly assessed. Servant leadership behavior espoused by an emotionally intelligent athletic leader will allow for connectivity, as Parrish (2015) conveyed, as well as an understanding of the moral and ethical dilemmas student athletes and athletic personnel may encounter. Guiding followers through periods of uncertainty is necessary and will not only strengthen the environment for growth mindsets to flourish, as Dweck (2015) asserted, but will also enable followers to function within the multi-level system that is intercollegiate athletics, as communicated by Fletcher, Benschhoff and Richburg (2003). Roby (2014) supported that athletic leaders have an ethical and moral responsibility to lead followers and must demonstrate values of conviction that stand the test of adversity.

The ethical and moral foundation of servant leadership plays a central role in addressing the needs of student athletes, as their journey to self-actualization is heavily dependent on the leader taking right action on the athlete's behalf. Brand (2006) contended that value must be restored to the student athlete experience. It is the responsibility of athletic leaders to convey value and instill a sense of worth within their followers. By investing in the student athlete beyond their sport and demonstrating their importance as people, the athletic leader becomes a source of inspiration, providing experiences that become pivotal moments in the athlete's life. Through their research, Figgins, Smith, Sellars, Greenlees and Knight (2016) demonstrated that the inspirational moments between a coach and a student athlete are most remembered and treasured and provide the most benefit to the athlete.

In closing, through the presented literature it is evident that servant leadership is the answer for change within intercollegiate athletics. Servant leadership is the call for intercollegiate athletics and will restore a focus of growth and development for all. Intercollegiate athletics can no longer send athletes out into the world after their university experience with no real sense of self. Athletic leaders can grow to be servant leaders if they recognize how the present and future success of their followers is dependent upon their own self-actualization. A leader who understands their own propensity for growth, will motivate, inspire, and support a student athlete in exploring the possibilities of who they are and in deciding the type of life they want to lead. Student athletes, athletics personnel, and athletic administrators will benefit from the presence of servant leadership, as it will push them to be better individuals, desire more for themselves, and serve someone else's needs at the same time. Once leaders step outside of themselves and seek to use their gifts in such a way that someone else discovers their own, they will know true happiness, experiencing true success.

To ultimately craft a vivid picture, detailing servant leadership's influence on the self-actualization of Division I student athletes, the researcher sought to provide a description and an understanding of the workings of a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2013). This type of research is categorized as ethnographic and is defined as a way of studying a culture-sharing group, immersing oneself in the day-to-day lives of participants by observing and interviewing. As Creswell (2013) stated, "Ethnographers study the meaning of the behavior, the language, and the interaction among members of the culture-sharing group" (p. 90). Ethnographic studies require prolonged research within the field, propelling researchers to build rapport with participants and establish a level of trust that will allow for the compilation of comprehensive or rich data. Within this particular study, this rich data was enhanced by quantitative data gained through the

deployment Servant Leadership Climate survey which measured perceived levels of servant leader behavior espoused by head coaches at XXX University and its ability to foster self-actualization. In totality, the data acquired enabled the researcher to confront her own biases within the research and produce cultural themes that fostered an authentic account of the phenomenon being considered. There is certainly a gap in the data as it relates to servant leadership in intercollegiate athletics. There are facets that have yet to be expounded upon and the researcher detailed truthful and honest experiences of self-actualizing outcomes through the utilization of a sequential transformative mixed-methods research design.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The following methodology outlines specific steps the researcher followed in answering the study's research questions, pertaining to servant leadership and its ability to foster self-actualization in Division I student athletes. To accurately paint a cultural portrait, depicting the experiences of Division I student athletes and their exposure to servant leadership in and out of the practice setting at XXX University, the researcher chose to conduct an ethnographic research study. Servant leadership can be modeled in a multitude of environments within intercollegiate athletics. Although, for the purposes of this study, the team setting provided opportunities for observation periods, as required by ethnographic research. Sangasubana (2011) explained, researchers use ethnographic studies to describe a group or culture. To arrive at an accurate description, many times ethnography may involve a full immersion of the researcher in the day-to-day lives or culture of those under study (Sangasubana, 2011). Ethnographic methodologies often include three distinctive characteristics. Sangasubana (2011) describes these characteristics as, "naturalistic in setting, personalized because the researcher is an observer and a participant, as well as dialogic due to the interpretations and conclusions formed being subjected to comments or feedback from the participants under study" (p. 567). Ethnographic research requires a long-term commitment from the researcher, as well as a deep level of trust established between the researcher and study participants to ensure rich data is acquired.

It was the researcher's goal to implement a study that provided useful data for intercollegiate athletic leaders who strive to implement servant leadership principles and give a voice to a generation of student athletes who may not always have the opportunity for their story to be told. The quantitative elements woven into the researcher's study, coupled with the

researcher's passion to truly influence leadership practice within intercollegiate athletics, gave this study an overall transformative design. In the longstanding debate of mixed-method designs, Lochmiller and Lester (2017) conveyed that a "transformative approach is less concerned with the particular positioning of qualitative or quantitative methods than it is concerned with the use of a theoretical perspective that allows researchers to attend to issues of power, discrimination, privilege and oppression" (p. 222). Ultimately, ethnographic qualitative research within a transformative design allowed the researcher to produce data that positively enhanced the body of research pertaining to servant leadership within intercollegiate athletics.

Setting and Participants

According to Creswell (2013), the researcher in an ethnographic study is striving to develop an overall cultural interpretation of a culture-sharing group. Creswell conveyed that this cultural interpretation is a description of the group and the themes related to theoretical concepts being studied. Ethnographers enter a setting that allows them to conduct research and collect data that results in an understanding of how the culture-sharing group works, the essence of its function, and the group's way of life. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative researchers collect data in a natural setting. This natural setting is "typically the field site where participants experience the issue or problem under study" (p. 45). The researcher interacted with and witnessed the student athletes and their head coach in a natural context so that the most accurate story of servant leadership's impact on Division I student athletes could be told.

The researcher believed that one of the most natural settings for coaches and student athletes is practice. Practice does not include the pressure to win like the competition setting and is often the environment where student athletes rehearse their use of the mental skills necessary to perform well. According to Frey, Laguna, and Ravizza (2003), "It is possible that an athlete's

attitude toward mental skill use is partially dependent on the coach's view of practice and mental skills" (p. 123). Frey et al. also conveyed that due to the amount of time student athletes spend with their coaches, there are more opportunities for coaches to reinforce student development through quality practices. The work of Frey et al. (2003) supported the researcher's decision to observe interactions between student athletes and their head coach in and outside of the practice setting as an environment in which to acquire data because it demonstrated the impact of the head coach's leadership influence on the overall success of the student athlete.

Analyzing the interactions of a Division I women's soccer team, in and out of practice, at XXX University, the researcher utilized consenting student athletes over the age of 18, their head coach, and former XXX University women's soccer student athletes as study participants for qualitative data collection. All consenting student athletes at XXX University over the age of 18 were utilized for the quantitative phase of data collection. This particular university was selected because the researcher was once an employee within the athletic department and access to study participants was readily available. Gaining access within this setting and creating buy-in with study participants, took building rapport with the site gatekeeper, which at the time was the interim director of athletics. The researcher explained purposes of the study, her data collection methods, and that participants would not be at risk any time during the study. As Creswell (2013) described, participants in this culture-sharing group shared language, patterns of behavior and attitudes that merged into discernable patterns. Creswell also highlighted that participants within ethnographic studies may also be groups marginalized by society. Due to the external forces and pressures intercollegiate athletic departments navigate, many student athletes become marginalized as their personal growth can become insignificant in comparison to the overall needs of the organization.

Sampling Procedures

Participant selection was a combination of convenience and purposeful sampling. For the quantitative portion of this study, the researcher deployed the survey to approximately 400 Division I student athletes at XXX University. For the qualitative phase of the study, participants were student athletes from the women's soccer team at XXX University and the team's head coach. Field research began with the collection of quantitative data via the Servant Leader and Self-Actualization Climate Survey. Lochmiller and Lester (2017) suggested that an invitation to participate within a quantitative study should only be extended to those meeting predetermined criteria. In addition, Lunenburg and Irby (2008) stated that the "purpose of qualitative research is to obtain an in-depth understanding of purposively selected participants from their perspective" (p. 177). Thus, in selecting a sample for this ethnographic transformative research design, as Lunenburg and Irby (2008) suggested, the researcher "purposively selected participants, creating a sample likely to produce the type of information needed to achieve the study's purpose" (p. 177). The researcher utilized the homogenous sampling approach, selecting participants who were very similar in their experience, incorporating an additional sampling strategy to accomplish the study's purpose. All subjects were from the same Division I athletic department, standardizing the departmental vision and values participants adhered to. Additionally, all student athletes needed to be willing to honestly discuss their head coach's leadership practices and the head coach needed to be willing in providing candid responses about his own leadership style.

The study began with an invitation to all XXX University student athletes asking for their participation in the Servant Leadership Climate Survey. After access was granted by the site gatekeepers, the director of athletics and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, the

researcher worked in conjunction with the site's faculty athletics representative to send an email invitation to each student athlete for the quantitative phase. Details on the research topic, goals of the overall study, definition of terms central to the study's mission, how long the survey would be accessible, confidentiality of the study, and criteria to participate was provided via consent form. Because the survey was created using an online software, the researcher built the consent form into the survey's design. Student athletes gave consent to reach the portion of the survey that allowed them to provide feedback. Participants apart of the qualitative stage, were provided an additional consent form, giving detail on the interview and observation phases, the length of these phases, and the researcher's impetus behind entering their team's culture in relation to the overall study. Within both phases, the researcher made it clear to all participants that they needed to be at least 18 years of age and that participation was voluntary and could be rescinded at any time.

Pre-Season Meeting with Women's Soccer

Prior to data collection, the researcher met with the women's soccer team at XXX University during their first team meeting of the 2018 season to explain their participation within the study. Upon entering the room, the head coach thanked the researcher for her presence and gave a brief introduction to the student athletes on the researcher's background. The head coach communicated that he had no reservations in allowing his team to participate in the study, as he valued giving back to others and evolving as a leader himself. He also communicated that being involved in the study was not mandatory and that no consequences would result should a student athlete decide to opt out of participating. The head coach's belief in the researcher's study was evident and visibly eased his team's skepticism. In turn, this created a deeper level of receptivity when the researcher spoke, giving details on the goals and objectives of the overall study.

The researcher gave a brief introduction into her background and stated that she was pursuing a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership. She echoed sentiments of the head coach, reemphasizing her familiarity with athletics. To also build a sense of comfortability, the researcher highlighted that she traveled with the women's soccer team during the 2017 season which prompted the upperclassmen to clap and cheer out loud in support. The researcher's attempts to build a deeper rapport with the team proved to be beneficial, as the student athletes' body language went from overly relaxed to upright and engaged. One student athlete asked what institution the researcher was attending during her doctoral journey, as well as the length of time it would take to complete. These questions brought a smile to the researcher's face, as the student athletes were intrigued, not only with the study, but with the researcher as well. This contributed to the overall engagement within the room. The researcher started by asking the student athletes if any of them had heard of servant leadership. With no one raising their hand, the researcher excitedly capitalized on the opportunity to define servant leadership and pointed out a few of its distinctive components such as service, trust, empowerment, and altruism. The researcher then tied servant leadership to her hypothesis, asserting that the espousal of servant leader behavior is what creates an environment for Division I student athletes to find personal fulfillment and realize their own potential.

Next, the researcher discussed the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study, highlighting that data collection was projected to take about one to two months to complete. At this point, the researcher stopped to further advise the team that all participation within the study would be voluntary and could be rescinded at any point in time. They were informed that consent would be needed from each participant prior to the beginning of the study and that all participants needed to be at least 18 years of age. Upon communicating the age requirement, the

researcher noticed a bit of disappointment in the face of one freshman student athlete who was still 17 years of age. Although this would be one less participant for the researcher, witnessing the student athlete's displeasure in the study's age requirement brought a sense of confidence and assurance to the researcher. It seemed that the student athletes were feeding off the researcher's passion and energy, creating an eagerness to participate. The student athletes were notified that the quantitative phase of the study would encompass a survey that would serve as a base for determining XXX University student athletes' perception of their head coach's level of servant leadership in and out of the practice environment. The student athletes were told that they could expect to receive an email soliciting their survey participation.

In moving on to the qualitative phase of the study, the researcher emphasized the value in the team's participation. It was addressed that the qualitative phase would consist of individual 30-minute interviews with each consenting student athlete to gain further insight on the impact of servant leadership within Division I student athletes. Before the researcher could move on to discussing the observation phase, a student athlete raised her hand to ask if any of their coaches would be interviewed. The researcher thanked the student athlete for her question and stated that she failed to mention their head coach would be interviewed as well. This question was great because it demonstrated the student athletes' regard for their coaches, as well as their interest in the researcher gaining a full picture of their team's dynamic, not just from a student athlete perspective, but from a coach's perspective as well. The observation component was highlighted next. It was communicated that the researcher would attend one practice a week and select games for the duration of the team's regular season. The researcher was sure to note that she would attend as a non-participant taking notes and seeking to make sense of the feedback acquired during the interviews.

Although the researcher's time with the team only lasted about 20 minutes, she repeatedly emphasized that all participant identities would be protected and that maintaining the integrity of her study was highly important. It was noted that pseudonyms would be used during the discussion of results and no identifying information about the team, such as win-loss records or locations, would be included. In conclusion, the researcher empowered the student athletes to view their participation within the study as a means of giving back to future student athletes. The researcher detailed that providing honest responses could produce results that have the power to impact NCAA programs and services. Last, but certainly not least, the researcher mentioned that she would utilize member checking to ensure accuracy and validity while writing the last two chapters of her dissertation. She explained exactly what member checking consisted of and that employing this strategy would ensure that she created a product, capturing the team's true voice. Before exiting the room, with no additional student athlete questions, the researcher thanked everyone for their time and attention and stated that she would be in contact via email.

Instrumentation and Measures

Quantitative

The researcher deployed the Servant Leadership Climate Survey (SLCS) (Appendix A) to gain insight and understanding on the student athletes' perception of their head coach's level of servant leadership behavior. The researcher created this quantitative instrument which was inspired by the Revised Servant Leadership Profile for Sport by Rieke, Hammermeister and Chase (2008). The SLCS was comprised of 23 Likert-style questions, measuring the likelihood of servant leader behavior in and out of the practice environment, three demographic questions, and one qualitative question giving respondents the opportunity to provide additional sentiments about their head coach. Likert scale questions were created using Patterson's (2003) seven

constructs of servant leadership. The seven constructs are agape love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. Using a four-point scale, student athletes were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed on statements about their head coach such as “prioritizes the personal growth of their student athletes” or “provides opportunities for discussion and reflection.” The SLCS took Rieke et al.’s (2008) research a step further, as it gauged student athletes’ perception of their head coach’s servant leader qualities in and out of the Division I practice setting. To increase the validity and reliability of the instrument, in consultation with the faculty athletics representative (FAR) and the longtime head women’s soccer coach at XXX University, the researcher consistently revised the survey before deployment to ensure the questions were clear and reflective of the study’s overall mission. Both the FAR and the head coach have extensive experience in working with student athletes and provided the researcher with valuable guidance to increase the effectiveness of the SLCS. The women’s soccer head coach provided invaluable feedback, suggesting that the SLCS seek to assess head coach servant leader qualities in and out of the practice setting. While the practice setting is often an environment where cultural norms are created and perpetuated for an athletic team, it may not provide a full understanding of the head coach’s espousal of servant leader qualities due to the time constraint and focused intention of each practice session. The head coach’s recommendation on editing the survey to assess servant leader qualities in and out of the practice setting added depth to the researcher’s data and enhanced the validity and reliability of the survey.

