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Game On: A Qualitative Study of Leadership Skills Developed Through College Athletics

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GAME ON: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF LEADERSHIP

SKILLS DEVELOPED THROUGH COLLEGE ATHLETICS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Wendy J. Snodgrass

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
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Title: Game On: A Qualitative Study of Leadership Skills Developed Through College
         Athletics

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Intercollegiate athletic programs claim to develop a variety of skills in their athletes, but how do we really know that this is occurring as a result of the athlete's participation? Through the review of past studies this study will seek to identify what leadership skills are gained as a result of participation in an intercollegiate athletic program. In addition, the study will examine the influence that these leadership skills have had on the development and growth of former athletes beyond college.

Senge's (1990) learning organization, Astin's (1993) theory of involvement, and Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development provide the theoretical frameworks for this study. Experiences in situational leadership, application to challenges posed, and through the use of purposeful simulations, athletes are able to develop their leadership skills (Astin, 1993; Brungardt, 1996; Senge, 1990). Kanter's (2006) confidence provided the guiding leadership framework, as well as identified the specific skills of confidence, accountability, collaboration, and initiative, which were the specific leadership skills, focused on during this study. Former college basketball players will be interviewed for the study. This study expanded upon the literature regarding leadership skills in college, as well as address the development of leadership skills directly or indirectly taught to college athletes. An analysis of how leadership skills have translated into and enhanced the participant's life after college will enable institutions of higher

education to evaluate and assess their athletic programs to better determine if they are providing

opportunities for leadership development in their student athletes.

DEDICATION

To Jeff, my husband and best friend, for your infinite patience, understanding, support, and

encouragement. To Callie and Maggie, the joy and light of my life. I hope that I have been and

will continue to inspire you. May you one day achieve all of your dreams.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From the onset of my doctoral program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, I knew that I was a part of something special. I am thankful for the members of Cohort 14 for their unwavering support, thoughtful insight, diverse perspective, and wonderful sense of humors. I could not imagine a better group of colleagues to travel through this journey with. I owe a special thank you to Jamie and Jen. I could have not have done this without the two of you. Always remember, "Just Keep Swimming."

I feel fortunate to have benefited from a remarkable dissertation committee. Dr. Helterbran, Dr. Laverick, and Dr. Twiest thank you for your insight and for continually challenging me. I enjoyed learning from each of you and feel fortunate that you were a part of my committee.

To Dr. Helterbran, chair of my dissertation committee. I will never be able to say thank you enough! You were my "mother hen" and gave me honest feedback, positive encouragement, and instilled a belief in myself that I could succeed. Thank you for the hours spent with me and for being an important part of the journey in writing my "little essay". I hope that someday I can be a mentor to someone as you have been for me!

To my family and friends, thank you for your love and support over the last three years. At times that I waivered you were there to lift me up and encourage me to continue pushing forward. I am forever grateful for your support.

I learned so much of what I know about hard work, dedication, persistence, and character from my mother and father. They were my first supporters, instilled in me a love of learning, and their teaching by example continues to serve me well as a wife, mother, student, and

professional. I am thrilled to share my latest academic achievement with my parents and am beyond thankful for their steady and affirming presence in my life.

Finally, words cannot adequately express the debt of gratitude that I owe my husband and daughters for their unwavering and loving support, patience, encouragement, understanding, and sacrifice throughout my doctoral program. I can say with confidence that I would not have been successful in this effort without a strong "team" at home. For every missed soccer game, times that "Mommy had to do homework", and the time spent away from you, may I say a very heartfelt, "Thank you!" I love you!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Many sports organizations, and those associated with education, have made claims that

participating in athletics develops leadership skills (Fondas, 2014; Meany, 2013; Rees, Howell &

Miracle, 1990; Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Whan, Jr., 1965). Athletic programs associated with

higher education find that this claim is of particular importance because leadership development

is one of the goals of higher education (Brungardt, 1996; Komives, Dugan, Owen, Slack, &

Wagner, 2011; Kouzes & Posner, 2008) and these leadership skills are contributing factors that

assist in the preparation of students for the workforce and to become productive members of

society (Astin & Astin, 2000; Boatman, 1999). The concept that athletes develop leadership

skills as a result of their participation in college athletics provides a primary justification for

sponsoring intercollegiate athletic programs on college campuses.

Athletics is more than just a game as it prepares the participants for the challenges of real

life through the trials that they face in the fields of play. The length of an athletic season provides

opportunities for its participants to work with others to achieve a shared goal, to deal with

adversity, to win, to lose, and persevere when faced with adversity. Students involved in

intercollegiate athletics receive the opportunity to engage with their peers and refine their

leadership skills including teamwork, accountability, collaboration and initiative while working

towards a common objective (Astin, 1993).

Leadership development related to athletic participation is an important topic to

understand because it provides the ability for intercollegiate athletic departments to tailor

experiences for the participants as well as further tying intercollegiate athletics to the goals of

higher education which almost often include the development of leadership skills (Brungardt,

1996). Furthermore, there is an emerging body of research that suggests that co-curricular

programming such as career development workshops and motivational speakers, in addition to athletic participation in sport settings, can enhance a student's leadership capabilities (Hellison, Martinek, & Walsh, 2008; Hoover & Komives, 2010). Co-curricular experiences have benefits for the student including retention, increased self-esteem, and self-awareness (Astin, 1999). As institutions of higher education set goals of leadership development for their students, it is important to understand the leadership skills that athletes develop through their intercollegiate athetlic participation as well as how these skills have transferred into the participants life after college.

Collegiate Leadership Development Opportunities

Participation in an intercollegiate athletic program develops leadership skills (Anderson, 2012). Leaders are needed in all professional arenas and every organization, be it in the workforce, family or social organizations. Our future leaders need to have the capabilities and skills that enable them to influence change, provide direction, and inspire those around them (Gifford, Cannon, Stedman, & Telg, 2011). Society benefits from involvement in athletics, as it is a place where leaders can be cultivated, where individuals receive the opportunities to work with others, and where participants are able to develop into leaders. As institutions of higher education continue to be challenged to create academic programs that focus on developing leadership skills in their students (Buschlen & Dvorak, 2011; Ferguson, 2011; Huber-Curran & Tilapaugh, 2013; Sowcik, 2012), these institutions also need to recognize that participation in intercollegiate athletic programs provides an opportunity for the practical application of leadership skills and allows its athletes to develop into future leaders (Astin, 1993)

Athletics offers an environment that allows individuals to develop intrinsic growth, a better understanding of the behavior necessary for efficient team collaboration, and to become

more effective in their application of leadership skills (Johnson & Harper, 2005). Effective programs, and the coaches involved in them, instill positive values and growth of those values through involvement and leading by example (Curry, 2012). Consequently, athletics provides the framework and sets the stage for its participants to develop leadership skills such as: confidence, accountability, collaboration and initiative (Kanter, 2006). These traits are not only developed through their involvement, but athletes are also placed in stressful situations in which they need to rely on their skills to enable effective decision-making. Athletes typically analyze their performance and assess the changes that they need to make to be more successful during the next competition (Eiche, Sedlacek, & Adams-Gaston, 1998; Extejt & Smith, 2009). This analysis and reflection regarding their performance develops skills that will be useful later in their life.