Lochmiller and Lester (2017) suggested that “surveys are flexible tools from which to infer what a group of individuals thinks, perceives, or feels” (p. 133). The researchers also claimed that surveys are a standardized way to collect information across a group of participants.

The Servant Leadership Climate Survey (SLCS) served as a base for determining the student athletes' perception of their head coach's level of servant leadership within the practice environment and outside the practice environment.

Qualitative

During the interview and observation phases, protocols developed by the researcher were used to guide data collection efforts. The interview protocol for student athletes (Appendix B) was comprised of seven questions and prompted participants to ponder on ideas ranging from what he or she considered to be good leadership to what kind of leader they would be if they were a head coach. The interview protocol for the head coach (Appendix C) was comprised of eight questions prompting the head coach to think about topics, ranging from what he considered to be good leadership to how his leadership style supported the student athletes' growth and fulfillment. The observation protocol (Appendix D) was a sheet divided into two sections, one for reflective notes and one for descriptive notes. The reflective notes section allowed the researcher to record thoughts and ideas during the observation phase, whereas the descriptive notes section provided space for the researcher to document factual data such as observed actions, behaviors and conversations.

Institutional Review Board

After gaining approval from the institutional review board (IRB) at Concordia University Irvine (CUI), the researcher met with the faculty athletics representative (FAR) at XXX University. The FAR was an important resource for the researcher especially in promoting her survey amongst the student athletes at XXX University. To ensure the researcher navigated the proper channels at XXX University, the FAR contacted the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP). The researcher was advised to submit her approved IRB materials from CUI

to the director of ORSP

Once the researcher's protocol materials were reviewed, the director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) responded via email with a few points for clarification. Also included was an institutional authorization agreement which Concordia University Irvine (CUI) was to sign on the researcher's behalf to ensure that her protocol met the necessary human protection requirements. Once the agreement was forwarded to CUI, it was determined that the institution was not registered with the Office for Human Research Protections. Therefore, the researcher's protocol was not assigned a federalwide assurance (FWA) number. Due to this unforeseen circumstance, XXX University could not accept the researcher's approved CUI protocol materials. After much deliberation, the ORSP director notified the researcher that the institution wanted to honor all of the effort she had put forth and would allow her to conduct research with student athletes at XXX University. The mandatory requirements were to partner with an XXX University sponsor being that she is not a staff member or student at the institution. The faculty athletics representative (FAR) agreed to be the researcher's sponsor, as well as the principal investigator for the study, as the second requirement was to submit protocol materials through XXX University's institutional review board. In conjunction with the FAR, the researcher submitted her protocol to XXX University. The researcher did not have to complete any additional human subjects training, as her National Institutes of Health certificate of completion was accepted (Appendix F). The researcher's protocol was approved two and a half weeks after submission.

Completing an additional institutional review board process was an unforeseen obstacle for the researcher, one that significantly delayed data collection efforts. Nevertheless, the researcher stayed committed to the research mission and began collecting data immediately,

deploying the survey to all student athletes at XXX University via email with the assistance of the university sponsor and joining the women's soccer team for observations at their first conference home game. Interviews commenced the following week. The additional time needed to gain IRB approval, delayed the researcher from collecting data per her desired timeline. To counter the delay, the researcher observed the athletes' practice one day a week and attended three home games over the course of four weeks. This combined observation of practice and home games ensured the acquisition of rich data for this study.

Data Collection

Quantitative

As Figure 1 below illustrates, the entire data collection process aligned with the research questions guiding the overall study. The researcher wanted to ensure that all data collection efforts served a purpose and upheld the mission of the research. The Servant Leadership Climate Survey (SLCS) was deployed to all student athletes at XXX University through Jump Forward, a communication software. Lochmiller and Lester (2017) advised researchers to give thought on how a survey will be deployed and the length of time that will be required. Survey deployment can greatly affect the length of a study and must be considered before the researcher commits to a specific method. In addition, Lochmiller and Lester (2017) also advised that "researchers familiarize themselves with technologies that are most relevant to one's research needs" (p. 159). The researcher chose to deploy an electronic survey for easier accessibility. Lochmiller and Lester suggested leaving an electronic survey open between two weeks and one month to allow for one to two reminders to be sent to participants. A link to the survey along with step-by-step directions and study details was emailed to all participants and a window of three weeks was given to complete it.

Qualitative

According to Creswell (2013), “Qualitative research begins with assumptions, as well as the use of theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning ascribed to social or human problems” (p. 44). To study a specific issue, qualitative researchers select a method of inquiry in which to conduct research and adhere to several common qualitative research characteristics. Creswell provided an in-depth description of these characteristics, starting with the setting in which data collection will take place. As previously mentioned, qualitative data collection should take place in a natural setting where participants experience the specific phenomena under study. A natural setting ultimately allowed for genuine face-to-face interaction over time between the researcher and the study participants. Qualitative researchers often collect data, using multiple methods such as observation, interviewing, and document examination. An instrument may be used, but it is often designed by the researcher, utilizing open-ended questions (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative research complements the researcher’s personal preference on data collection, as she has always been intrigued by the stories of others. Although, this study encompassed quantitative elements as a transformative mixed-methods design, it was the collection of qualitative data driving this study’s impact in creating change. The researcher realized that ethnographic research would allow her to fill a gap in the research on servant leadership in intercollegiate athletics and would add quality insight on the fruitfulness of its employment. Delving into the lives of Division I student athletes and becoming a nonparticipant in their practice setting provided accuracy and understanding in explaining their experiences.

The qualitative phase of this study began with interviews of women’s soccer student athletes and their head coach in which audio was recorded via the researcher’s laptop. The

researcher also interviewed three women's soccer student athletes from the previous season that graduated from XXX University to diversify responses and further protect the identity of current student athletes. In all interview recordings, participant names were not identified. Creswell (2013) regarded interviewing as a "series of steps in a procedure, identifying several key components" (p.163). Student athletes shared their perceived level of servant leadership qualities exemplified by their head coach, the way those qualities helped them grow, as well as the practice environment their coach created in doing so. The head coach was also asked to share his own perceived level of servant leadership qualities and how those qualities allowed him to create an environment that supported the personal growth and development of student athletes. According to Harrell and Bradley (2009), semi-structured interviews:

Allow researchers to delve deeply into a topic using probing questions fostering a more thorough understanding. There are specific details and topics that must be covered within semi-structured interviews, but the data is collected in more of a conversational approach (p. 27).

After completing the interviews, the researcher compiled all responses and began observations of the team during select practices, homes games, and pre/post game meetings. Maxwell (2013) asserted that "Observation provides a direct and powerful way of learning about people's behavior and the context in which it occurs" (p. 103). To better understand the culture-sharing group, the researcher became a nonparticipant, observing from afar, but still striving to build relationships with the student athletes and their coaching staff. The goal was to establish a level of trust that would allow participants to feel comfortable having the researcher take detailed notes within their intimate team environment. An observational protocol was used to guide the researcher's note taking to ensure that the most pertinent information was recorded. The

observation phase was a crucial component to the overall study. It allowed the researcher to determine if the head coach upheld the environment by creating, nurturing, and perpetuating the servant leadership behavior he discussed in the interview phase and how the student athletes' beliefs in their own potential were impacted. After the observation phase, the researcher withdrew from the site, thanking the participants and also reassuring them of the data usage and their ability to access the study once complete.

Research Questions	Servant Leadership Climate Survey	Interviews	Observations
(1) How is servant leadership exemplified by the head coach in and out of the practice environment in Division I intercollegiate athletics?	X	X	X
(2) Do servant leadership behaviors espoused by the head coach affect student athletes' growth toward self-actualization?		X	X

Figure 1. Data Collection in Alignment with Research Questions

Data Analysis

Quantitative

Lochmiller and Lester (2017) suggested that the “purpose of quantitative data analysis is to use descriptive and inferential statistics to assess trends patterns and relationships in data” (p. 189). Lochmiller and Lester also conveyed that the process unfolds over time, as each step brings the researcher closer to a deeper understanding of the dataset. The researcher spent time critically thinking about the specific variables involved to determine what descriptive statistics would best convey the trends within the dataset. With responses from the Servant Leadership Climate Survey, the researcher followed the Quantitative Data Analysis Cycle presented by Lochmiller and Lester. The process began by preparing the data set, identifying any data that

was missing, and standardizing variable values. A codebook, an inventory of the individual variables and their respective values, was also created to ensure a clear understanding on what each value in the dataset meant. The researcher then familiarized herself with the data, using the variables to identify patterns and trends. Lochmiller and Lester (2017) suggested that “frequencies are one of the easiest ways to identify how data are distributed” (p. 194). The researcher then used descriptive statistics, specifically measures of central tendency such as mean, median, and mode, to present quantitative findings. Finally, the researcher created graphs to visually present the data, allowing easier understanding for the reader. Graphs were created using Microsoft Excel. After selecting a graph style, the researcher input theme specific data from the Servant Leadership Climate Survey and inserted the graphic directly into her document. Overall, the Quantitative Data Analysis Cycle gave the researcher’s qualitative efforts a foundation in which to corroborate interview and observational data against, creating a cultural portrait that gave a voice to the Division I student athletes under study.

Qualitative

Per Creswell (2013), data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data for analysis. Researchers then use coding to reduce the data into broad themes and condense those themes down to three to five main categories for discussion. It is at this point in the journey where researchers begin to connect all facets of the data, and for ethnographers, begin to paint a picture of the culture-sharing group under study. Researchers often use conceptual graphics, charts, and maps that allow them to visualize their data’s interconnectedness in order to articulate their findings.

It was important to stay organized while embarking on data analysis, as ethnographic research is data rich due to the immersion of the researcher into another culture. The researcher

engaged in qualitative data analysis using Creswell's (2013) Data Analysis Spiral. First, the researcher uploaded interview responses to an online transcription service called Temi. This allowed the researcher to keep all audio files in one place, assisting in effectively analyzing the data. After transcription, the researcher then read through the interviews, gaining a general sense and understanding of the responses and field notes. Next, the researcher wrote memos, "short phrases, ideas, or key concepts that occur to the reader and are written in the margins of field notes and transcripts" (Creswell, 2013, p. 183). Memoing allowed for reflection, as qualitative researchers must consistently strive to remember how their own experiences influence their interpretation of participant behavior and responses.

Next, the researcher engaged in the process of coding. Coding enabled the researcher to offer detailed descriptions on what was seen and develop themes, providing interpretation in light of her own world views and biases (Creswell, 2013). By creating small categories from the overall information, the researcher intentionally sifted through the data, as not all the data was included in the actual study. Creswell (2013) suggested that researchers begin with "lean coding" (p. 184), constructing five or six categories with general code names and then expanding on the categories as the researcher continues to curate the data. This process produced many themes, causing the researcher to engage in the winnowing process. Reducing, combining, counting and comparing was done until four overarching categories resulted which corresponded to each of the research questions driving the study. The researcher heavily utilized the bracketing method, motivating her to set aside her assumptions of the data and continuously evolve her understanding of the study's topic. Therefore, category names were summative, as their larger concept derived directly from summarizing all of the data present and described, as well as interpreted, how the culture-sharing group worked. Throughout the entire process, data

triangulation remained a central focus. As Creswell (2013) contended, triangulation involves corroborating evidence from different sources to expand on a theme or perspective and involves a number of different strategies. It is at this stage where the survey data was used, as well as notes from the observations. The researcher related specific survey questions to each theme, creating a well-rounded analysis that was reflective of all facets present within the data.

The researcher finally presented the interpretation of findings in an impressionistic tale which, according to Van Maanen (1988), is a personalized account of the fieldwork. Creswell (2013) also stated that “impressionistic tales present a compelling and persuasive story” (p. 233). This personalized writing style allowed the researcher to delve deep into the participants’ story, describing the culture-sharing group and depicting the state of the team environment in and out of practice which added a level of compassion and genuineness to the overall impetus behind the study. To complement the tale being told, tables comprised of interview responses were incorporated, helping the reader to better understand and connect with the categorical breakdown of the findings. This ethnographic study ultimately developed a story, presenting patterns, key events, important characters, interactions, and inferences, informing readers of the necessity for servant leadership and self-actualization in Division I intercollegiate athletics.

Theoretical Lens to Analyze, Compare, Relate, and Interpret

This study became a true mixed-methods design after the quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately, as figure 2 demonstrates below. Figure 2 is a visualization of the data collection and data analysis processes, summing up the steps necessary in creating a cultural portrait for the Division I student athletes and head coach under study. Transformative designs adopt a theoretical lens, expounding on critical and socially oriented perspectives (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). The researcher’s purpose was to challenge the normative modes of leadership

within intercollegiate athletics that have yet to produce standards on how to effectively assist Division I student athletes with the identification of their needs for personal growth and fulfillment. Findings were analyzed and compared against the theoretical foundation underpinning this study, displaying the need for services and programming built on the ideology of servant leadership and self-actualization. By focusing on the current issues within intercollegiate athletics and the use of old leadership paradigms in new contexts, the researcher challenged the status quo in hopes of creating environments of growth for a generation of student athletes that deserve to realize their potential for success in overall life.