Leadership Development in College Athletes

There is growing evidence of the leadership skills that students gain throughout college (Dobosz & Beaty, 1999; Extejt & Smith, 2009; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Pascarella & Truckenmiller, 1999; Shulman & Bowen, 2001), but despite these gains there is less evidence specifically related to college athletes. This growing research suggests that participation in athletics can be beneficial for the leadership capabilities of its participants (Anderson, 2012; Hellison, Martinek, & Walsh, 2008; Hoover & Komives, 2010). Rudd and Stoll (2004) found that athletes experience social development including skills such as teamwork, self-sacrifice, work ethic, and perseverance. Another study conducted by Pascarella and Smart (1991) focused on leadership attributes of college athletes. In this study, it was found that participation in intercollegiate athletics had a positive impact on leadership development with regards to achievement, competence and intellect, initiative, and self-awareness. These

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skills are significant because they are individually developed and strengthened throughout participation in an intercollegiate athletic.

Achievement is the first concept from Pascarella and Smart's (1991) study that relates to leadership development in athletics (Erhard, Jensen, & Granger, 2010). The notion that leaders are able to form a goal in their minds from which they measure success is applicable for student-athletes who have developed mental skills such as concentration, goal setting, and self-motivation, which prepare them for competition. The second concept, competence, is associated with sports participation in athletes (Donaldson & Ronan, 2006). Other studies have also suggested a link between intellect and physical activity, as intellect and competence are imperative to leadership development (Bailey, 2006; Ratey, 2008).

Initiative is the third leadership development concept associated with sports participation. Larson (2000) supported the concept that participation in sports allows an individual to develop their initiative. This experience also allows for the development of self-motivation, which is important for leadership development (Astin, 1993). Furthermore, a study conducted by Larson, Hansen and Moneta (2006) found that former athletes who participated in athletics reported higher rates of initiative, experiences with teamwork and emotional control when compared to other co-curricular activities.

According to Pascarella and Smart (1991), self-awareness is the final leadership development concept related to athletic participation. Simon (2004) found that students who are involved in athletics were able to understand their strengths and weaknesses, analyze their weaknesses in order to overcome them, and recognized that hard work enabled them to improve. This ability to analyze and evaluate our traits is a relevant skill to being a successful leader (Brungardt, 1996). Understanding the enhancement of leadership skills in students who

participate in intercollegiate athletics is important to comprehend, as it will create a greater awareness of leadership development of college students.

Overall, the literature suggests that physical activity in athletics in and of itself aids in the development of physical, intellectual and social skills (Eccles et al., 2003) as well as the enhancement of self-esteem and self-confidence (McHale, Vinden, Bush, Richer, Shaw, & Smith, 2005) all of which are significant traits of leadership (Eiche, Sedlacek, & Adams-Gaston, 1998). In addition, participation in athletics appears to contribute to self-efficacy, cognitive skills and the ability to work with others (Chemers, Watson, & May, 2000; Chen & Bliese, 2002; Dobosz & Beaty, 1999; Extejt & Smith, 2009; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Pascarella & Truckenmiller, 1999; Shulman & Bowen, 2001).

Research has also been conducted on the role that the athlete plays on the team in relation to the individual's development of leadership skills. Grandzol, Perlis and Draina (2010) found that athletes who served as team captains were provided with a unique opportunity to develop and apply their leadership skills. When appointed or elected as a captain of an athletic team, Dupuis, Bloom and Loughead (2006) asserted that an assumption could be made that the individual would have the characterics to be an effective leader. Furthermore, in the role as team captain the athlete is more likely to be involved in activites and decision making with the coaching staff (Shertzer & Schuh, 2004).

Leadership Development Outside of the Classroom

A common theme in the literature related to leadership is that it is difficult to cultivate leadership the classroom. In a study conducted by Eiche, Sedlacek and Adams-Gaston (1998), athletes are placed in situations on a regular basis that enable them to develop and utilize their leadership skills. Eiche, Sedlacek and Adams-Gaston (1998) also highlighted that athletes are

able to apply their leadership skills in these stressful situations, which would not occur for a student in a classroom setting.

Colleges and universities have the expectation that they will provide an atmosphere that encourages the growth and development of the student (Andreas, 1993). Leadership co-curricular programs at institutions of higher education are continually developing to compliment the leadership curriculum found in some academic programs. In a study conducted by Astin (1993), it was found that there is a significant correlation between student involvement and the development of leadership, with student involvement being defined as "one's investment of physical energy and time in the experience" (p. 552). In a study conducted by Kuh (1995), students viewed their experiences outside of the classroom as real world opportunities to apply their knowledge. This experience outside of the classroom is one reason why participation in college athletics is so imperative on a college campus. These experiences give the student the opportunity to apply their leadership skills, while also being able to reflect on these experiences and carry those opportunities into their life after college (Kuh, 1995). The development of leadership skills through athletic participation also gives credibility to intercollegiate athletic programs, and will allow those programs to better align their student learning outcomes with the goals of higher education (Kuh, 1995).

Although individuals can study leadership in the classroom, until they have the opportunity to apply that knowledge and reflect on it they are unable to fully understand what it means to be a leader. Participation in athletics is one approach that allows its participants to not only develop their leadership skills but it also enables them to apply and reflect on their leadership knowledge. The military concept of "Be, Know, Do" relates to the theory of applying knowledge because individuals must understand their own values, while also being able to

comprehend, understand, and apply their knowledge (Offstein, 2006). Those who analyze leadership expect their leaders to be able to not only have specific skills in leadership but to also be able to comprehend and apply that knowledge. Athletics enables the participant to not only develop their leadership skills, but as they progress through their athletic career they are able to reflect on successes and failures, while also having the ability to apply their leadership through individual and team relationships that are formed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership skills gained as a result of participation in intercollegiate athletics and the influence that these skills have had on the development and growth of former athletes beyond college.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of former intercollegiate athletes regarding leadership skills gained through team participation?

2. How do former intercollegiate athletes describe the influence that leadership skills gained through athletic participation have had on their development and growth after college?

Significance of Study

After extensive review of the literature, a majority of the research related to leadership skills developed by college athletes is outdated. The literature that does exists relates to college athletics pertains to athletic administrators and coaches and their leadership potential, or the influences that a coach's leadership skills has on his or her athletes (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Dwyer & Fisher, 1988; Summers, 1991). Also, there is no known research related to how leadership skills obtained during college translates to an individual's future in their professional career, family, and community. However, there is growing research regarding athletes' potential

for leadership development and it can be argued that athletics provides the opportunities and experiences to develop leadership skills (Anderson, 2012; Bend & Petrie, 1977; Carlson, 1997; Hellison, Martinek, & Walsh, 2008; Hoover & Komives, 2010). Eitzen (2000) suggested that athletics develops leaderships attributes such as decision-making, responsibility, the ability to cooperate with others, initiative, self-discipline, and effective use of time. This study will examine former participants of intercollegiate athletics and their perspectives of leadership skills that they individually developed and strengthened throughout their intercollegiate athletic participation. Furthermore, this analysis will enable institutions of higher education to evaluate and assess their athletic programs to better determine if they are providing the opportunity to develop leadership skills in their athletes. This study is significant because it addresses the development of leadership skills directly or indirectly taught to college athletes as well as analyzes how those skills have translated into and enhanced their life after college (Magyar, 2001).

Study Design

A qualitative interpretive approach will be used to conduct this study of former college athletes (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research was chosen for the study design as this method allows for an in-depth understanding of how college athletics has impacted the development of leadership skills of former college athletes. The interpretive approach is appropriate for inquiry into the attributes that college athletes received as a result of their participation, and will allow former athletes to describe the leadership skills that they acquired throughout their college athletic careers. Furthermore, an interpretive approach allows for an analysis as to how leadership skills were developed throughout their participation as well as the impact of those skills on their professional life.