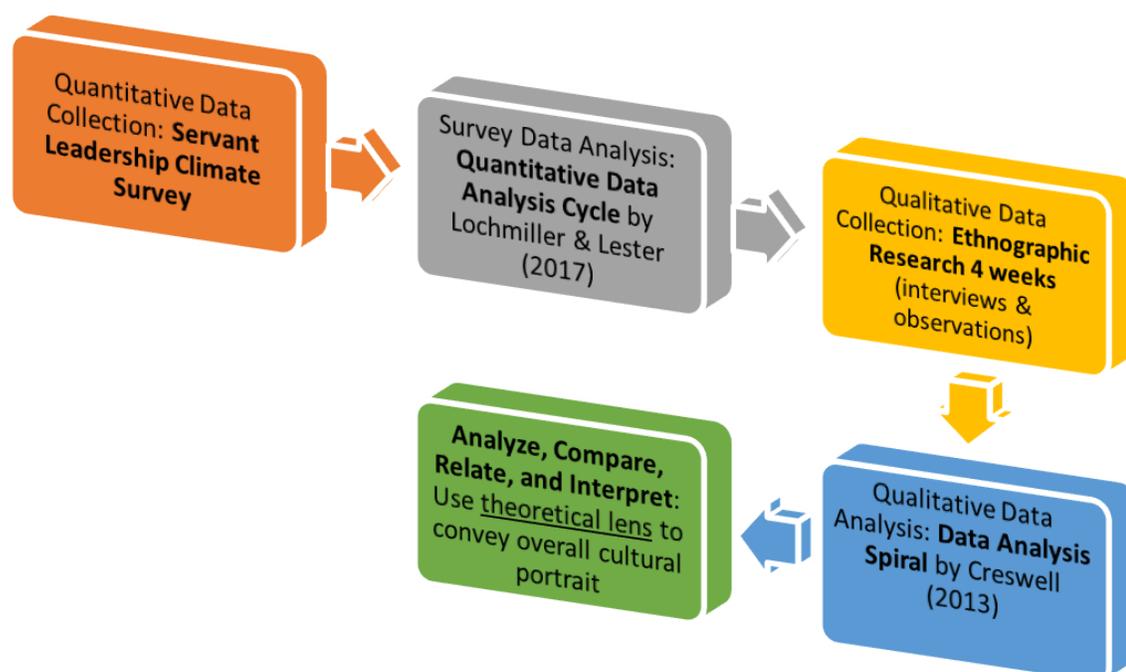


Figure 2. Data Analysis Sequential Transformative Design

Ethical Issues

According to Maxwell (2013), ethical concerns should be involved in every aspect of a researcher's study design. Creswell (2013) contended that "Regardless of the researcher's selected method of inquiry, researchers can face many ethical issues during data collection in the field, as well as in analysis and distribution of reports" (p. 174). The ethical issues that may arise

for all researchers include approval from the institutional review board to conduct research, proper permission to enter a local site for data collection, and recognition of participant vulnerability. During the survey phase of data collection, to avoid a breach of ethics, the researcher kept all survey data anonymous and identification details confidential. This was especially important, as a participation incentive of \$100 dollars was used to garner survey responses. Student athletes who chose to enter the drawing, willingly provided their name and email address at the end of the survey. It was critical to understand the differences between anonymity and confidentiality while collecting data. The survey instrument itself was completely anonymous, as it did not require participants to provide identifying data. Confidentiality was exhibited if participants decided to enter the drawing and during the interview and observation phases of the study.

During the qualitative phase of the study, the researcher reduced the possibility for a breach in confidentiality by protecting the identities of the women's soccer student athletes and their interview feedback. Although the researcher worked in conjunction with the head coach to get an idea as to what days and times might be best for the interviews, the researcher did not share the interview location or the specific interview time assignments. Only the researcher knew the specific student athletes that consented to participating in an interview. Within Division I intercollegiate athletic programs, competition is inherent, and teams are protective over the intricacies of their culture. The biggest barrier the researcher faced in obtaining quality data was whether or not she built trust with the student athletes and head coach participating in the study. Creswell pointed out that ethical concerns often reside in deception over the true intentions of a researcher. Transparency was paramount in gaining support and required the researcher to convey to participants that they were indeed participating in a study, to explain the

purpose of the study, and to be open about the true nature of the study.

Ethnographic research requires prolonged engagement and persistent observation within the field of study. Participants needed to feel comfortable welcoming the researcher into their culture-sharing group and needed to trust that the researcher wanted to tell their story accurately. Therefore, as a validity strategy, the researcher employed member checking after the data was analyzed. By sending her concluded themes and a brief discussion of those themes to members of the women's soccer team, the researcher could ensure that her interpretation captured the essence of their team culture. Additionally, close long-term contact was inevitable, but what could have resulted and could have even posed an ethical dilemma, was participants sharing information off the record. Creswell (2013) ascertained that "such information is often deleted from analysis by the researcher, but that the issue becomes problematic when the information, if reported, harms individuals" (p. 174). The researcher was careful not to breach the faith of her participants and break the trust given to her.

While conducting research in the field it was important to recognize when participants were confiding in the researcher outside of the study's boundaries and to discern which information should not be included for analysis. Another potential ethical issue the researcher had to be cognizant of was sharing too many personal experiences with study participants. While it was somewhat challenging to hold back when interacting with participants due to the nature of ethnographic research, the researcher kept in mind that the personal experiences shared could impact the responses given by participants. Interpretation and meaning are central to qualitative study and can be heavily impacted when the researcher becomes a participant. The researcher consistently reflected on her ethical duties as an ethnographer and always remained aware of her personal disclosure level.

Another ethical consideration was reciprocity. According to Creswell (2013), reciprocity is important, and researchers must ponder on how participants will gain from one's study. The researcher kept in mind how she could give back to the participants for their time and effort. Ethnographic studies are a two-way street. Researchers need their participants and must not take their participation for granted, as the quality of the study depends on it. One final ethical consideration was the realization that cultural norms of the culture-sharing group needed to be respected during data collection and data analysis. Despite the length of time spent with the group under study, the researcher was always an outsider and knew that one day she would have to withdraw from the group. It was important to respect all participants and their differences, taking into consideration their anonymity, confidentiality within the group, and the level of care needed to not disrupt or cause a divide within the group while involved.

Summary

This chapter reaffirmed the purpose of the study and presented the distinct steps that were taken to answer the two research questions guiding the researcher's efforts. The setting in which this study took place was a Division I intercollegiate athletics program. The participant population resulted from a mixture of convenient, purposeful, and homogenous sampling. The data collection process was discussed, outlining the necessary fieldwork accurately revealing the experiences of Division I student athletes and the influence of servant leadership behavior espoused by their head coach. Plans for data analysis were also detailed which followed Lochmiller and Lester's (2017) Quantitative Data Analysis Cycle and Creswell's (2013) Data Analysis Spiral. The ethical considerations highlighted were important to the integrity of this study and remained at the forefront while research was conducted.

The researcher expected to conclude that coaches were already espousing some level of

servant leader behavior but may not have recognized its ability to influence the self-actualization of their student athletes. The expected outcome for the student athletes was that they desired more care and regard from their head coach on an individual level. The student athletes involved within this study demonstrated the ways in which their self-actualization mattered to them and how their head coach could create an environment in and out of practice that fostered peak experiences, helping them realize their needs for personal growth and fulfillment. The researcher strives for these presented findings to be the impetus behind governing bodies within intercollegiate athletics creating programs and services that perpetuate servant leadership and display its impact on the self-actualization of all individuals under its influence.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The intent of this study was to investigate the perceived level of servant leadership behavior present both in and out of the practice environment at XXX University. The researcher sought to determine, within a Division I context, how servant leader behavior is exemplified by the head coach and, in turn, how those behaviors impact student athlete growth towards self-actualization. Based on Maslow's (1965) categorization of self-actualization, the researcher hypothesized that in and out of the practice setting, the head coach's implementation of servant leader behavior creates an environment where the student athlete can have peak experiences, leading them to an understanding of their deeper intrinsic needs. A visual representation of this hypothesis is located in Figure 3. The researcher achieved this purpose by employing a transformative mixed-methods design, which required the researcher to consistently utilize a theoretical lens while collecting and analyzing data. The Servant Leadership Climate Survey was deployed to all student athletes at XXX University, fulfilling the quantitative requirement. The researcher utilized traditional ethnographic strategies to acquire her qualitative data, interviewing XXX University's women's soccer team specifically and observing the team during select practices and home games throughout the fall 2018 season.

The data from this study will be presented in a format that resulted from use of the bracketing method. As Fischer (2008) described, bracketing is a form of researcher engagement which encompasses a temporary putting aside of the researcher's beliefs, as well as the researcher's evolving comprehension of the data in light of a revised understanding of any aspect of the research topic. Results of data collection presented in this chapter based on the emerging themes reflected in the data according to each research question.

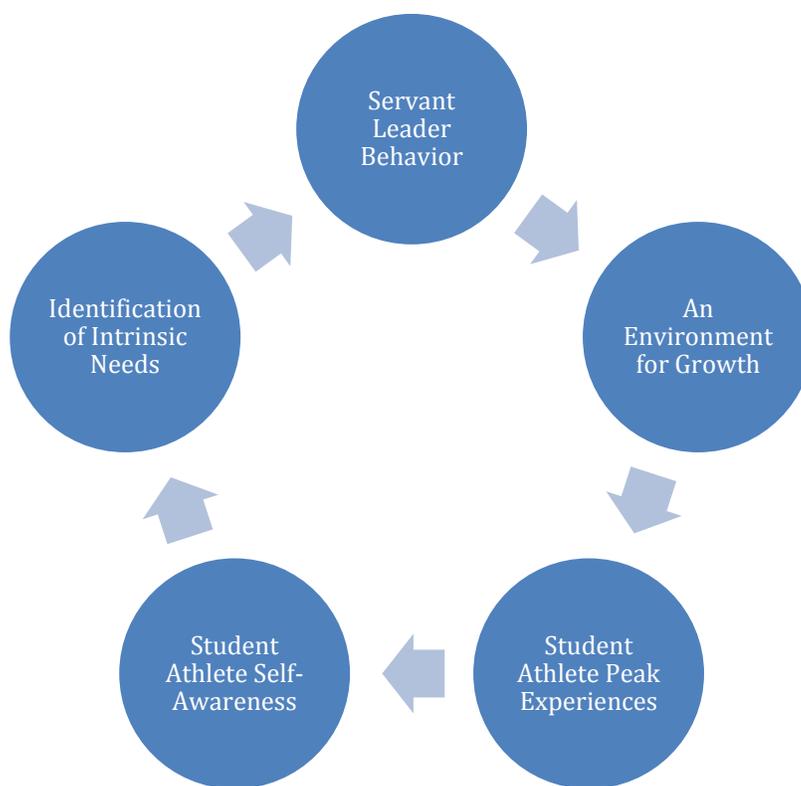


Figure 3. Hypothesis Detailing Servant Leadership in Division I Context

Participant Demographics

Seventy surveys were completed by student athletes at XXX University. Out of the 70 respondents, 64.29% (n= 45) were male and 35.71% (n= 25) were female. A range of class levels were represented amongst the student athlete population surveyed. The class breakdown included: 28.57% (n= 20) Seniors, 22.86% (n= 16) Juniors, 20% (n= 14) Sophomores, and 25.71% (n= 18) Freshmen. It should be noted, 2.86% (n= 2) respondents selected “other” as their class level. The researcher included this option to be inclusive of graduate level student athletes, as well as student athletes who may have redshirted at some point during their tenure as an intercollegiate student athlete. When a student athlete redshirts, their sport participation is delayed, lengthening their period of athletic eligibility. For example, a redshirt freshman is a sophomore academically, but in their first season of competitive athletic participation. The

ethnic breakdown of the survey respondents are as follows: 61.43% (n= 43) Caucasian, 17.14% (n= 12) Chicano/Latino/ Hispanic, 10% (n= 7) Asian/Pacific Islander, 5.71% (n= 4) Black/African American, 1.43% (n= 1) Native American, and 4.29% (n= 3) Other. Table 1 demonstrates the respondent demographic data which has been broken down by gender.

Table 1

Respondent Demographic Data

		Class Level		Ethnicity	
Demographic		Count	%	Count	%
Gender	Male (n= 45)	14 Freshmen	31.11%	3 Black/African American	6.67%
		9 Sophomore	20%	6 Chicano/Latino/Hispanic	13.33%
		11 Junior	24.44%	33 Caucasian	73.33%
		9 Senior	20%	2 Asian/Pacific Islander	4.44%
		2 Other	4.44%	1 Native American	2.22%
	Female (n= 25)	4 Freshmen	16%	1 Black/African American	4%
		5 Sophomore	20%	6 Chicano/Latino/Hispanic	24%
		5 Junior	20%	10 Caucasian	40%
		11 Senior	44%	5 Asian/Pacific Islander	20%
				3 Other	12%

Data According to the Research Questions

By employing Lochmiller and Lester's (2017) Quantitative Data Analysis Cycle and Creswell's (2013) Data Analysis Spiral and then utilizing the bracketing method, the researcher answered the research questions using sub-themes. Given the amount of data the study produced, the researcher used a logical sequence to easily guide readers. The following sections will reference each set of sub-themes by addressing the survey data first and then the interview and observation data. The categorization of these sub-themes into the study's larger overarching themes is displayed in chapter five.

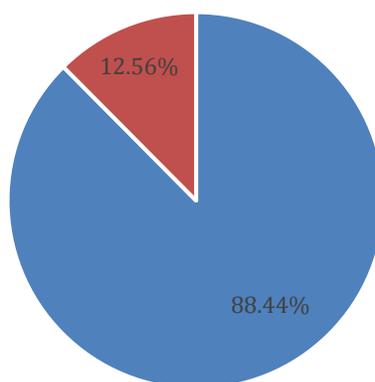
Research Question One

How is servant leadership exemplified by the head coach in and out of the practice environment in Division I intercollegiate athletics?

Head Coach Balance Between Hard and Soft: Quantitative

The Servant Leadership Climate Survey used a four-point Likert scale to gauge XXX University student athletes on their perceived level of servant leadership behavior espoused by their head coach during (in) and outside (out) of the practice environment. Response options were strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree. The instrument used statements that exemplified qualities of a servant leader head coach based on Patterson's (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership. Those seven constructs are agape love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. Student athletes were asked to think of their head coach in and out of the practice setting while considering various servant leader coach behaviors such as "Speaks positively about the capabilities and potential of student athletes" and "Believes that all student athletes can improve."

As displayed in Figure 4, overall responses exemplified the presence and recognition of servant leadership in and out of the practice environment. Out of 70 survey responses, an average of 88.44% student athletes answered somewhat agree or strongly agree to both the in practice and out of practice options on all 23 Likert Scale questions. This means, an average of 12.56% answered either somewhat disagree or strongly disagree to both the in practice and out of practice options on all 23 Likert scale questions. Although the data demonstrates the presence of servant leadership behaviors from head coaches at XXX University, variance in responses were present, alluding to preferences for head coach balance between harder and softer approaches. This variance was particularly evident on the very last question of the survey which asked, "Is there anything else you would like to say about your head coach?" giving student athletes the opportunity to provide additional feedback. Table 2 displays responses from this particular question.



■ Strongly Agree and Somewhat Agree ■ Strongly Disagree and Somewhat Disagree

Figure 4. Average of Overall Survey Responses Signifying Servant Leadership Presence (N= 70)

Table 2

Survey Responses Demonstrating Balance in Head Coach Approach

Survey Student Athlete Code	Belief Shared
SSA 1	“Our coach is not a good example of what it means to be a mentor or an inspiration.”
SSA 4	“My head coach is a great guy, but in my opinion, a poor coach. He is generous, and respectful, and I believe is a good role model for behavior off the course. I just don't believe he helps our team, or myself, improve athletically.”
SSA 7	“There’s kind of two sides to my head coach. Sometimes he is supportive and believes in you, other days he tells you that he’ll pull your scholarship and send you home in a heartbeat. It depends on the day, his mood, your performance in the workout, etc.”
SSA 12	“She’s a great coach but just expects perfection a lot.”
SSA 15	“After reading these questions, I came to realize that my coach is a great coach on and off the field and I need to appreciate the way he coaches.”
SSA 18	“As a head coach I think he has a lot of good qualities, but I would prefer he cared more about winning rather than off the field stuff. I think the team would agree they love him as a person but not a coach.”
SSA 25	“Our coach is encouraging and although is intense during practice, he has our best interest at heart. An attitude I have now that has changed since my freshman year.”
SSA 62	“He’s a great coach and I love playing for him. Genuinely wants you to succeed at the sport and also in life.”

Head Coach Balance Between Hard and Soft: Qualitative

The researcher interviewed a total of 21 subjects during the qualitative phase of the study and spent a total of 20 hours observing the women's soccer team at XXX University. The student athlete interview protocol consisted of seven open ended questions. The head coach's interview protocol consisted of eight open ended questions. Table 3 displays a breakdown of the hours the researcher spent observing practices and games over a four-week period.

When asked to explain the leadership qualities personally required from their head coach and how their head coach demonstrates servant leader qualities in the practice setting based on the servant leadership definition provided for them, student athlete responses highlighted a necessity for their head coach to exemplify a level of balance both in and out of the practice environment. As Table 4 demonstrates the contrast, student athletes preferred their head coach to care for them as a person and not just a student athlete. Additionally, subjects highlighted their preference for a head coach who possessed emotional balance and knows how and in what ways to leverage their practice intensity with a softer more positive approach.

Table 3

Practice and Game Observation Hours

Women's Soccer Team Observations	Practice		Home Games	
	Week	Hours	Week	Hours
	Week 1	2 Hours	Week 1	4 Hours
	Week 2	2 Hours	Week 2	4 Hours
	Week 3	2 Hours	Week 3	4 Hours
	Week 4	2 Hours		
	Total: 12 Hours		Total: 8 Hours	
Total Practice and Home Games: 20 Hours				

Table 4

Interview Responses Demonstrating Balance in Head Coach Approach

Student Athlete Code	Belief Shared
SA 3	“Definitely knowing that the coach trusts me as a player and also wants to help me get to my goals.”
SA 5	“I definitely need someone who's going to be like brutally honest.”
SA 11	“I feel like I struggle when I get yelled at. I think I'm more like pull me aside and tell me what I'm doing wrong. I don't know if I'm sensitive, but sometimes he'll call me out in front of everyone during practice... its fine to critique me, but can you critique me outside?”
SA 2	“Knowing when to not be so intense and not getting wrapped up in your emotions.”
SA 15	“The last few days he's just been yelling at me that I don't work hard enough. I know he's doing it because he cares even though it sounds negative. He does it because he cares. He shows qualities of hard work and like caring...I know he's using it as a way to motivate me but I'd rather have positivity.”
SA 20	“For my head coach, well I definitely want them to be someone who doesn't only care about winning and things like that, but also obviously cares about the girls and what they're going through. Not even just in soccer bust also outside. I don't mind a coach that's hard on you because I personally think that you need someone who's going to be hard on you to motivate you and push you.”

Head Coach Investment: Quantitative

The data provided in this section corresponds to the head coach's investment in a student athlete beyond their athletic identity. Figure 5 summarizes the in and out of practice responses to the following statements from the Servant Leadership Climate Survey: “Prioritizes personal growth of their student athletes,” “Recognizes the growth of student athletes over time versus current skills and abilities,” and “Encourages their student athletes to pursue their goals and dreams.” In comparing the in-practice option for all three statements the mode response was “strongly agree.” Of the student athlete respondents (N= 70), an average of 72.38% of student athletes strongly agreed that, in the practice environment, the head coach not only prioritized their personal growth but also recognized their growth over time while encouraging them to pursue their goals and dreams. The mode response for the out of practice option for all three

statements was also “strongly agree” as an average of 76.66% of student athletes provided this response. While the data surrounding these particular survey statements indicate a deeper head coach investment in and out of the practice setting, the difference between both averages is 4.28%. Although, the difference is slight, there is indication that outside of the practice setting, the student athlete respondents recognized more of a head coach investment than inside of the practice environment.

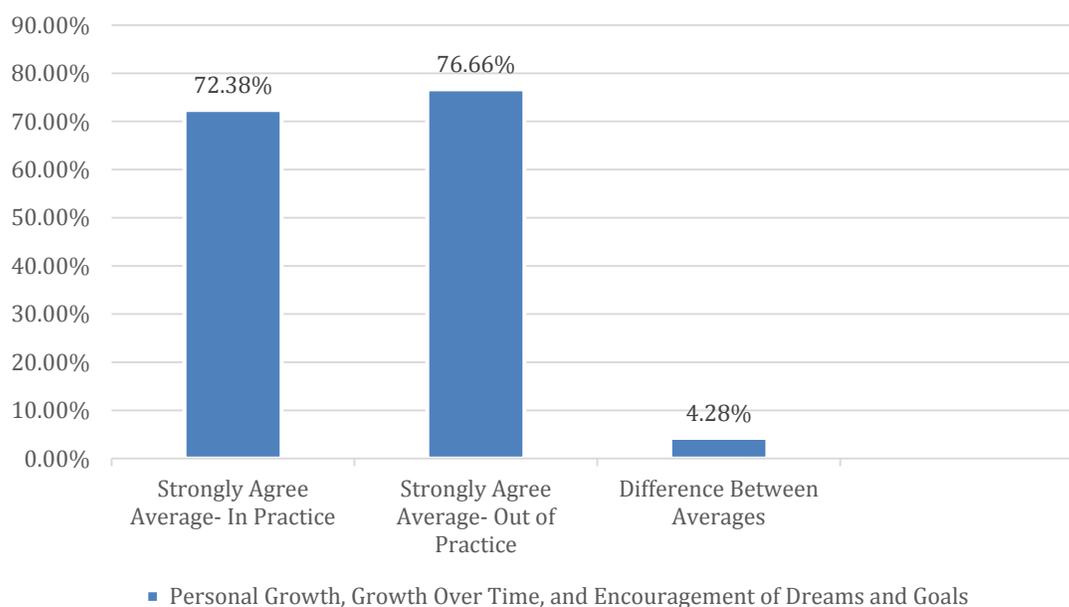


Figure 5. Average of Survey Responses Displaying Head Coach Investment (N= 70)

Head Coach Investment: Qualitative

Investment required by the head coach became evident through the women’s soccer team interview responses, as well as through their communication of needs which the head coach inadvertently accommodated by investing in the student athletes beyond athletics. As Table 5 displays, when asked how he balances supporting the growth and fulfillment of his student athletes while also focusing on the competitiveness of Division I athletics, the head coach simply emphasized the importance of being “all in” for every moment of his players’ lives. For the head coach, his stance on being “all in” required a genuine investment beyond the soccer field, as well

as having a pulse on what is going on with his players on a team and individual basis.

As Table 6 demonstrates, when asked what they required from their head coach, in consideration of their own value and self-worth, the women's soccer student athlete responses supported the head coach's stance on personal investment. Student athlete (SA) 18 emphasized "genuine care and interest" as a requirement from her head coach. SA 8 echoed the same sentiments by communicating her preference for a coach that "really cares about their players as people." In addition, SA 6 shared her preference for a coach who motivates her and knows her potential. SA 17, emphasized her need for a coach who leads by example.

Table 5

Head Coach Responses Supporting Head Coach Investment

Head Coach Code	Belief Shared
HC	"As a head coach, you have to be all in for every moment of their lives. You have to be all in with your team as people and as soccer players."
HC	"You have to have a good handle on what is going on with your players."

Table 6

Student Athlete Responses Supporting Head Coach Investment

Student Athlete Code	Belief Shared
SA 18	"I like a coach that shows a genuine care and interest for the student athletes. I think that our coach does a good job of trying to look after each individual player."
SA 8	"I require a coach that is confident and knows what they want and can understand each player. Someone who really cares about their players as people."
SA 6	"I for sure require a coach to motivate us, a coach who knows my potential. I also know my potential, so when I don't hit it, I do require my coach to hold me to that standard."
SA 17	"From a head coach, I need them to kind of lead by example, not just by saying things... Like my coach, he'll explain things to the girls, if someone doesn't understand it, he'll show it off and he can do it."

Intensity, Competitiveness, and the Desire to be Pushed: Quantitative

As Figures 6 and 7 demonstrate, feedback provided on the Servant Leadership Climate Survey demonstrated how XXX University student athletes recognized their coach's promotion of mental skills to cope with growth and performance in and out of the intense competitive Division I practice setting. The in and out of practice responses for this particular statement were identical. The raw percentages for both settings are as follows: 74.29% (n= 52) of student athletes answered strongly agree, 20% (n= 14) answered somewhat agree, and 5.71% (n= 4) answered somewhat disagree. No student athletes answered strongly disagree.

In addition, when asked to consider whether the head coach creates a sense of community and belonging among members of the team, responses for in and out of practice were almost identical. The raw data shows 68.57% (n= 48) of student athletes answered strongly agree and 21.43% (n= 15) answered somewhat agree for both settings. An average of 6.42% of student athletes answered somewhat agree and an average of 3.57% answered strongly disagree for both settings.

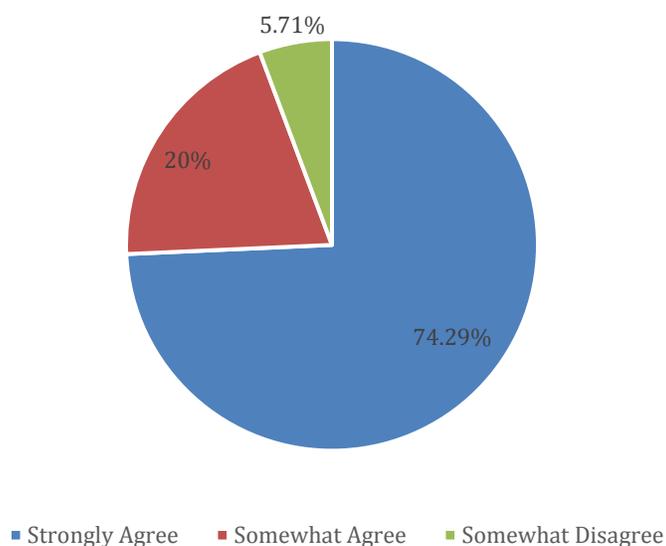


Figure 6. Survey Responses for Encouragement of Mental Skills in and out of Practice. (N= 70)

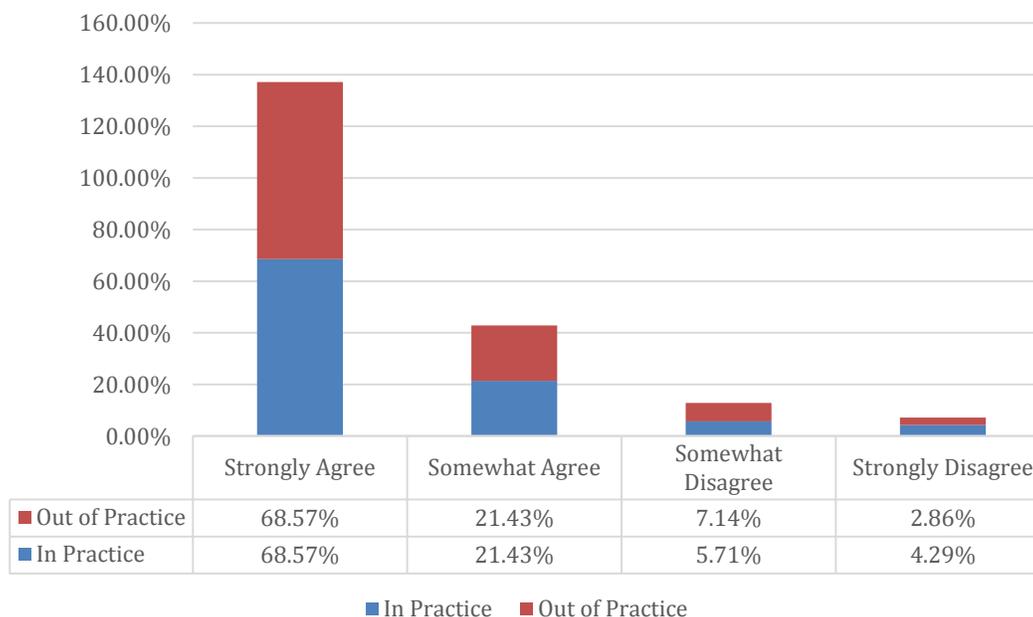


Figure 7. Survey Responses for Creation of Community in and out of Practice. (N= 70)

Intensity, Competitiveness, and the Desire to be Pushed: Qualitative

The head coach's understanding of what it means to leverage intensity and competitiveness with care and regard for his student athletes was apparent. When asked what he would consider to be good leadership behavior, the head coach communicated the importance of creating an "environment for good training and success." In response to the same question, he also emphasized the importance in "understanding who players are, as well as what makes them great and then never losing sight of that."

Student athlete understanding surrounding this same topic also demonstrated their reverence and expectation for intensity and the competitiveness inherent to Division I athletics. When asked about the environment that best teaches her about her potential for growth and success, student athlete (SA) 1 bluntly responded, "I like an environment that sets me up for success. Tell me straight up. Don't beat around the bush, tell me how it is, black and white. Tell me what I need to do, how to fix it." In addition, SA 9 answered, "I like to be pushed. I'm motivated by yelling and attention, constant correction." Similarly, SA 10 echoed the statements

made by her teammates stating, “The environments that teach me about my potential for growth and success are those when I’m being pushed to be better and being held accountable. Also an environment that provides feedback.” SA 5, 13, and 6 also communicated similar sentiments, as Table 7 displays.

Table 7

Student Athlete Responses Demonstrating Intensity and Competitiveness

Student Athlete Code	Belief Shared
SA 1	“I like an environment that sets me up for success. Tell me straight up. Don't beat around the bush, tell me how it is black and white. Tell me what I need to do, how to fix it.”
SA 9	“I like to be pushed. I’m motivated by yelling and attention, constant correction.”
SA 10	“The environments that teach me about my potential for growth and success are those when I’m being pushed to be better and being held accountable. Also an environment that provides feedback.”
SA 5	“Practice is definitely intense. Our coach wants you to go in there and compete. In practice our coach wants us to understand there is a job to do and a certain standard has to be met.”
SA 13	“I really like getting praised, but I also really need people to call me out on my bullsh*t sometimes. I need to not think I'm constantly doing great. I need to realize that I need to constantly be checked in.”
SA 20	“There is an internal pressure between the girls. If there are academically successful girls it definitely helps to like positively pressure your teammates to succeed as well.”

Identity Balance- Coach, Athlete, Team: Quantitative

Servant leadership in the Division I context is modeled through the head coach’s appreciation of student athlete individuality and through an understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses which inspires the student athlete to be themselves, heavily impacting the overall identity of the team. Regarding the survey statement “Appreciates individuality among student athletes,” XXX University student athletes felt that their head coach exemplified this more outside of practice than inside of practice. The raw numbers show that 60% (n= 42) of student athletes strongly agreed, 32.86% (n= 23) somewhat agreed, 7.14% (n= 5) answered

somewhat disagree, and 0% answered strongly disagree. Additionally, responding to the survey statement “Recognizes his or her own strengths and weaknesses,” student athletes also felt their head coach exemplified this more outside of practice, as an average of 44.29% answered strongly agree or somewhat agree. In relation to whether their head coach inspired student athletes to be themselves, student athletes again felt that this was more present out of the practice setting, as the raw number shows 63 (N= 70) student athletes selected strongly agree or somewhat agree.