The sample population will include former men's and women's basketball players from a mid-sized NCAA Division II institution in southwestern Pennsylvania named "Rivers College" (pseudonym). These two programs were selected as a result of the historical success of both teams. The selected participants will be former players, who have graduated a minimum of ten years ago or more. One-to-one interviews were the main method for data collection which also included an artifact analysis and a collection of demographic information.

Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical frameworks selected for this study are related theories from social science. Senge's (1990) concept of a learning organization, Astin's (1993) theory of involvement and Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development was used as the foundations for this study. Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence will provide the guiding leadership framework, as well as identify the specific skills of accountability, collaboration, and initiative. These three skills will be the focus of this study (Kanter, 2006). These four concepts and theories were selected as they relate naturally to intercollegiate athletics. Senge's (1990) learning organization centers on the concepts of teamwork and collaboration. Astin's (1993) theory of involvement integrates the involvement in activities, including intercollegiate athletics, with the development of leadership skills. Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development highlights the process that an individual progresses through on their path of leadership development. The following graphic organizer demonstrates the development of leadership skills through situational leadership, application to challenges posed, and through the use of purposeful simulations found in Senge (1990), Astin (1993) and Brungardt (1996), while tying directly to the skills that Kanter (2006) believes are essential in leadership. (Figure 1).

Senge's Concept of a Learning Organization

Development of skills through:

-Skills gained through past experiences
- Enhancement of teamwork, collaboration, and goal setting
-Assessment & decision-making
-Enhancement of skills

Kanter's Concept of Confidence

Skills of accountability, collaboration and initiative develop through three theoretical frameworks

Application of skills is foundational for success in life

Brungardt's Theory of Leadership Development

Development of skills through:

- Encountering challenges
- Purposeful opportunities
- Situational challenges

Astin's Theory of Involvement

Development of skills through:

- Investment of physical activity
- Application of knowledge outside of classroom
- Level of responsibility

Figure 1. Author created theoretical foundations graphic organizer.
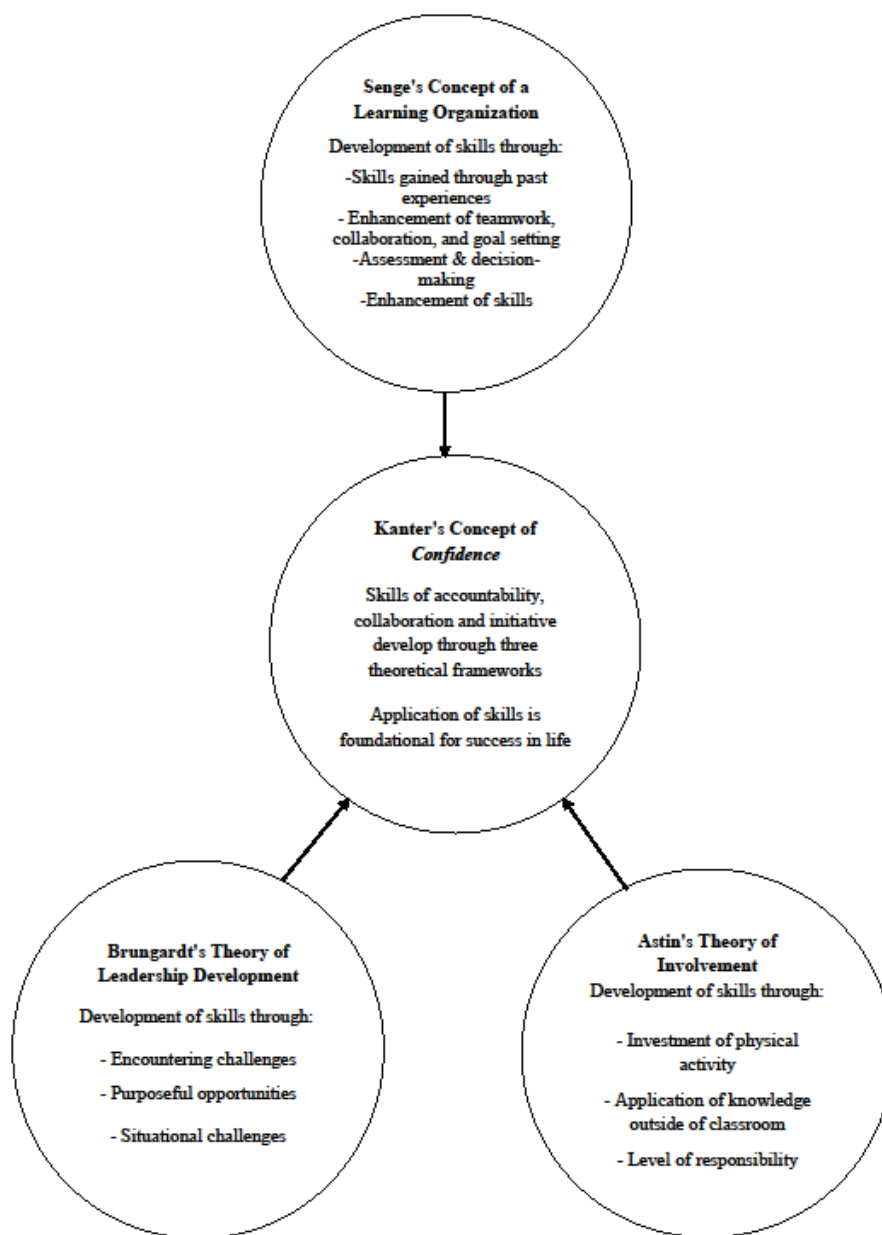
Senge's learning organization relates to intercollegiate athletics as it focuses on five disciplines including systems thinking, shared visions, mental models, personal mastery, and team learning (Senge, 1990). As individuals progress through each stage, they rely on the knowledge developed in the previous stage to assist them in their growth and mastery of each

stage. The five stages allow the participants to enhance their skills in teamwork, collaboration, and goal setting which are imperative skills to develop in an intercollegiate athletic program. This theory also highlights the need for an individual to be adaptive and malleable, which are important skills for an athlete. Athletes must be able to assess a situation quickly and make a decision dependent on their analysis. At times these decisions need to be made quickly, and often under the watchful eyes of their fans, coaches, and peers.

Astin's (1993) theory of involvement can be utilized to examine the development of leadership traits among college athletes. Astin (1985) defined his theory of involvement as "the investment of psychosocial and physical energy in the collegiate environment" (p. 36). As individuals become involved in activities, their leadership traits develop the more that they are involved. The level of involvement and time spent in an activity results in additional growth of leadership skills in the individual. Astin's theory contended that involvement occurs when students are able to learn and apply their knowledge through opportunities outside of the classroom.

Furthermore, the theory of involvement also suggested that a student's leadership development is directly affected by the level of responsibility that the student accepts (Astin, 1985). This includes the athletic role that the student plays on the team, leadership positions held within the team, as well as the relationships that the student develops with other members of the team. A student's involvement also extends to entities outside of their athletic team, as many participants are involved in other organizations such as student government, Greek life and professional organizations related to their academic discipline.

Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development described an individual's journey through his or her development of leadership skills. Through the combination of leadership

education and leadership training, the individual is able to foster abilities to develop their leadership skills. This process of development occurs throughout the life of the individual, with purposeful programming and opportunities included throughout the process (Brungardt, 1996). Brungardt's (1996) theory stressed the importance of the challenges that an individual encounters, as those challenges develop their leadership skills through the experiences and situations to which they are exposed. Often times these situations cause the individual to be challenged mentally while also relying on past experiences to guide them in their decision-making. Brungardt's (1996) theory will assist in describing the role that an individual's athletic participation can have on their development of leadership skills.