Identity Balance- Coach, Athlete, Team: Qualitative

When asked had he ever experienced leadership that prioritizes the personal growth of followers, the women’s soccer head coach said he had not. The head coach also responded, due to the standards placed upon them, “You’re almost afraid to be yourself as a coach.” The researcher observed this hesitation from the head coach in the way he was interacting with his team. He was a lot tenser with his players when the researcher first entered the team’s culture. His patience was short and there was an obvious agitation. During the interview, the head coach also mentioned that he knew he “changed where he put his energy.” From observing, the head coach seemed to have a realization as time went on. It’s as if he sat back and reflected on his own deviation away from the coaching style he knew fit him best. The coach’s change influenced the student athletes, as the researcher witnessed a change in their spirits as well. From observing, it was clear that many of the players were frustrated, some in the team’s performance and some in the team’s divide between the upper classmen and lower classmen. Although, once the head coach made a return to his preferred style, not focusing so much on the standards placed upon him, his team won two games back to back and started to gel more as a unit off the field. The coach’s shift to be more in tune with himself certainly influenced the players, shifting the team’s overall identity and culture.

Creation of the Peak Experience Environment: Quantitative

Peak experiences are characterized by different factors that are specific to each student athlete individually. Nevertheless, an open environment where student athletes can have these experiences is most essential. The survey weighed in on the student athlete's perception asking them to consider the following statement about their head coach, "Creates an open team environment where thoughts and ideas may be shared." Responses show XXX University coaches demonstrate this both in and out of the practice setting, but it seemed that student athletes perceived their coach to demonstrate it slightly more outside of the practice setting, as there was an average difference of 3.57%. As figure 8 shows, the mode response for in practice and out of practice was strongly agree with an average of 67.86% of student athletes selecting this option. An average of 20% selected somewhat agree and an average of 7.85% chose somewhat disagree. Out of the 70 respondents, an average of 4.28% of student athletes selected strongly disagree for both settings.

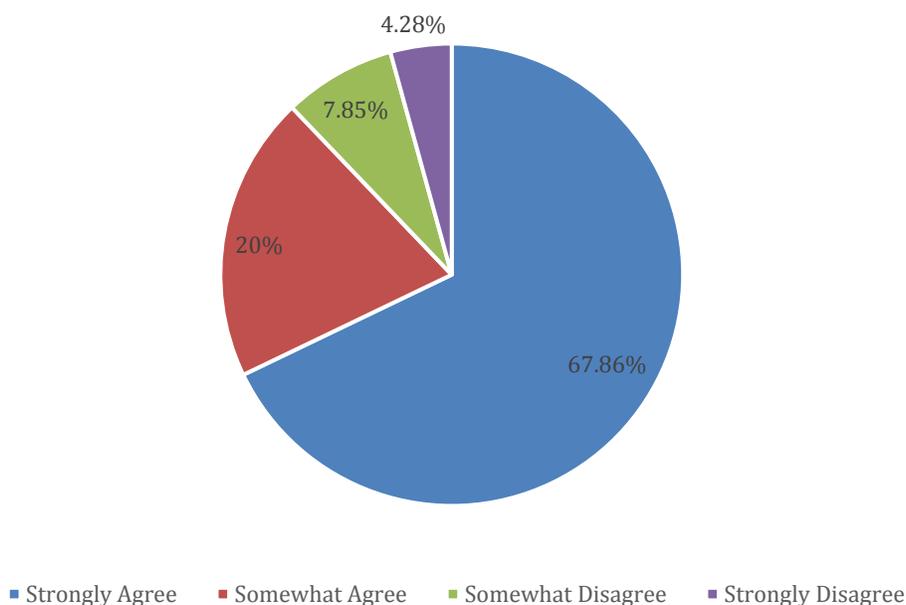


Figure 8. Mean Survey Responses for Open Team Environment in and out of Practice. (N= 70)

Creation of the Peak Experience Environment: Qualitative

The head coach's responsibility in creating the peak experience environment was evident in the women's soccer head coach interview responses. When asked to communicate what he learned about the needs of his student athletes in supporting their personal development, the head coach responded, "They don't necessarily always know their own needs as players." The interview then took a focus on self-actualization specifically and how the identification of those needs arise out of an environment fostering peak experiences. The head coach asserted, "It all starts with the head coach creating this environment. Whether the peak experiences are highs or lows, for the student athlete to learn what their needs are." In relation, when asked how his leadership style supports the student athletes' individual growth and fulfillment, the head coach made sure to highlight his personal belief in focusing more on people than just soccer alone. He also communicated the necessity to be explicit in differentiating between the person and the player when providing feedback and direction stating he had to be clear, "This is not about the person, it's about the player right now." Finally, regarding what he believed was his current leadership style also supporting his creation of a peak experience environment for student athletes, the head coach said he no longer avoids conflict and in no longer avoiding conflict, he could determine what works and what adds to an environment by subtraction.

Research Question Two

Do servant leadership behaviors espoused by the head coach affect student athletes' growth toward self-actualization?

The Division I Understanding: Quantitative

The Division I student athlete understanding comprises a knowing and an expectation as to what is inherently acceptable for the level of competition Division I athletics provides. As the

data in this study demonstrates, this understanding reveals itself in the way student athletes sacrifice, desire to work hard, desire to have their needs met, and regard honesty as a necessity. This understanding can be increased by a head coach's leadership that offers empathy, exercising the ability to understand the thoughts and feelings of another person. On the Servant Leadership Climate Survey, student athletes were asked to consider whether their head coach tries to understand their point of view. As figure 9 displays, for the in practice option, out of the 70 respondents, 50% (n= 35) answered strongly agree, 37.14% (n= 26) answered somewhat agree, 8.57% (n= 6) answered somewhat disagree, and 4.29% (n= 3) answered strongly disagree. For the out of practice option, 57.14% (n= 40) of student athletes answered strongly agree, 31.43% (22) answered somewhat agree, 8.57% (n= 6) answered somewhat disagree, and 2.86% (n= 2) answered strongly disagree.

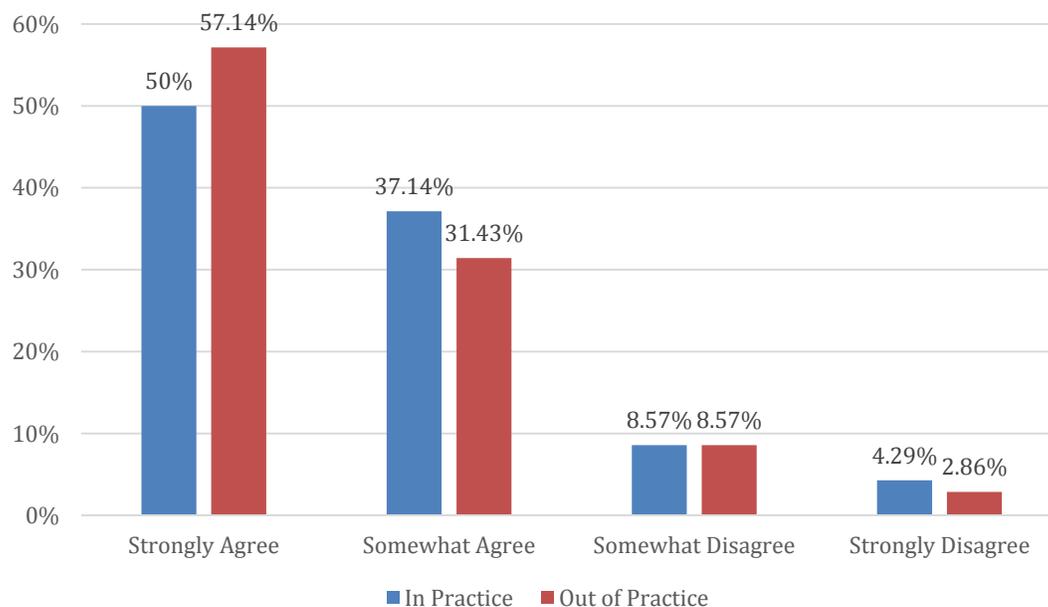


Figure 9. Survey Responses for Understanding Point of View in and out of Practice. (N= 70)

The Division I Understanding: Qualitative

As previously stated, the Division I understanding encompasses an acceptance and an expectation of what is inherent to the environment fostered by such a high level of competition. The interviews and observations provided the researcher a different perspective on this, as the women's soccer student athletes were very vocal and somewhat proud of their understanding. As displayed in Table 8, in response to being asked about the environment that teaches her about her potential for personal growth and success, student athlete (SA) 5 responded, "I think one that pushes you to compete." In response to the same question, SA 8 answered, "I thrive in an environment where I struggle first and stretch past my comfort zone. I also like when my coach uses failure as a tool to teach us." SA 8 also stated that working hard in and out of soccer was a guiding principle for her. In addition, SA 12 responded, "A high stakes environment where I have to rise to the occasion. Like to be comfortable with being uncomfortable, a make or break you type of environment."

Perfectly communicating the uniqueness of the Division I understanding, and unknowingly summarizing the sentiments of her teammates, SA 6 stated:

There's a level of understanding, like the sacrifice aspect. I think my teammates would probably agree. It's not being afraid of a job that on the outside is really scary to people, and I think Division one athletics is scary to people. Weight room at 6:00 AM and practice every day... I think most division one athletes would relate to that.

Table 8

Interview Responses Demonstrating the Division I Understanding

Student Athlete Code	Belief Shared
	In response to what environment best teaches her about her potential for personal growth and success:
SA 5	“I think one that pushes you to compete.”
SA 8	“I thrive in an environment where I struggle first and stretch past my comfort zone. I also like when my coach uses failure as a tool to teach us.”
SA 12	“A high stakes environment where I have to rise to the occasion. Like to be comfortable with being uncomfortable, a make or break you type of environment.”
SA 6	“There’s a level of understanding, like the sacrifice aspect. I think my teammates would probably agree. It’s not being afraid of a job that on the outside is really scary to people, and I think Division one athletics is scary to people. Weight room at 6:00 AM and practice every day... I think most division one athletes would relate to that.”

Transferable Lessons: Quantitative

The qualitative question on the Servant Leadership Climate Survey, asking student athletes, “Is there anything else you would like to say about your head coach?” provided a few telling answers as to how their head coach’s leadership impacted their overall life. From these responses, as Table 9 demonstrates, the researcher was able to gather that the transferable lessons provided by their head coach’s leadership were, not only valued by the student athletes at XXX University but were also thought provoking and life changing. Survey student athlete (SSA) 48 stated, “He does a great job of making us not only the best baseball players, but as well he makes us the best people and shapes us into successful students, athletes, and people in general.” SSA 58 said, “Awesome Coaching Staff. They want to see us all be successful on the field and as men.” SSA 65 also stated, “He is the best coach I’ve ever had and has heavily impacted my life for the better.” Additionally, SSA 68 stated, “This program is run much more efficiently and

practically. There is an element of catering towards the athletes' lives beyond the field." Further demonstrating this value in the transferable lessons provided by their head coach's leadership, SSA 69 stated:

He looks past developing the student athlete and really cares about the players as people.

He values how he will impact other lives in the future and this care goes past sports. He is sincere about helping less fortunate people and is an excellent leader.

Table 9

Survey Responses Demonstrating the Value in Transferable Lessons

Survey Student Athlete Code	Belief Shared
SSA 48	"He does a great job of making us not only the best baseball players, but as well he makes us the best people and shapes us into successful students, athletes, and people in general."
SSA 58	"Awesome Coaching Staff. They want to see us all be successful on the field and as men."
SSA 65	"He is the best coach I've ever had and has heavily impacted my life for the better."
SSA 68	"This program is run much more efficiently and practically. There is an element of catering towards the athletes' lives beyond the field."
SSA 69	"He looks past developing the student athlete and really cares about the players as people. He values how he will impact other lives in the future and this care goes past sports. He is sincere about helping less fortunate people and is an excellent leader."

Transferable Lessons: Qualitative

The value and recognition the competitive women's soccer student athletes held for transferable lessons demonstrated how lessons from soccer were applied to their personal life and how lessons learned outside of soccer could apply to their learning within soccer. When asked how realizations regarding their own personal growth and success guide them outside of the practice setting, the student athletes were honest and intentional in providing a response as Table 10 shows. Student athlete (SA) 14 responded:

Thinking positive and knowing that things are going to turn out well for yourself and for others also. I think just how the attitude and discipline you bring onto the field each morning will also translate to the classroom. How you are in your social life, your family life in any aspect of your life.

SA 20 stated:

I think that it has a lot to do with my work ethic and in my personal life and the effort I put into everything. Especially like leadership, it's actually a big topic in my household... If I mess up or make a mistake, I just want to be the best that I can be. It's kind of just like instilled in me. It's given me a lot of success, not only on the field but also off, like in the classroom.

In addition, SA 13 responded:

Things that make me really good in film are because of soccer. In my position on the field, I'm always supposed to dictate and I'm always supposed to speak my point of view and tell people what's going on. And that helped me a lot in film because if you're a director you need to be able to do the exact same thing.

The very last question during the semi-structured interviews asked the student athletes to consider the leadership strategies they would use if they were a head coach. SA 16 said:

If I was head coach I would probably try to be relatable. I just think that forms a bond, a very strong bond. I would share my experiences because I've been playing since I was 5. I think when you share that with your team it really does just form a bond and I think it just kind of brings everyone together.

SA 19 provided invaluable insight, which was inspiring, as she had not played soccer as long as some of her teammates and was still able to play for a Division I program. She stated:

The characteristics I would use is just never give up. Like if you ever have a goal, strive for it. I started playing soccer when I was 13, so I started really late. You know, these girls have been playing since they were four years old. I just never gave up. I just kept pushing and I kept working really hard.

Table 10

Interview Responses Demonstrating the Value in Transferable Lessons

Student Athlete Code	Belief Shared
SA 14	“Thinking positive and knowing that things are going to turn out well for yourself and for others also. I think just how the attitude and discipline you bring onto the field each morning will also translate to the classroom. How you are in your social life, your family life in any aspect of your life.”
SA 20	“I think that it has a lot to do with my work ethic and in my personal life and the effort I put into everything. Especially like leadership, it’s actually a big topic in my household... If I mess up or make a mistake, I just want to be the best that I can be. It’s kind of just like instilled in me. It’s given me a lot of success, not only on the field but also off, like in the classroom.
SA 13	“Things that make me really good in film are because of soccer. In my position on the field, I’m always supposed to dictate and I’m always supposed to speak my point of view and tell people what’s going on. And that helped me a lot in film because if you’re a director you need to be able to do the exact same thing.”
SA 16	“If I was head coach I would probably try to be relatable. I just think that forms a bond, a very strong bond. I would share my experiences because I’ve been playing since I was 5. I think when you share that with your team it really does just form a bond and I think it just kind of brings everyone together.”
SA 19	“The characteristics I would use is just never give up. Like if you ever have a goal, strive for it. I started playing soccer when I was 13, so I started really late. You know, these girls have been playing since they were four years old. I just never gave up. I just kept pushing and I kept working really hard.”

Positive Energy and the Value in Recognition: Quantitative

The perpetuation of positive energy in the team environment is derived out of the head coach’s personal understanding of the ways in which their actions affect their student athletes. When asked to consider whether their head coach “Understands the impact of his/her actions on student athletes’ feelings,” XXX University student athletes identified with this more outside of the practice setting. Out of 70 respondents, an average of 42.14% of student athletes selected

either strongly agree or somewhat agree for the out of practice option. Alternatively, an average of 35% of student athletes answered strongly agree or somewhat agree for the in practice option.

Positive Energy and the Value in Recognition: Qualitative

During the interviews, when it came to recalling instances in the practice setting where they felt valued because of their head coach's leadership, the student athletes' body language changed. The radiation of positive feelings from remembering these experiences was very inspiring to witness. In recalling a specific incident, shown in Table 11, student athlete (SA) 15 stated, "I'll make a decent save and he'll be like good job. Like just those words alone make me feel so happy. I'm like, I did it. I did succeed." This same student athlete referenced another time where she was named conference player of the week and the head coach did not verbally express his recognition like her teammates and assistant coaches. Rather, he only gave the student athlete two thumbs up during practice that day. Although a small gesture of recognition to the student athlete it meant everything, she stated "I don't know why his opinion matters so much more." SA 17 also communicated:

The other day in practice he was using examples of what makes good leaders and followers. Even though I can't play, I've just been giving the team water during games. So he pointed me out to everyone and that really made me feel a lot better because I feel like sometimes I'm not doing much since I'm not playing.

Echoing the same sentiments, highlighting her value for recognition given by her head coach, SA 20 said her coach was good at giving credit where credit is due. She stated:

He doesn't only focus on the technical ability, you know like who made this pass or shot. He focuses a lot on effort and accountability and things like that. And so I personally feel valued when he acknowledges that and he's positive about it.

What also became evident during the interviews were the student athletes' appreciation for one on one recognition, as well as how certain acts demonstrate their head coach's trust in his players. Multiple student athletes expressed their satisfaction when their head coach made an effort to pull them aside for individualized time and attention. In sharing how her head coach's leadership makes her feel valued in the practice environment, SA 6 shared, "Taking you out from a larger group or something, giving you that time and attention." SA 10 shared how she felt her coach trusted her, stating "He'll choose specific players to do set pieces which are crucial parts of the game. This made me feel valued because it showed he could trust me with this part of the game."

Table 11

Interview Responses Demonstrating the Positive Energy in Recognition

Student Athlete Code	Belief Shared
SA 15	"I'll make a decent save and he'll be like good job. Like just those words alone make me feel so happy. I'm like, I did it. I did succeed."
SA 17	"The other day in practice he was using examples of what makes good leaders and followers. Even though I can't play, I've just been giving the team water during games. So he pointed me out to everyone and that really made me feel a lot better because I feel like sometimes I'm not doing much since I'm not playing."
SA 20	"He doesn't only focus on the technical ability, you know like who made this pass or shot. He focuses a lot on effort and accountability and things like that. And so I personally feel valued when he acknowledges that and he's positive about it."
SA 6	"Taking you out from a larger group or something, giving you that time and attention."
SA 10	"He'll choose specific players to do set pieces which are crucial parts of the game. This made me feel valued because it showed he could trust me with this part of the game."

Running Towards Success or Running from Failure: Quantitative

As the researcher began to collect data, she immediately recognized the dichotomy in failure amongst the student athletes, as well as the head coach's role in affecting how student

athletes perceived failure. Were they running from failure or running towards success? The Servant Leadership Climate Survey asked student athletes to consider the degree to which their head coach “Encourages student athletes to learn from experience.” As Figure 10 displays, the difference in responses between the in practice and out of practice option was very slight and demonstrated that this encouragement was undoubtedly present in both environments. For the in practice option, out of 70 student athlete respondents, 81.43% (n= 57) answered strongly agree, 14.29% (n= 10) answered somewhat agree, 4.29% (n= 3) answered somewhat disagree, and 0% answered strongly disagree. For the out of practice option, 84.29% (n= 59) of student athletes answered strongly agree, 11.43% (n= 8) answered somewhat agree, 4.29% (n= 3) answered somewhat disagree, and 0% answered strongly disagree.

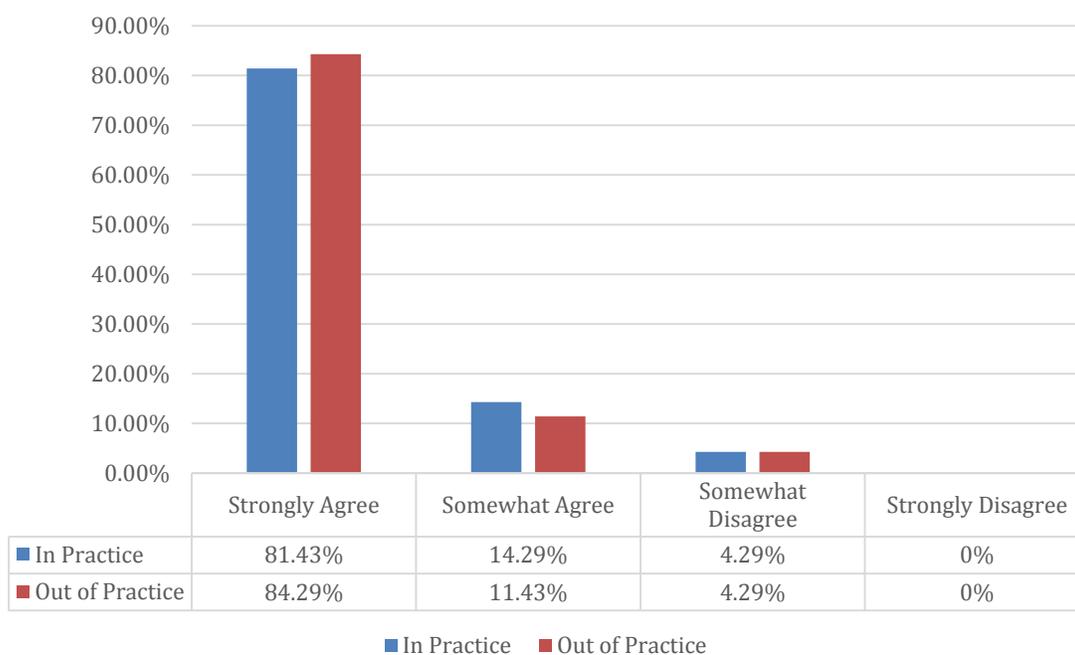


Figure 10. Survey Responses for Learning from Experience in and out of Practice. (N= 70)

Running Towards Success or Running from Failure: Qualitative

The most telling pieces demonstrating the role of the head coach in how XXX University student athletes perceived failure, came in interviewing the head coach, as well as in observing the

women's soccer practices. In answering how he would describe his style of leadership at the time, the topic of fear surfaced. The head coach went on to talk about his personal views on fear and how he tried to communicate that same message to his team. He stated, "Fear is not always a bad thing. Fear can't drive you as player, but it must create action." This one statement was extremely insightful, as it prompted the researcher to reflect back on the observations that had taken place where she witnessed the head coach's frustration with his players taking breaks- not getting back into position quick enough after failing to stop the ball or make a big play. The head coach was very adamant in stressing this to his players and it seemed to be a point of contention at one point. Although, the researcher witnessed a turning point, almost as if the student athletes truly began to understand how failure was controlling them and not the other way around. The head coach's views on failure creating action started to manifest in the practice setting, fostering an urgency within the team to run towards success and not from failure.

Summary

The significance of the data presented in chapter four demonstrate the nuances of servant leader behavior within the Division I intercollegiate athletics context. 70 student athletes at XXX University provided feedback on the Servant Leadership Climate Survey, fulfilling the qualitative portion of the mixed-methods study. The qualitative data reflected feedback garnered from 20 women's soccer players at XXX University and their head coach through individual semi-structured interviews. In addition, impressions from the researcher's observation efforts were also included. The researcher's data collection strategies enabled her to report findings that provided an overall perspective, as well as a more intimate perspective on the culture and state of head coach servant leadership within XXX University Athletics and how the cultivation of self-actualization in the student athletes under study was impacted.

As demonstrated in the results, there was certainly a presence of servant leadership behavior espoused by XXX University head coaches and a recognition of such behavior by the student athletes. A reverence for head coach investment beyond the game was reflected, as well as the student athletes' need for deeper investment. Nevertheless, a need for head coach balance was also reflected, as there was variance in student athlete preferences between softer and harder approaches. Not all student athlete participants required a deeper investment outside of practice and preferred their head coach focus more on sport specific aspects. The qualitative data showed that servant leader behavior was also exemplified by the head coach's ability to be in tune with themselves and their players. This then allowed the head coach to create an environment that enabled the student athletes to have experiences that further educated them on their personal needs for growth and development.

The understanding and acceptance exemplified by the student athletes regarding the elements inherent to the Division I context and experience was also demonstrated within the data. This emergence gave way to a comprehension surrounding the values of the competitors under study and their desire for hard work, competitiveness, intensity, and sacrifice. The student athletes showed their knowledge of how they could use experiences gained within their sport as transferable lessons to be applied outside of sport and vice versa. Ultimately, chapter four reflects a unique set of themes and sub-themes that answer the study's two overarching questions: 1. How is servant leadership exemplified by the head coach in and out of the practice environment in Division I intercollegiate athletics? and 2. Do servant leadership behaviors espoused by the head coach affect student athletes' growth toward self-actualization?

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In the 1990's, a father of four communicated to all his children—three boys and one girl—that anything was possible. He was highly committed to provide his children with a better childhood experience than his own and epitomized the definition of hard work and dedication. The father began investing in his boys' talent as they grew older and they began to exemplify superior athletic skill. He coached his boys in their sport endeavors, and with the support of his wife, instilled in them the power of sportsmanship, integrity, and resiliency. The father consistently stressed academic excellence and asserted that education took precedence over their participation in athletics.

As the children grew older, their dreams began to manifest. The father taught himself what was necessary for each of his boys to obtain an athletic scholarship to college. He purchased a high-quality camcorder and began recording game film. He purchased a book, listing every single intercollegiate athletics department in the United States. The father created profiles for his children which highlighted their athletic talents as well as their academic successes. He was the number one fan for each of his children. The father's style was a unique mix of love and belief in their capacity coupled with the reality that if everything in life was supposed to be easy, then everyone would attain the same level of success.

Each boy received an athletic scholarship to college during his senior year of high school. In 2003, 2005, and 2009, each son realized a long-awaited dream as they signed their letters of intent, full of pride and admiration for their father's unwavering investment. As move-in day approached, the father always communicated the same message: a college degree was the ultimate goal. Each of the three boys finished college as regular students without the athlete

moniker, as they had stopped playing their sport due to poor head coach leadership. They were equipped with the realization that there was far more life beyond the athlete identity they embodied for so long. Each boy began to delve deeper into what they truly wanted out of life with their mother and father right by their side.

All three boys similarly endured a challenging intercollegiate athletics experience. Facing adversity within sport is almost inevitable. Sadly, however, numerous interactions with coaches that leave an athlete questioning their worth should not be a part of the journey. They were constantly compared to their peers, made to feel inferior in some instances, and received no motivation to explore who they were outside of their sport. There was no investment into making the athlete all that they could become. There was untapped potential left in each athlete that could have been developed. This sad scenario is a familiar one for far too many intercollegiate athletes today.

The three athletes in the aforementioned story are brothers to the researcher. As a sibling, it was hard to witness her brothers' frustration in possessing a passion for their sport as collegiate athletes but suffering under less than exemplary leadership. As conveyed by Dweck (2015), the coaches failed to cultivate a context for growth that valued the development of one's ability over time. Instead, each coach created an environment that was solely focused on rewarding current ability. It seemed that each coach fell into the destructive habit of perpetuating old leadership and coaching paradigms in newer contexts, as Betts (1992) conveyed. Branch (1990) asserted, athletic departments have become successful through task and goal accomplishment, negating the cultivation of interpersonal relationships. This dynamic has unfortunately permeated athletic departments and ultimately influenced the coach-student athlete relationship.

The familial observations have caused the researcher to become a catalyst in advocating for genuine interpersonal investment within intercollegiate athletics. By employing servant leadership principles, athletic departments will witness a rise in individuals that are accepting of themselves, have realized their potential, and are ready to conquer the world beyond sport. Now, more than ever, student athletes need to find sustainable methods that will allow them to nurture lifelong relationships, supporting who they are at their core. The athletic leader, with whom they often spend the most time with, should model leadership qualities to the athlete that inspire them to explore their intricacies and support others in doing the same. Not every student athlete is fortunate enough to grow up with parents who invest in the dreams of their children. It is this dream that carries the student athlete through their formative years. It is this dream that sometimes becomes a dream deferred when the athlete is met with the staunch reality of a coach who only vested in them as an athlete and not as a whole person.

The research questions framing this study correlate to the experiences of the researcher's three brothers, as the journey of a young athlete is often heavily shaped positively or negatively by interactions with their head coach. As the data demonstrated, the slightest recognition and the slightest impression of a deeper investment instills confidence in an athlete and allows them to trust that their head coach has their best interest in mind in and out of the practice setting. While this story is indeed personal to the researcher, it depicts a larger narrative within intercollegiate athletics that is inadvertently reinforced through leadership practices that are embedded into the culture of sport in America. Additionally, in referencing the communication with NCAA President, Mark Emmert from chapter one, such stories demonstrate the necessity in making conclusions on exactly how the NCAA can aid student athletes in their self-actualization through innovative programs and services. The following discussion of themes is in accordance with the

research questions and provides insight that will hopefully contribute to the incorporation of more impactful leadership paradigms within intercollegiate athletics.

Discussion of the Themes According to the Research Questions

The following information will highlight the researcher's conclusions on the data presented in chapter four. The discussion of themes corresponds to each research question and is comprised of the sub-themes given in the previous chapter. To further validate the researcher's conclusions, it should be noted that member checking was employed. In all cases, each member from the XXX University women's soccer team the researcher contacted was in agreement with the following themes and felt the researcher accurately captured their sentiments.

Research Question One

Theme One: Intricacies of Care and Regard in and out of Practice

In addressing how servant leadership is exemplified by Division I head coaches in and out of the practice setting, through the data, the researcher found that it is an intricate process. Intricate, not because head coaches are incapable of espousing servant leader behaviors, but intricate because it is often a set of behaviors that require the head coach to be emotionally balanced and in tune with themselves, as well as their student athletes. The complexity of this process witnessed by the researcher during the observation period was often exposed in a convoluted demonstration of the care and regard the head coach possessed for his student athletes.

Head Coach Balance between Hard and Soft

Within this intricate process of care and regard both in and out of practice, the idea of head coach balance was displayed almost immediately. Overall, the Servant Leadership Climate Survey demonstrated an average of 88.44% of the student athlete respondents answered either

somewhat agree or strongly agree to the in practice and out of practice option for all 23 Likert Scale questions. While this demonstrated to the researcher that student athletes at XXX University felt their head coach espoused servant leader behavior, what was equally as telling were the interview responses and the qualitative survey responses demonstrating the variance in student athlete preferences between their head coach's harder and softer approaches. This was also evident during the researcher's observation period. Although it was apparent that the head coach of XXX University's women's soccer team certainly cared about his student athletes on and off the field, yelling and high intensity was almost inevitable during practice. Balance in his approach was required by the head coach in his follow-up with the student athletes after practice. On most occasions he took his time to explain to the student athletes what they did wrong. Outside of practice he had an open-door policy where most of his players knew they could go to him with any type of issue.