The guiding leadership framework, which will also be the specific leadership skills examined in this study, will be Rosabeth Moss-Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence. Her view on leadership is based upon the attributes of confidence, accountability, collaboration, and initiative. These leadership skills will be the focus of the specific skills examined in this study. According to Kanter these four skills are all necessary attributes that provide the foundation for individual's to maintain "success" in any situation in life (Kanter, 2006). Athletes are focused and committed to the success of their team, and the attributes of confidence, accountability, collaboration and initiative are all integral traits that when applied will lead to the team being successful and efficient.

Definition of Terms

Defining terms are fundamental to the full understanding of a research project. The definitions provided in this section relate to the key terms that will be used in this study:

Intercollegiate Athletics – represents the highest level of athletics in college. Athletes and teams represent their schools in competition against other institutions of higher education.

These programs are represented by institutional support financially for facilities, travel, coaching staffs, academic support, and athletic scholarships (Cornelius, 1995).

Involvement – The investment of psychological and physical energy in the collegiate environment (Astin, 1985).

Leader Development – The expansion of a person's ability to be effective in leadership processes and roles (Van Velsor & Drath, 2004).

Leadership - A process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Leadership is a collaborative process that involves working with others to accomplish a goal or promote change (Northouse, 2001).

Leadership Development – Leadership development is the process of transforming the skills and knowledge of influence to their application in various contexts (Van Velsor & Drath, 2004). It involves the mastery of both intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies. Developing as a leader is a lifelong process (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2007). It is nonlinear; and will likely regress and progress (Posner, 2004). Leadership development places an emphasis on social capital, i.e., the organization (Day, 2001).

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA): A member association made up of higher education institutions. The association governs competition to provide safety to the student athletes (About the NCAA, 2013).

NCAA Division II: An intermediate-level division of competition, which offers an alternative to both the highly competitive level of intercollegiate sports offered in Division I and the

non-scholarship level offered in Division III (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2014).

Role Player: A role player is a person who can be relied upon to competently and efficiently fulfill a role, a person who plays or adopts a role, and a person who fulfills a role rather than excelling in a particular position (Perchinsky, 2012).

Student-Athlete: A participant in an organized competition sport at an intercollegiate level that is sponsored by the institution in which enrolled (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2014).

Limitations of Study

Several limitations existed within this study. The first limitation that existed was that the athletes interviewed will likely have had different experiences in regards to their team climate, relationships with their teammates and coaches. The team climate and relationships, whether positive or negative, could have had the potential of influencing the athletes' acquisition of leadership skills. Another limitation that exists is that the data collected will be self-reported data, as self-reported data may reflect a personal bias in the findings. The final limitation that exists is that the results cannot be generalized to all participants in intercollegiate athletics due to the small number of participants in the study, as well as relating the findings to individuals involved in individual sports as the participants will be representative of team sport programs.

Summary

Intercollegiate athletes develop leadership skills as a result of their athletic participation (Anderson, 2012). Intercollegiate athletic programs are valuable to a college campus because of the experiences and skills that it provides to its participants and should not be looked upon as dispensable during difficult financial times. Also, society's future leaders need an opportunity to

cultivate, develop, and apply their leadership skills and intercollegiate athletics provides such an opportunity. This study examined the leadership skills developed through intercollegiate athletic participations while understanding the impact that the skills have had on the participant's life after college. Furthermore, this research will enable institutions of higher education to understand that athletics has an impact on the development of leadership skills in its athletes, can contribute to the overall goals of higher education, and is an important and valuable experience on a college campus.

The next chapter will provide more detail on the focal points of this study: historical background of intercollegiate athletics, leadership development of college students and athletes, and leadership styles of male and female college students. Also, the next chapter will also review related literature associated with leadership development in college students, while examining the three theoretical foundations of Senge (1990), Astin (1993) and Brungardt (1996), as well as the theoretical framework of Kanter (2006).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership skills gained as a result of

participation in intercollegiate athletics and the influence that these skills have had on the

development and growth of former athletes beyond college. This study is grounded in three

major theories related to leadership development, and this chapter will examine a body of

literature related to the development of leadership skills of college students.

The review of literature is organized into three main sections. The first section of this

review examined the history and evolution of intercollegiate athletics. The second section will

review leadership development with regards to college students. Furthermore, the second section

will also review the development of leadership while specifically looking at college athletes. The

final section will examine the theoretical foundations for this study, which will include Senge's

(1990) concept of a learning organization, Astin's (1993) theory of involvement, and Burngardt's

(1996) theory of leadership development theory. Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence will

provide an additional leadership perspective to the study, as well as identify the leadership skills

that will be the focus of this study. The review of literature will examine and describe the growth

of intercollegiate athletics, the differences and similarities of male and female athletes with

regards to leadership, as well as the leadership development of college students and student-

athletes.

History of Intercollegiate Athletics

To fully comprehend the role that intercollegiate athletic participation has on the

development of leadership skills, it is essential to understand how intercollegiate athletics began

and the path traveled to where it is today. Athletics and education has become so intertwined

together that it's hard to imagine that at one point it did not coexist. Intercollegiate athletics has been around for almost 150 years, and it seems as though it is a natural fit in institutions of higher education. Understanding the path of how intercollegiate programs began will provide a clearer picture on why they look like they do today.

In 1850, college athletic programs were limited in existence but by the early 1900s they had become one of the most important social functions on college campuses (Lucas & Smith, 1978). During this time period the Civil War had occurred, the country was progressing through industrialization, and people were becoming more city-orientated as opposed to an agrarian society (Chu, 1989; Estler & Nelson, 2005; Rudolph, 1990). Throughout this time, people became more engaged in recreation and, as the infrastructure of transportation continued to expand, the ability to travel to competitors became easier.

Lucas and Smith (1978) described the importance that the Civil War had on the development of intercollegiate athletics. The war created a need to train and develop men for military leadership. As a result, the government supported the creation of colleges that provided opportunities for student from middle and lower class families to attend. This influx of new students to colleges brought along with it a wide range of extra-curricular interests, which included the opportunity to participate in athletics (Lucas & Smith, 1978).

Mid-nineteenth century colleges were church-based institutions and these institutions provided very strict and regimented control on the types of extra-curricular activities in which students could participate. Recognizing a need for students to be active in more than just their academics, colleges began to allow students to participate in extra-curricular activities such as musical groups, the college newspaper, and athletics (Lucas & Smith, 1978).

The first documented intercollegiate athletic contest was developed as a business venture by the owner of a railroad company (Lewis, 1967). In 1852, the Superintendent of the Boston Concord offered to send the crew teams of Harvard and Yale on an eight-day, all-expenses-paid trip to New Hampshire if they would compete against each other. The superintendent realized the appeal of athletic competitions and he knew that fans would travel using his railroad to watch the competition (Lewis, 1967).

The popularity of athletics grew at a rapid pace, and with that popularity the importance of winning grew as well (Lucas & Smith, 1978). At this point, unethical practices began to occur and problems began to generate. Although there were ethical issues, such as the utilization of professional athletes, the general belief was that college campuses were better off with athletics than without them. College presidents were the most supportive as they were motivated to continue to see their campus enrollments grow as a result of the excitement that athletics brought to their campuses (Chu, 1989).