Based on the student athlete feedback, care and regard on the head coach's behalf was certainly present, but its level of effectiveness depended on their coach's level of self-awareness, understanding of student athletes' needs, and balance between preferences of harder and softer approaches. Some student athletes preferred to be yelled at to be motivated or preferred brutal honesty, whereas other student athletes preferred a positive, softer approach where trust could truly be created. For example, student athlete (SA) 20 stated, "I don't mind a coach that's hard on you because I personally think that you need someone who's going to be hard on you to motivate you and push you." In contrast, demonstrating an awareness of her coach's more aggressive approach and her preference for a softer approach, SA 15 stated, "I know he's using it as a way to motivate me, but I'd rather have positivity." In either case, it was evident that the student athletes, especially the women's soccer team, understood that their head coach cared about them

even if they did not agree with the approach. Perfectly summing up this notion, survey student athlete 25 wrote, “Our coach is encouraging and although is intense during practice, he has our best interest at heart. An attitude I have now that has changed since my freshman year.”

Head Coach Investment

The level of investment necessary by head coaches in the Division I environment at XXX University was demonstrated through the communication of needs by participants. The qualitative data was paramount in supporting the survey data, as it gave life to the numbers. While the survey feedback was comprised of XXX University student athletes from various teams, the overall sentiments were similar when it came to addressing their head coach’s ability to demonstrate servant leadership through prioritizing their growth, recognizing growth over time and not just current ability, as well as encouraging them to pursue their goals and dreams. The qualitative feedback gained from the women’s soccer participants allowed the researcher to gain a more in-depth perspective on what it means for a head coach to serve their student athletes by investing in their needs in and out of practice. It was evident that all of the women’s soccer student athletes knew their head coach cared about them. When asked what type of leadership qualities they required from their head coach, many of them referenced the current head coach’s ability to tend to off the field needs as one of his strongest leadership qualities. The student athletes’ recognition of this ability was supported by the head coach’s statements on being “all in,” as he stated, “As a head coach, you have to be all in for every moment of their lives. You have to be all in with your team as people and as soccer players.” In turn, the head coach’s stance created a trickledown effect where the student athletes looked after one another in a similar way and held each other accountable when it came to on the field performance and off the field personal achievements. This environment was undoubtedly influenced by the head

coach. The researcher supports Dweck's (2015) assertion regarding student psychology, as she states, "we need to understand much more about contexts that foster beliefs and goals that create growth" (p. 244). By taking the time to ask student athletes what they require from a head coach, the researcher hopes that needs continue to be accommodated in such a way that student athletes feel heard and cared for beyond their athletic identity.

Ultimately, the level of head coach investment boils down to willingness. Willingness from student athletes in communicating their needs and a willingness from the head coach to listen, take initiative, and help wherever possible. Willingness alone could make all the difference when it comes to improving the intercollegiate student athlete experience. This willingness is exemplified in the way student athletes are strengthened and empowered and the degree to which the leader, as examined by Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser (2007), reinforces a culture of collaboration, initiative, and involvement. From the survey and interview data, it is evident that student athletes want to be invested in and they recognize when a head coach puts a personal touch on their leadership, supporting and empowering the student athlete in personal growth and in maximizing their potential.

Intensity, Competitiveness, and the Desire to be Pushed

The preferred leadership of Division I and Division II student athletes, according to Beam (2001) stated, "It appears coaches should consider student-athletes' needs, desires, and abilities as well as organization rules, regulations, and goals in determining actual behavior" (p. 131). Beam's assertion supports the researcher's findings, in the current study, in that the recognized inherent intensity and competitiveness of Division I intercollegiate athletics is somewhat revered by student athletes and head coaches. As the survey data demonstrated, even in the midst of a competitive environment, 68.57% of the student athletes surveyed strongly agreed that their head

coach created community and a sense of belonging within their team. The head coach's consideration of needs in this respect allows student athletes to build comradery within their team while also striving to be competitors at the highest level. Additionally, 74.29% of student athletes surveyed strongly agreed that XXX University head coaches encouraged the use of mental skills both in and out of the practice environment. This encouragement can be viewed as a head coach's way of maximizing the student athlete's potential. While some may argue that the head coach's push for the use of mental skills enhance performance, therefore increasing the likelihood of winning games, Rieke, Hammermeister, and Chase (2008) concluded that the employment of servant leader qualities inadvertently produces student athletes with more intrinsic motivation and a higher psychological profile for sport. In turn, this helps the student athlete understand themselves and their capabilities on a deeper level, aiding in their overall growth and fulfillment. As the women's soccer head coach asserted, "It is good leadership to create an environment that is good for training and for success." The creation of this environment comes in serving one's student athletes, recognizing the pressures and challenges of the Division I setting and striving to advocate for all services that will help student athletes on and off of the field. The researcher witnessed the women's soccer head coach espouse servant leader qualities by entrusting responsibility to his student athletes. He made it a point to continuously push his players by keeping leadership a focal point of their team culture. He deemed the upperclassmen as leaders with a responsibility to teach and model good behavior to the freshmen. He allowed the student athletes to meet by themselves before the game, demonstrating his belief in their capability to perpetuate a team culture that derives out of their own desire to be successful. While not every student athlete could handle the responsibility of being a team leader, the intensity and competitiveness of the environment allowed many of the players to dig deeper,

finding an appreciation, not only for the environment, but also for their preference for the environment, and their ability to help one another grow from it all.

Theme Two: Servant Leadership in the Division I Context

The Identity Balance-Coach, Athlete, Team

Servant leadership in the Division I context requires a balance in identity. As the researcher observed, once the women's soccer head coach returned to a coaching style that was true to who he was as a person, it eased much of the tension within the overall team culture. He was able to restore the balance of his own identity within the boundaries of the expectations placed on him as head coach. It is this type of balance that is experienced by the head coach and student athletes which impacts the team's overall identity. It impacts the way the head coach carries themselves, interacts with their student athletes, handles defeat, as well as their ability to be in tune with themselves. What was most evident from the data was that student athletes felt inspired to be themselves by their head coach more outside of practice. In addition, student athletes felt their head coach recognized their own strengths and weaknesses more outside of practice as well. The women's soccer head coach referenced the challenge in being himself because of the standards and expectations placed on him. His comments were thought provoking and gave insight as to why the student athlete survey data favored the out of practice environment. At the Division I level, head coaches are tasked with building and maintaining winning programs. They must work within the expectations their athletic department has placed on them while complying with conference and NCAA rules. A head coach must also take into consideration what other programs are doing and adjust accordingly if they want to be considered a just opponent. This refers back to DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) concept regarding the isomorphic pressure within athletic organizations and how this pressure is

perpetuated through cultural expectations that have the potential to become hegemonic. This pressure can cause less of a personal investment within the practice environment, impacting team identity in the long run and causing head coaches to focus more on meeting standards of the game rather than the impact they're having on student athletes.

Viewing the identity balance as central to the identity growth of student athletes and the overall team is important, as it can influence the in practice flow. As the women's soccer head coach modeled, a head coach in tune with themselves creates a team culture that prioritizes winning and fulfillment simultaneously. He stated, "They commit their team to a winning mentality first and the game second." Winning and personal fulfillment, as well as true growth, can exist for all in practice if head coaches can move beyond the standards placed upon them and stay true to their own identity as an individual in the way they do outside of practice. The head coach must remain true to the vision of the team and his/her personal vision as an integral component to the team's culture. Per Patterson (2003), vision is one of the seven constructs signifying the presence of servant leadership. Servant leadership in the Division I context requires head coach vision in seeing how the identity balance is not only a cycle, but also a domino effect that impacts student athletes personally and the overall team.

Creation of the Peak Experience Environment

As the survey data shows, an average of 67.86% of XXX University student athletes surveyed strongly agreed that their head coach created an open environment for thoughts and ideas to be shared in and out of practice. This is very important, as the women's soccer head coach openly demonstrated his responsibility in creating a peak experience environment for student athletes, which ultimately is an open environment. Although the student athlete participants seem to be very clear in their expectations of a head coach and how they prefer to be

led, the head coach's perception on student athletes not always being able to identify what their needs are is quite telling. There is a level of dependency within the student athlete-coach relationship because the student athlete looks to their head coach for reinforcement and correction. The dynamic is comprised of highs and lows, addition and subtraction, addressing what might not be working which can cause conflict, performance issues, personal issues, and a myriad of other nuances. For the women's soccer head coach to understand this dynamic and be deliberate in differentiating between conversational contexts, student athlete vs. individual, speaks to the degree to which he seeks to serve his players. The display of service and a moral love to do the right thing for his players overtly demonstrates his propensity for effectiveness as a servant leader.

An open environment is an environment that can support change and growth. In changing and growing, all inhabitants of that environment begin to align with their needs and find personal fulfillment. This is servant leadership in action. It is not a perfect leadership, but one that arises out of sacrifice and altruism. While the researcher witnessed the struggles of the women's soccer team in coming together as a team, what was always evident was the warmth of the head coach's care which often was his strength and his weakness. Ultimately, what mattered most was that this care existed. Servant leadership qualities were certainly present, as well as an environment for the student athletes to be open, learn from their mistakes, and to get back up each time they fell with a new understanding of what they needed to grow and get better.

Research Question Two

Theme Three: The Values of a Competitor

The Division I Understanding

Division I athletics presents an environment unlike any other. To many, it is a sacrifice, a

day in and day out kind of endeavor. As the researcher observed, she began to realize that the Division I student athletes under study willingly participated in a lifestyle that is the epitome of sacrifice. These student athletes forgo a traditional collegiate experience for one that is marked by potential injury, early morning training, tough practices, eating on the go, tight schedules, defeat, and a high level of obligation to more than just themselves in a quest to be considered a valued competitor. With this realization in mind, the researcher became even clearer on what the Division I understanding truly is, as there was a sense of maturity surrounding the student athletes and their decision. It is as if they knew their sacrifices would open up doors for them in the future, both in and out of sport. These student athletes were somewhat mindful and aware. They were propelled by this, whether they knew it or not and as, per the survey data, this is where the importance of an empathetic head coach comes into play. This is a head coach that can see the student athlete's point of view and in recognizing the sacrifice can say to their team, "I see you. I see the path you've chosen for yourself as a college student. How can I be my best and understand you better in order for you to continue to flourish?" The Division I understanding signifies a relinquishing of control for both coach and student athlete but it is also marked by a willingness for the uncomfortable wrapped in comfortability provided by a head coach who comprehends the risk it all entails.

Transferable Lessons

The transferable experiences from sport to life and vice versa were insightful and demonstrated the XXX University student athletes' humanness as ordinary college students with superior athletic skill. Figgins, Smith, Sellars, Greenlees, and Knight (2016) conducted a two-fold study where participants were asked to write about an instance where they had been inspired in sport. In all the instances the athletes recalled, Figgins et al. (2016) concluded that the

athletes' experiences of inspiration can be evoked by many sources but mainly leadership behavior. What was also interesting about the study was that many of the athletes recalled sport experiences that happened years prior but still impacted them. In analyzing the values of a competitor, it is important to consider the transferable lessons student athletes apply from sport to their personal lives and from their personal lives to sport. As the data within this study shows, the student athletes at XXX University wanted more than just one dimensional interactions that only spoke to their athletic ability. The student athletes required leadership experiences that taught them new skills they could apply outside of the game. They were looking for instances within the game to apply the life lessons they learned in their endeavors with family, a job, academics, or relationships. The survey feedback gave proof that the XXX University student athlete respondents appreciated their head coach for what they had been taught and the wisdom they had gained from being treated as real people, not just student athletes.

The Division I student athletes at XXX University were paying attention. They were taking inventory of their head coach's leadership and then making informed decisions as to how they go about their own lives and what types of leaders they can one day be. These experiences are important when examining the values and morals of a competitor. Understanding where and how student athletes place their value should encourage head coaches to employ leadership methods that put the student athlete in a position to cultivate their ethical comprehension, not compromise it.

Positive Energy and the Value in Recognition

The researcher selected this theme because of the student athletes' overwhelming display of joy in being recognized by their head coach in the practice setting. Whether it was in a group setting or a one on one interaction, the student athletes demonstrated their high reverence for

attention and praise creating a sense of value within them. The positivity generated from recalling such instances gave the researcher deeper insight into the women's soccer student athletes and their team culture. Their head coach was certainly aware of the impact his use of recognition had on each player which then inadvertently created a more positive tone in practice and in the student athletes' recollection of those experiences. Witnessing the positive reinforcement that took place during games and practices, the researcher further understood the values of a competitor. Not only were the student athletes inspired to recognize their own teammates in the same way their coach did, they also exemplified what it meant to be good leaders. Competitors value good leadership- a leadership that feels comforting to them and boosts their morale during more trying times. The researcher observed how the women's soccer student athletes excelled off of the field as well. Many of them spoke of their good grades and how serious they viewed their academics because their coach valued academics and would recognize players for their academic efforts in addition to their athletic triumphs.

The student athlete survey data on the degree to which they agreed that their head coach was aware of the impact of their own actions in relation to the qualitative data on value and recognition, speak to the overall transformative power of the trust, humility, and empowerment created in the servant leader-student athlete dynamic. Additionally, according to Patterson (2003), trust, humility, and empowerment are three of the seven servant leader constructs. As the study's data demonstrated, the student athletes wanted to work hard out of their own thirst for success at the highest level of intercollegiate athletics competition. Yet, these same student athletes also seem to trust that their efforts will be met with positivity and recognition on the head coach's behalf, making them want to work harder. While the researcher cannot generalize the culture of XXX University's women's soccer team across all XXX University athletic teams

or all NCAA Division I teams, she can highlight the potential for positive impact when head coaches are aware of their actions and how their student athletes' morals and values as a competitor are shaped as a result.

Theme Four: The Dichotomy in Failure

Running towards Success or Running from Failure

As the data presented in chapter four demonstrated, there is a role the head coach plays in influencing how student athletes perceive failure. A head coach who encourages their student athletes to learn from their experiences, inadvertently empowers them to reframe instances of failure as a means to grow towards success. The women's soccer student athletes exemplified that the dichotomy in failure is that some run towards success, using failure as motivation, whereas others run from failure in hopes of finding success. A head coach that understands this dichotomy, like the women's soccer head coach, can use their servant leader qualities to prioritize the higher needs of their student athletes by tapping into their potential. Putting the athlete in situations to stretch the understanding of their own capabilities, will teach them how to persevere and push through, displaying the potential for success and not so much the risk of failure. The end result, as it relates to the athlete's competitor values, will be an appreciation, not just for success, but also for the level of grit they displayed in doing so. This in and of itself is the perfect example of how a Division I head coach can use servant leadership to create an environment in and out of the practice setting that allows student athletes the chance to understand themselves in a way that will teach them about additional needs and capabilities they never identified with which is level of self-actualization that no one can ever take from them as they continue to mature.