The 1800s brought about a change in the leadership of college campuses. College presidents were changing from clergy to non-sectarian educators, and businessmen dominated the boards of trustees to whom the presidents answered (Chu, 1989). With growing pressure to succeed financially, presidents were supportive of continuing their athletic programs regardless of the problems that accompanied them.

Feeling that there needed to be more control over the administration of college athletics, the formation of athletic conferences began (Barnhill, 1998). Mostly due to the association between institutions, conferences were formed to provide a better oversight of college athletic programs. The Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference was established in 1894, and soon afterwards, the Western Conference, which is now known as the Big Ten, was established. These

conferences provided a blueprint that other newly established conferences would follow

(Barnhill, 1998). These conferences initiated rules that prohibited non-students from

participating, banned players from receiving compensation, and mandated that all players had to

be academically eligible (Barnhill, 1998). It was though the development of athletic conferences

that the need for oversight occurred to establish equity and fair play among all participating

institutions.

The Creation of the National Collegiate Athletic Association

The creation of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was an important

milestone in the history of intercollegiate athletics because it signaled the start of a coordinated

and formal effort to gain control over college sports. The motivation for its creation was to instill

some control over the seriousness of injuries that football players were receiving as well as the

growth of commercialization that college athletics had experienced (Bok, 2003).

By the late nineteenth century, college administrators were realizing that their athletic

programs brought prestige and attention to their campuses (Chu, 1989; Gerdy, 1997; Savage et

al., 1929). Although commercialization of athletics had grown, the severity of the injuries

sustained by football players is what ultimately led to the creation of the NCAA (Bok, 2003;

Crowley, 2006). After a violent football game between Harvard and Yale, Harvard decided to

eliminate its football team (Guttman, 1988). President Theodore Roosevelt, who was a Harvard

alumnus, convened a gathering of the presidents of Harvard, Princeton, and Yale at the White

House to explore the options to preserve the game of football.

President Roosevelt's gathering brought attention to the need for reform, but it was an

initiative by Henry McCracken, the Chancellor of New York University, that set the reform in

motion (Thelin, 2004). Motivated by the death of 18 football players and the injuries of 143 other

football players, McCracken wanted the sport either to be abolished or dramatically reformed (Bok, 2003; Smith, 1988). McCracken convened a meeting that included presidents from ten colleges. This small subset of college presidents created a football rules subcommittee and announced a national meeting to be held by all institutions. On December 28, 1905, 62 members founded the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS) (Bok, 2003). Although this organization provided some sport oversight, they still permitted institutions to control the final decisions that were made. In 1910, the IAAUS renamed itself the NCAA and its sole purpose was to reform the game of football as well as provide oversight for college athletic programs (Frey, 1982). This oversight established equitable institutional control over athletic programs as opposed to the free reign and unethical practices that were occurring within the athletic programs.

Athletic-related revenue generated by radio and television broadcasts, as well as home competition gate receipts, became an integral component for financial growth of institutions (Bok, 2003). Television coverage of intercollegiate competitions began in 1939, and with it came an increase in national exposure and visibility that institutions had not experienced before (Bok, 2003; Crowley, 2006). These newly found commercial interests for colleges and universities were hard to ignore although national calls for reforms of college athletic programs continued to be expressed (Duderstadt, 2000). While the commercial interests of intercollegiate athletic programs were blinding, the increasing costs of maintaining competitive teams had a devastating effect on the academic integrity and financial bottom line of colleges and universities (Bok, 2003).

In the 1950s, the NCAA began a series of campus reforms that intended to reemphasize higher education and its academic mission. A report conducted by the American Council on

Education's (ACE) Special Committee on Athletic Policy supported the NCAA's reform efforts (Crowley, 2006). The report offered that the benefits of athletic competition had been challenged by serious violations. ACE's recommendations included eliminating bowl games, banning athletic scholarships, and requiring that athletic departments be a part of the regular faculty (Crowley, 2006). Colleges and universities responded by reforming freshman eligibility, admission standards for student-athletes, and athletic scholarships.

The 1960s found intercollegiate athletics at a time when all restrictions were pushed to the side and enormous amounts of money were being spent to support college athletic programs. Coaching staff sizes increased, as did the budgets to recruit student-athletes (Crowley, 2006). Institutions also expanded training facilities and built separate housing for student-athletes. Athletic scholarships were increased which had no relation to the individual's academic background or financial need (Crowley, 2006). This move in athletic scholarships caused quite a concern for faculty members as it was the first shift away from recruiting academically gifted students who were exceptionally talented athletically to now recruiting marginal academic students who were gifted athletically (Duderstadt, 2007).

The intercollegiate athletics "arms race" was in full gear by the 1970s. Faculty, athletic directors and presidents expressed their concerns as to the amount of spending that institutions were involved in, thus forcing the NCAA to implement cost containment requirements (Crowley, 2006). These measures included placing limitations on the number of coaching staff, expense-paid recruiting visits and squad sizes. The most controversial reform measure at the time though was the limits that the NCAA placed in the total number of allowable athletic scholarships in the sport of football. Division I football programs are divided into three sub-divisions: a) schools that participate in bowl games, b) schools that participate in the NCAA-run football

championships, and c) schools that do not sponsor football. Schools that participate in the bowl game category were reduced to 85 total athletic equivalencies and could only award 25 scholarships annually (Crowley, 2006). This deregulation allowed for institutions to not only save financial resources but it also resulted in more equity among Division I bowl-game eligible institutions (Crowley, 2006).

Over the next 20 years, major academic reforms occurred which sparked controversy. Up until this point the only individuals making decisions on athletics were athletic directors, conference commissioners, and faculty athletic representatives. It was during this time that college presidents firmly placed their control over their athletic programs (Crowley, 2006). Before then, college presidents had shown very little interest and were not involved in the decisions that occurred in their athletic programs. In 1984, the NCAA established a Presidents' Commission that provided a stronger voice regarding fiscal integrity, academic standards, and a general reputation for college athletics (Crowley, 2006). In fact, during the four years prior to the commission, at least half of all Division I programs were placed on probation or sanctioned for various NCAA rules violations (Bok, 2003).

With the increasing influence of college presidents, several major reforms occurred which changed the focus of college athletics. The first was Proposition 48, which was an academic reform that addressed eligibility standards needed to participate in intercollegiate athletic programs. This proposition established stricter academic requirements, which included a minimum SAT score and specific high school core curriculum that included a minimum GPA requirement (Crowley, 2006). Another reform set forth by college presidents was Proposition 15 that required Division I athletic programs to undergo an external evaluation, as well as implementing an institutional self-study. Once both assessments were completed an NCAA

certification committee would make a formal decision on each institution regarding their compliance with the rules regulations set forth by the NCAA (Crowley, 2006).

More recently intercollegiate athletic programs have focused on student-athlete well being as well as a having a continued focus on academic reform. Institutions have reduced the amount of opportunities to recruit potential student-athletes, minimized practice and competition schedules for football and basketball, and have begun to phase out student-athlete housing (Crowley, 2006). Stronger requirements have emerged regarding academic progress and degree completion as well as the amount of time that an athlete can devote to practice and competition within their athletic programs. This focus on academics is a direct result of more presidential oversight as well as through a healthy debate throughout campuses nationally (Crowley, 2006).