Discussion of Results According to the Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is comprised of Burton and Welty Peachey's (2013) research on servant leadership within intercollegiate athletics, Rieke, Hammermeister, and Chase's (2008) work on servant leadership in sport and its effectiveness on coaching, and Maslow's (1965) research on self-actualization. While collecting and analyzing data, the researcher committed herself to utilizing a transformative lens that pushed her to keep in mind the theoretical framework of the study and the value in creating a cultural portrait that would, not just honor the bodies of work within the framework, but also give a fresh new perspective to the field of intercollegiate athletics. The researcher's findings uphold the conclusions of Burton and Welty Peachey, as she indeed witnessed via observation and discovered through interviewing, how the head coach's espousal of servant leader qualities fostered a level of leadership necessary in creating an environment that cultivated student athlete development, ethical awareness, and inspired student athletes to serve their teammates. In addition, overall XXX University student athlete results from the Servant Leadership Climate Survey also supported Burton and Welty Peachey's assertion regarding the supportive climate created through servant leadership's focus on follower needs and its influence on strong relationships. Being that the researcher conducted the study at the highest level of competition within intercollegiate athletics it is even more telling and speaks to servant leadership's transcendent effectiveness.

Rieke, Hammermeister, and Chase (2008) studied the influence and effectiveness of the servant leader coach. The results of this study confirm their conclusions on coaches who adhere to the servant leader model, as the student athletes under study demonstrated their values as competitors as well as their expectation and desire to be pushed and challenged in and out of the

practice setting due to their head coach's personal leadership style. According to Rieke et al., coaches who employ servant leader behavior produce student athletes who are mentally stronger and have a higher propensity for success. Due to their exposure to servant leader qualities, the student athletes under study at XXX University recognized and valued the genuine investment from their head coaches. It is this recognition and value that creates trust within the head coach-student athlete relationship, allowing for openness and the vulnerability necessary for the student athlete to be led in such a way where their potential is maximized. The transferable nature of these experiences enabled the student athlete to create meaning and further identify with their needs in and out of the practice setting. Although Rieke et al.'s study was conducted with high school student athletes, the researcher believes that her findings add further significance to their conclusions because data was collected at the Division I intercollegiate athletics level. This variance demonstrates how servant leadership can withstand multiple levels across athletic and educational landscapes. While servant leadership is not a universal strategy for all team cultures, it does allow for reciprocal growth between leader and follower due to its people-centered approach.

Research question two specifically asked whether or not servant leader qualities espoused by head coaches impact student athlete growth toward self-actualization. According to Maslow (1965), self-actualizing people learn intrinsically and identify specific processes that can help them become all they are meant to be. The instructions on how to guide individuals to self-actualization, created through Maslow's research, is supported within this study and represent the value in applying methods supporting growth and fulfillment beyond traditional teaching and counseling settings while in the spirit of servant leadership. Study results confirmed that XXX University student athletes were indeed affected, not only by the head coach's servant leader

behavior, but also by the head coach's awareness of how their overall leadership impacted student athlete feelings. Data from both phases of the study showed how the student athletes required a head coach who was vested in their identity beyond athletics. The survey data highlighted how XXX University student athletes valued this behavior in and out of the practice environment. The survey data also demonstrated how head coaches must find balance in their overall leadership approach, as some student athletes preferred a head coach who was softer in their delivery, while others preferred a straightforward approach that focused more on the sport aspect. Overall, what came to be certain through the data, was that student athletes at XXX University were heavily impacted by their head coach's leadership which, in turn, influenced their intrinsic learning, as well as their ability to identify their own potential for achievement in and out of the practice environment.

Limitations

There were several limitations within this study, as briefly described in chapter one. Due to the depth of the data collection methods, only one Division I institution was used in this study. Therefore, findings present views of one athletic department and cannot be generalized over all intercollegiate athletic departments. Also, this study required that participants be at least 18 years of age or older. This requirement limited the amount of student athletes at XXX University that could participate. Another limitation of the study, not covered in chapter one, was the number of survey responses the researcher received. The Servant Leadership Climate Survey was deployed to over 400 student athletes. While the survey was open for feedback for three weeks, the researcher was only able to garner 70 responses.

Another limitation to the study was that the survey did not capture the sport team each student athlete respondent was a member of. This addition would have allowed for the

researcher to further analyze the data by team and sport. While the researcher took the necessary precautions to protect the identity of the student athletes at XXX University, the nature of her study could have caused the low survey participation, as student athletes may have feared their survey feedback would somehow impact their sport participation if their head coach were to find out. In regard to the inherent depth of the data collection methods, as well as timing and availability, the researcher only utilized one head coach within the study. This posed a limitation, as additional head coach feedback would have given the researcher even richer data and may have produced more variant results broadening the scope of the findings. One last limitation to the study was scheduling of interviews. The researcher could only schedule participant interviews for one particular week. She tried to be as flexible as possible when it came to scheduling and rescheduling interviews with the student athletes. Nevertheless, there were multiple student athletes who could not participate due to scheduling conflicts. Additional interview feedback would have provided the researcher more detail that would have certainly aided in the creation of the overall cultural portrait.

Implications for Practice

The significance of this study is that it explored another side to the servant leadership narrative within intercollegiate athletics. Not only did this study explore servant leadership specifically from the Division I context, it also explored how the use of servant leader behavior by the head coach can greatly impact the creation of environments that enable student athletes to have peak experiences in and out of the practice setting. Those peak experiences educate the student athlete on their needs for growth and personal fulfillment.

Additionally, this study sought to give a voice to student athletes, as well as opportunities for deeper conversation that may not always be given to them. This study allowed

the student athletes at XXX University the space to be honest about their personal requirements of a head coach and how their personal growth is impacted by their head coach's leadership. Intercollegiate athletics cannot operate without the head coach-student athlete relationship. Therefore, the researcher found it important to address head coach leadership in relation to the needs of student athletes in hopes of enhancing the standards placed upon coaches so they can truly experience a level of growth that will resonate with their athletes, allowing for servant leadership to thrive.

Ultimately, the significance of this study lies in the contrast between the simplicity of the research questions and the depth of the themes provided. Each theme is comprised of two to three sub-themes that go beyond surface level analysis, seeking to provide an accurate cultural portrait of the group under study. Keeping the research questions simple allowed the researcher a certain level of freedom during data analysis in which she felt there was space to dig deeper in exploration. The goal was to construct an impressionistic tale that was layered in its complexity, similar to the population under study.

Recommendations for Further Research

As mentioned in the limitations section, capturing the specific sport participants played and analyzing data by challenges historically seen in each sport could have provided sport specific conclusions. The researcher recommends further servant leadership study within Division I intercollegiate athletics that takes into account the self-actualization of student athletes according to the specific sport they play. At the same time, additional research pertaining to this topic should be conducted across multiple institutions to create truly generalizable results.

The researcher would like to also suggest future research pertaining to Division I head coach personal development. Just as the head coach encourages the student athlete to take

advantage of services available to them outside of the practice setting that impact growth, they too must take advantage of opportunities for personal growth. Head coaches set the tone. The commitment they display to their own self-actualization will inspire student athletes to value their own. Each new group of student athletes comes with a new set of specific needs. In order to address these needs, as this study demonstrates, it is no longer enough to just coach. True investment beyond the game is what it will take to lead student athletes to their highest, best self.

Finally, based on the data provided within this particular study, the researcher would like to suggest further servant leadership and self-actualization research pertaining to the male head coach-female student athlete dynamic. Within intercollegiate athletics, there is still a gender gap between the number of male head coaches and female head coaches. At XXX University alone, there are 10 women's sport programs and only three female head coaches. The researcher believes that researching this same topic, while targeting a more specific gender population for the overall study, would produce results that allow better leadership and gender equity for future student athletes and athletic leaders.

Summary

This study explored the significance of studying servant leadership in the Division I setting and its impact on the self-actualization of student athletes in and out of the practice environment. In striving to answer the two overarching research questions, four major themes emerged: Intricacies of Care and Regard: The Dynamic in and out of Practice, Servant Leadership in the Division I Context, The Values of a Competitor, and The Dichotomy in Failure. The two most studied forms of leadership within intercollegiate athletics seem to be transformational and transactional. While studies on servant leadership within athletics are consistently emerging, gauging its effectiveness strictly from the Division I context, as well as its

impact on the growth and personal fulfillment of student athletes, bridges a gap in the existing literature.

The participants within this study highlighted the need for an in tune head coach who not only knows themselves, but also their student athletes outside of their athletic identity. The student athletes communicated their value and reverence for competition and a level of intensity that brings them out of their comfort zone, pushing them to grow. It was ultimately concluded that this type of environment could not be made possible without the efforts of a head coach who finds value in determining the needs of their student athletes, seeking to accommodate those needs as best as possible, all while balancing their leadership between harder and softer approaches. The values of the Division I competitors in this study also came to life, as the student athletes valued a team culture that recognized their efforts, provided intensity and empathy, positive energy, and an exchange of transferable lessons.

Ultimately, the student athlete participants at XXX University displayed their maturity, their recognition of good leadership, their desire to be successful beyond sport, and their preference for a head coach who cares and invests in them in and out of practice. While there were a few student athletes that expressed their desire for a coach that focuses more on in-sport endeavors, what was most important was that they were given the opportunity to assess their needs and effectively communicate them. The women's soccer head coach who participated within this study was open to learn and hone his leadership skills. He was honest about his challenges but also truly cared for his student athletes. His desire to grow as a person and a long-time head coach who leads young women was admirable.

It is the researcher's sincere hope that this study is a catalyst in creating programs and services that educate head coaches on the benefits of servant leader qualities that will allow them

to become more in tune with themselves and their student athletes. Additionally, the researcher hopes that because of this study, student athletes are empowered to express their leadership preferences in light of their personal growth and fulfillment in and out of practice. It is no longer acceptable to operate in an athletics context utilizing antiquated paradigms, hoping for new results. The leadership within Division I intercollegiate athletics should seek to stay on the cutting edge of leadership innovation, to adequately serve and represent an ever-evolving student athlete population.

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APPENDIX A

Servant Leadership Climate Survey

What is your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Other

What is the racial/ethnic group you identify with?

- a. Black/African American
- b. Chicano/Latino/Hispanic
- c. Caucasian
- d. Asian/Pacific Islander
- e. Other

What is your class level?

- a. Freshman
- b. Sophomore
- c. Junior
- d. Senior
- e. Other (please indicate): _____

For the following statements, please think about your head coach in and out of the practice environment. Please

indicate the level to which you agree or disagree about your head coach.

Prioritizes the personal growth of their student athletes.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Actively and respectfully listens to what student athletes have to say.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Speaks positively about the capabilities and potential of student athletes.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Tries to understand student athletes' point of view.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Recognizes his/her own strengths and weaknesses.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Takes advantage of opportunities for personal growth.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Recognizes the growth of student athletes over time versus current skills and abilities.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Believes that all student athletes can improve.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Encourages student athletes to learn from experience.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Adapts teaching and coaching methods based on the situation.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Provides opportunities for discussion and reflection.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Encourages student athletes to achieve their goals and dreams.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Encourages self-determination and positive self-talk.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Appreciates individuality among student athletes.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Creates an open team environment where thoughts and ideas may be shared.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Avoids reminding student athletes of past mistakes.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Encourages student athletes to express their feelings.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Models self-confidence.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Inspires student athletes to be themselves.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Understands the impact of his/her actions on student athletes' feelings.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Motivates members of the team to help one another.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Encourages the use of mental skills to cope with growth and performance.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Creates a sense of community and belonging among members of the team.

In Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Out of Practice: __strongly disagree __somewhat disagree __somewhat agree __strongly agree

Is there anything else you would like to say about your head coach?

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol- Student Athletes

Topic: Servant Leadership and the Cultivation of Self-Actualization in DI Student Athletes

Date of interview:

Time of interview:

Servant Leadership: A leadership style that is demonstrated by empowering and developing people and by providing direction. Servant leadership emphasizes the ideal of service in the leader-follower relationship and prioritizes the personal growth of followers.

Interview Questions:

1. In what ways do your realizations regarding your own personal growth and success guide you in your personal life outside of the practice setting.
2. Considering your own value and self-worth, describe the leadership qualities you personally require from your head coach in the practice setting?
3. Visualize your head coach's behavior in the practice setting. Based on the servant leadership definition provided, explain how you feel your head coach demonstrates servant leader qualities?
4. What type of climate does your head coach create in the practice?
5. Please explain what environment teaches you about your potential for personal growth and success?
6. Tell me about an experience in the practice setting where, because of your head coach's leadership, you felt valued as a member of the team.
7. If you were a head coach, what characteristics or strategies would you use as a leader?

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol- Head Coach

Topic: Servant Leadership and the Cultivation of Self-Actualization in DI Student Athletes

Date of interview:

Time of interview:

Interview Questions:

1. What would you consider to be good leadership behavior?
2. A servant leader prioritizes the personal growth of followers, have you ever experienced this type of leadership?
3. When have you experienced servant leadership in athletics and how did it make you feel about yourself?
4. How would you describe your current leadership style as a head coach?
5. How does your leadership style support your student athletes' individual growth and fulfillment?
6. How is your support of the student athletes' growth and fulfillment demonstrated within the practice environment on an individual and group level?
7. How do you balance supporting your student athletes' growth and fulfillment while also focusing on the competitiveness of Division I athletics and the pressure to win?
8. In supporting their personal development, what have you learned about the needs of your student athletes?

APPENDIX D

Observational Protocol

Topic: Servant Leadership and the Cultivation of Self-Actualization in DI Student Athletes

Date of practice:

Time:

Place:

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes

APPENDIX E

Timeline

June 2016-August 2017

First seven curriculum courses of Doctoral program and Dissertation Seminars I-III

August 2017-October 2017

Applied Qualitative Methods for Educational Leaders course and Dissertation Seminar IV

October 2017-December 2017

Applied Quantitative Methods for Educational Leaders course and continuation of Dissertation Seminar IV

January 2018-May 2018

Statistical Analysis for Educational Leaders course (last curriculum course), continuation of Dissertation Seminar IV, and beginning of Dissertation Seminar V. Dissertation chapters I-III due. Began working with Dissertation Committee Chair, Dr. Belinda Karge (January 2018)

May 2018- June 2018

Submitted dissertation proposal (chapters I-III). Prepared and submitted Institutional Review Board application at Concordia University Irvine. Approval of sequential transformative research design. Defense of dissertation proposal.

July 2018- September 2018

Assigned a faculty sponsor at XXX University. Submitted Institutional Review Board application at XXX University. Approved for data collection at XXX University.

September 2018- October 2018

Quantitative and qualitative data collection

October 2018- November 2018

Quantitative and qualitative data analysis

November 2018-December 2018

Wrote dissertation chapters IV and V and began editing process.

January 2019- May 2019

Completed final dissertation edits. Defended Dissertation. Presented qualitative research at Ethnographic & Qualitative Research Conference in Las Vegas, NV. Participated in Concordia University Irvine Commencement

APPENDIX F

NIH CERTIFICATE