In the beginning, the NCAA was weak in its supervisory and rule enforcement. There was no legislative process like there currently is today. It wasn't until much later in the 20th century that the NCAA became the organization that it is today. The NCAA is now known for protecting student-athletes, accountability with regards to academics, and providing oversight of intercollegiate athletic programs to keep the playing fields even (Estler & Nelson, 2005). The NCAA lists its basic purpose as:

> 1.3.1. Basic Purpose. The competitive athletics programs of member institutions are designed to be a vital part of the educational system. A basic purpose of this Association is to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student body and, by so doing, retain a clear line of demarcation between intercollegiate athletics and professional sports. (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2014, p. 1)

The creation of the NCAA gave college athletic programs guidance and direction with which their programs were to be run. The history of the NCAA has shown that presidents and academic leaders have learned from the past and understand the importance of a strong oversight in aligning academics, student-athlete well being, and athletics. The next major milestone in the history of college athletics was the growing interest of women in sports and the incorporation of women's sports at colleges and universities.

Women in Sports – Pre-Title IX

Women in sports were not an issue in the mid-nineteenth century because at that time most women did not attend college (Lucas & Smith, 1978). As the women's rights movement grew, by the late 1800s more women were attending college. Many had the belief at the time that women were not able to endure the rigors of academic work, thus involving women in physical activity was a method by which to make the women psychologically stronger (Park & Hult, 1993).

According to Gerber, Felshin, Berlin and Wyrick (1974), the expansion of women's athletics was a very controlled and methodical process, which was very much the opposite of the growth of male sports. Progression for women through the process consisted of three tiers of participation: instruction, intramurals, and athletics. Instruction provided the largest group of individuals with skill-related instruction in specific sports. Intramurals gave those women who desired lower levels of competition an arena to compete. Women who desired more intense competition progressed to the athletic program, but these programs did not have the same financial support as the men's programs. Institutions were responsible for first developing the instructional programs, and once the interest and funding existed, then women could progress into the intramural program. As the intramural program grew, women could then progress into

the intercollegiate athletic programs as long as the funding and the interest existed (Gerber et, al., 1974).

While athletic participation for women provided the atmosphere to strengthen the participants in regards to their academic work, it was also believed that a participant's social skills would develop as a result of participation in team sports (Gerber et al., 1974). While gymnastics was one of the earliest sports for women, some of the earlier team sports included basketball, crew, archery, cycling, golf, horseback riding, fencing, lacrosse, swimming, rowing, track and field, and volleyball (Spears, 1973).

At this time a majority of the competition that was occurring for women was mostly within the institution itself. Rather than traveling and competing against other institutions similar to the men's programs, the women's programs competed through inter-dormitory, inter-class, and inter-sorority contests (Gerber et al., 1974). There is debate among historians as to whether women competed on athletic teams during this time, but it is apparent that the focus for women at this time was their educational development.

According to Carpenter and Acosta (2005), the foundation for competition among women was also fundamentally different than that of male athletes. Following the format for participation, most women participated on intramural teams following an interclass-interschool model. This model provided that the institution needed to produce a winning team before they would be permitted to travel to another institution to compete. Also, schools employed a telegraph method for competitions. For those sports that did not require that two teams be present for competition, such as archery and rifle, institutions would compete on their own respective campus and then send their scores via telegraph to the opposing school to determine the winner (Berger et al., 1975).

Providing recreational activities that were physical was the main objective for offering athletic opportunities for women. Similar to the men's programs, college administrators found that these opportunities contributed to the student's retention to the institution. Sports days were also incorporated as a method for competition. These activities provided opportunities for women to travel to other institutions and compete against other teams. Sport days were viewed more as a social activity rather than opportunities for competition. Women often did not know what sport they would be competing in thus winning was often not reported (Berger et al., 1975; Park & Hult, 1995).

Throughout the late nineteenth century and through the early part of the twenty-century, women's athletics had developed through a very controlled and rigid process. Physical educators were determined to keep athletic participation as an education opportunity for women. Educators also believed that women should have opportunities in sport but those opportunities should only be available to those with elite athletic ability (Park & Hult, 1993).

In the early 1900s, the Committee on Women's Athletics (CWA) endorsed women's participation in athletics (Park & Hult, 1993). Around the same time the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching released their report, American College Athletics, in 1929. This report spoke of the growing issues surrounding college athletics and challenged institutions to bring competition back to an even playing level (Park & Hult, 1993). These concepts were on the minds of women's physical educators as they could sense a growing urge by women to have to the same opportunities as the men in regards to competition.

In the 1920s, the Women's Division-National Amateur Athletic Federation (NAAF) was founded and its charge was to organize intercollegiate athletic competitions among women in college (Park & Hult, 1993). 1920 also saw the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment that gave

women the right to vote while also placing an emphasis on other freedoms for women. The first feminist movement resulted in some gains for women in relation to sport but the Great Depression cut these gains short in the 1930s (Gelb & Palley, 1996). Despite the gains for women, the Depression forced women to maintain their homes while men were forced out of work. The perspective at the time was that a woman's place was in the home, and this view overshadowed the desire of women to participate in sport. This view went unchanged until the 1940s (Lucas & Smith, 1982).

The 1940s brought with it World War II. When the men went off to fight in the war the women were called upon to join the work force, often making the supplies necessary for the men who were fighting the war (Chafe, 1972). The opportunity for employment, and the demonstration that they were just as competent as men to work, increased the self-esteem and self-confidence of women. The women showed that they were capable to complete the task and their newfound confidence contributed to the movement for equal rights for women. Throughout the war, the women believed that if they could work and do a man's job then they could perform on the fields of play as well (Chafe, 1972). The first women's professional athletic team was also formed during World War II. The All-American Girls Baseball League was initiated in 1943 to replace the cancellation of Major League Baseball. Although only in existence during the war, the competitions in the women's baseball league were popular and well attended by both men and women. When the war ended and the men returned from war, men went back to work and women returned back to their role in the homes. Although everything returned back to normal, the opportunities for women in sport continued to expand which included both interscholastic and intercollegiate athletic opportunities (Gerber et al., 1974).

The culture of America was changed during the 1950s and 1960s. Individuals being suppressed fought for their rights, and the passage of the Civil Right's Act of 1964 gave them those rights of equality (Gelb & Palley, 1996). Specifically this act gave women and minorities the rights that were being denied to them, and through the civil rights movement a wave of feminism arose (Gelb & Palley, 1996). Activists for women in sport experienced success when the Division for Girls and Women in Sport (DGWS) amended their official position statement in 1963 to say that it was "desirable" for intercollegiate programs to exist for women (Gerber et al., 1974).

As women's involvement in sports continued to expand there was a need for the creation of an organization to assist in controlling the competitions. The DGWS appointed a commission to oversee the implementation of competitions called the Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (CIAW). In 1969, under the supervision of the CIAW, the first national championships took place for women, which included gymnastics and track and field. Soon after its formation, the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) replaced the CIAW because women desired an organizational body similar to the NCAA for men (Gerber et al., 1974).

Women participating in sports continued to expand and grow in popularity. What the AIAW did was keep the focus of women's athletics on the opportunity to participate rather than the win or die attitude of the NCAA. To the AIAW, the opportunity to participate was more important than the desire of winning. As a result of its leadership and guidance, the AIAW had increased its membership to 800 institutions by 1981 (Hulstrand, 1993; Sperber, 1990).

Passage of Title IX

The Civil Rights Amendment led the way for the rights of women, but in the 1960s there was a push by women's groups to eliminate sexual discrimination. The National Organization for Women (NOW) adopted a platform at their first national convention in 1967 that read "…the right of women to be educated to their fullest potential equally with men be secured by federal and state legislation" (Boles, 1989, p. 643).

In 1972 the law, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, was passed but the implementation of the law was not without controversy. With the passage of the law Congress built in a six-year implementation phase for secondary and post-secondary schools to come into compliance with the law, but they did not state how that implementation would be evaluated. All interpretation and evaluation rested with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (Carpenter, 1993).

Opponents of Title IX fought to have the law eliminated because they feared that the implementation of the law would have an adverse effect on male athletic programs. It was through the lobbying efforts of groups such as the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education that Title IX was successful (Gelb & Palley, 1996).

As women's participation in athletics continued to expand, the NCAA began to believe that its power and influence over intercollegiate athletics was being threatened. The NCAA began to fight against the implementation of Title IX, and believed that the law had no influence over intercollegiate athletics because athletic departments did not receive federal funding (Acosta & Carpenter, 1985). Although athletic departments did not specifically receive federal funding, the student-athletes that participated in the programs did, thus athletic departments were not exempt from Title IX.

While the NCAA was fighting the implementation of Title IX legislation, they saw the advantages of the growth of women's athletics. The NCAA foresaw the advantages of expanding their organization to include women because it would bring financial gains to the organization. The NCAA then set out to take control of women's athletics. Their first strategy was to absorb the AIAW into their infrastructure by offering championship opportunities, which would link schools to the NCAA (Stern, 1979). The second strategy that the NCAA initiated was to exclude the AIAW and form its own NCAA Women's Committee (Carpenter, 1993). The formation of this committee was politically important because prior to this time the NCAA had shown no interest in anything that had to do with women's sports (Carpenter, 1993).

During the fall of 1974, the NCAA and the AIAW agreed to a meeting. The AIAW wanted to form a joint partnership with the NCAA, but the NCAA would not consider a joint membership because they did not consider the AIAW its equal. Instead the NCAA wanted to absorb the AIAW (Festle, 1996).

At their 1973 convention, the NCAA waived the restriction that did not allow women to compete in men's events. They thought that this compromise would help them avoid charges of sexual discrimination while also avoiding any real commitment to women's athletics (Festle, 1996). The NCAA also realized that they could no longer ignore women's athletics as it was quickly becoming apparent that the concept of equal rights was a priority of the Federal Government (Festle, 1996).

To avoid legal implications the NCAA decided to expand their championships to include women. In order to entice institutions to send their teams, the NCAA offered the following incentives: a) pay all expenses for teams competing in the championship, b) allow institutions to expand their membership with the NCAA to include the women's teams at no additional expense

to the institution, c) create rules related to eligibility, financial aid and recruitment that mirrored the men's teams, and d) provide more television coverage to the women's teams (Festle, 1996). The AIAW could not compete with the incentive package that the NCAA put together and eventually had to cease operations as a result in their decline in membership. The AIAW sued the NCAA for violating anti-trust laws, but the courts ruled that no laws had been violated since women's athletics was open for competition (Schubert, Schubert, & Schubert-Madsen, 1991).

Following the adoption of Title IX, women participating in sports grew. Participation by women in college sports has grown from 15 percent in 1972 to 43 percent in 2012 (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005; National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2013). In 1981-1982, the NCAA sponsored the first women's championships. Today, the NCAA sponsors 44 women's championships, 42 men's championships and three co-ed championships in all three NCAA divisions (NCAA, 2013).

Leadership Development

The focus of this study was to better understand the leadership skills that are gained as a result of participation in intercollegiate athletics and how those skills impacted the participant's life after college. The next section examines the development of leadership in general, and then reviews the literature related to the leadership development of college students as well as the development of leadership skills of those that participate in college athletics.

Three main elements are included in most definitions of leadership including; a) involving multiple people, b) a process, and c) aimed at achieving a goal (Chelladurai, 2009). As defined by Northouse (2001) leadership is, "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 3). There are two categories of leadership: leader development and leadership development. Day (2001) defined leader development as the

development of the individual, whereas leadership development is the development within an organization. The direction of this study focused on leader development as it supports the concept that athletic participation contributes to the development of an individual's personal leadership.

Leader development, as defined by Lord and Hall (2005), is an individual based, multi-faceted process that takes place over time. This process allows the individual to progress through a growth and decline of their leadership skills (Kouzes & Posner, 2005), and each stage of the process demonstrates skills that are influenced by the individual's culture and personal experience (Lord & Hall, 2005). The leader development process is not a definite process. The journey is different for each individual person, and based on the individual's background, the process and the pace of growth will be different.

Avolio and Gibbons (1989) also suggested that leader development is the result of numerous life experiences that occur over time. As a result of this development over time, Avolio (1994) suggested that a combination of life experiences and participation in co-curricular programming should be differentiated when examining leadership development.

The development of leadership takes focus and practice on the behalf of the individual. Allio (2005) noted that individuals must be given opportunities to practice their leadership skills. Also, leadership is not something that can be simply taught in the classroom. Leaders must have the opportunity to experience leadership and also be able to apply those skills in real-life settings (Astin, 1993; Astin & Astin, 2000). Athletics provide an opportunity where individuals are put into challenging situations and in which they can apply their leadership skills beginning at an early age.

Leadership can also develop at different speeds depending on the experience as well as the cognitive, behavioral and social skills of the individual. (Day & Halpin, 2004; Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, & Marks, 2000; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001). Emphasized by Lord and Hall (2005), the self motivation of an individual is an important aspect of leader development. The leader may need to seek out leadership opportunities, thus making their own interests and motivation a crucial factor for their own development (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). An individual's identity is a continual process of growth and development, and leadership is one aspect in the development of identity as it can take years for leadership skills to develop in an individual. Participation in athletics can be viewed upon as a significantly personal experience that can mold an individual's leadership skills (Allio, 2005; Avolio & Gibbons, 1989). Athletic participation typically begins at an early age, thus giving the individual the time necessary to develop, practice and apply their leadership skills.

Self-efficacy, the belief that one has the ability to accomplish a task, also influences the tasks that an individual chooses as well as the goals they set for themselves (Lunenburg, 2011). Self-efficacy is very similar to the confidence that an individual feels (Kanter, 2006). Bandura (1982) described how self-efficacy affects performance and learning: a) the influence over the goals and objectives that the individual chooses for himself, b) the influence over learning as well as the effort that the individual exhibits; and c) the influence over the persistence that the individual exhibits during new and difficult tasks. Self-efficacy is a key ingredient in the growth of leader development (Lunenburg, 2011).

Kouzes and Posner (1987) described three different opportunities to develop leadership: a) trial and error, b) people, and c) education. The first, trial and error, allows the individual to learn by doing. The second opportunity, people, such as: coaches, parents, and teachers, allows

the individual to look towards role models to provide examples and guidance throughout the developmental process. The last opportunity is formal leadership education. This approach allows individuals who may not have had opportunities to be involved in co-curricular activities the ability to receive formal education. Based on the developmental theories mentioned above, numerous scholars have explored the topic of the development of leadership throughout college and all have ascertained that involvement in activites or educational programming continute to leadership development in college students (Anderson, 2012; Astin & Astin, 2000; Boatman, 1999; Day, 2001; Dugan & Komives, 2007; Eiche, Sedlacek, & Adams-Gaston, 1998)

General Involvement in College

Colleges and universities have the expectation that they will provide an atmosphere that encourages the growth and development of the student (Andreas, 1993). Leadership co-curricular programs at institutions of higher education are continually developing and are being created to compliment the leadership curriculum found in some academic programs. In a study conducted by Astin (1993), it was found that there is a significant correlation between student involvement and the development of leadership, with student involvement being defined as "one's investment of energy and time in the experience" (p. 552). Several authors have found that involvement in college develop's leadership skills as consistent with Astin's theory of involvement (Antonio, 2001; Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhardt, 2001; Dugan, 2006; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Smart, Ethington, Riggs, & Thompson, 2002).

In a study conducted by Kuh (1995), students viewed their experiences outside of the classroom as real world opportunities to apply their knowledge. This experience outside of the classroom is one reason why participation in college athletics is so imperative on a college campus. These events give students the opportunity to apply their leadership skills, while also

being able to reflect on the experience and carry the knowledge gained into their life after college (Kuh, 1995). The development of leadership skills through athletic participation also gives credibility to intercollegiate athletic programs, and will allow those programs to better align their student learning outcomes with the goals of higher education (Kuh, 1995).

Numerous studies have looked at leader development of college students and investigated how their involvement in co-curricular activities has impacted their leader development (Astin, 1993; Boyer, 1990; Boyer, 1987; Cress et al., 2001; Kuh, 1991; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Sommers, 1991; Winston & Miller, 1994; Winter, McClelland, & Stewart, 1981). Kuh et al. (1991) defined involvement as: "…active participation in activities and events that are not part of the curriculum but nevertheless complement the institution's educational purposes" (1991, p. 7).

Boyer (1990) indicated in his Carnegie Commission report, "Campus Life: In Search of Community", that much attention has been given to the concept of life outside of the classroom. Boyer (1987) also emphasized the importance of experiences outside of the classroom stating, "the effectiveness of the undergraduate experience relates to the quality of campus life and is directly linked to the time students spend on campus and the quality of their involvement in activities" (p. 180). Winston and Miller (1994) reinforced this concept while arguing that a complete educational experience for college students is one in which both academic and personal development is achieved.

A qualitative study conducted by Kuh et al. (1991) focused on student involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities. Through the evaluation of 14 institutions, this study found that although co-curricular programs were not a part of the formal curriculum, the programs did indeed complement the institution's educational mission, which included the leadership development of their students.

Numerous other studies have utilized quantitative methods as well such as the College Student Survey (CSS) or Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). Cress et al. (2001) used CCS and CIRP data from 10 institutions. A review of the data revealed that participants in an intentional leadership program demonstrated growth in leadership skills, civic responsibility, and social and personal values while in college. The results also demonstrated that students have the ability to enhance their leadership skills through their engagement in leadership training opportunities (Cress et al., 2001).

In another longitudinal study, Astin (1993) found that leadership skills did increase throughout the student's college career. This study, which examined over 25,000 college students, found that the number of years in school had a direct, positive correlation to the growth of leadership skills. Astin (1993) also found that the quantity and quality of a student's involvement in college directly related to the amount of development of learning of the individual. Furthermore, this study found that involvement during college was a significant factor in developing leadership (Astin, 1993). Several types of involvement were found to impact leadership development, including peer interaction. The interaction among peers were found to have the strongest effect on leadership as it is often present in student activities and organizations. Astin (1993) also found that the amount of time spent engaged in activities such as student clubs, volunteer work, and intramural sports was a contibuting factor in the development of leadership skills.

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) conducted a study that found that students reported an increase in their leadership skills throughout college. They attributed the main growth of leadership skills to activities and experiences in which the student was involved. Moreover, they found that the main effects on leadership development related specifically to students'

experiences in programs that exposed them to leadership opportunities (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Additionally, Sommers' (1991) study examined the correlation between leadership experiences while in college and post-college leadership roles. The study found that a student's leadership skills post-college were all influenced by the quality of the experiences, the quantity of activities involved in, and the role that the individual served while participating in activities throughout college (Sommers, 1991).

In the 2006 Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL), it was found that those who participated in student organizations while in college scored significantly higher in every outcome related to leadership than did those students who did not participate (Dugan & Komives, 2007). The study also found however that the amount of organizations that an individual was involved in negatively impacted leadership development. This revelation demonstrates that involvement in too many activities can reduce the quality of an individual's development (Dugan & Komives, 2007).

From the previously mentioned studies, it is clear that students who were involved in co-curricular programs experienced a positive impact on their development. It is also apparent that the development of leadership skills and capabilities for those students increased throughout college. The next section will examine previous studies that focus specifically on leadership development through participation in athletics.

Involvement in Intercollegiate Athletics

Despite the claims that athletic participation develops leadership skills of its participants, there are few studies that demonstrate this concept. Kent and Rolf (1979) stated that much of the literature that exists related to the benefits that participation in athletics brings is subjective, opinionated, and speculative. This statement still rings true today, although empirical research in

this field is growing. The research that does exist has several limitations including few longitudinal designs, self-reported data, and correlational findings (Danish, Petipas, & Hale, 1990).

The negative aspects of college athletics, often sensationalized in the media, can diminish the positive attributes that participation in college athletics develops. Few days pass that there is not something discouraging reported by the media related to inappropriate recruiting, improper benefits, and cheating (Associated Press, 2013; Schackner, 2013). In addition, institutions are faced with a continual decrease in funding resulting in the reduction or elimination of co-curricular and extracurricular programs (Dembicki, 2011; Dew, 2012; Nichols, 2013) as athletic programs are sometimes viewed as dispensable when discussions of budget cuts occur on campus (Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2010). However, research has shown that involvement in athletics develops its participants physically, mentally and emotionally while providing an experience that cannot be found in a classroom (Eiche, Sedlacek, & Adams-Gaston, 1998; Howard-Hamilton, 2002). The experience of being a part of a team and working towards a common goal provides the opportunity for the individual to experience teamwork (Eccles, Barber, Stone & Hunt, 2003; Eitzen & Sage, 2003; Extejt & Smith, 2009; McAllister, 2006) and is associated with increases in self-efficacy (Chemers, Watson, & May, 2000; Chen & Bliese, 2002; Fox, 1997; Levy & Ebbeck, 2005; Maurer & Lippstreau, 2010; Popper & Mayselless, 2007; Wilson, 2009) and self-awareness (Holt, Tink, Mandigo, & Fox, 2008). These attributes are integral components in leadership development as they both directly relate to the ability to complete tasks and reach goals (Day, 2001). The interaction between self-efficacy and self-awareness allows individuals to realize that they have the ability to affect a situation, as well as having the confidence to face challenges placed before them with the certainty of knowing that

they can use their knowledge and experience to accomplish the task (Fox, 1997; Holt, Tink, Mandigo & Fox, 2008; Levy & Ebbeck, 2005).

Understanding the benefits that participation in athletics carries is important to understand as intercollegiate athletic programs are continually under the microscope and in the spotlight. There are mixed results regarding the empirical research that examines whether participation in athletics affects the development of leadership. Many of the studies found a positive association between participation and leadership development (Danish, Petipas, & Hale, 1990; Gould & Carson, 2008; Winter, McClelland, & Stewart, 1981), while others found little or no correlation between leader development and participation in athletics (Cornelius, 1995).

In a study reviewing extra-curricular activities at seven liberal arts colleges, Winter, McClelland and Stewart (1981) found that students who were involved in university sponsored co-curricular activities developed stronger managerial and career-decision making skills than students who were not involved. Also, the study found that student-athletes at the selected institutions exhibited higher scores in critical thinking skills as compared to students who were not involved in intercollegiate athletic programs.

There are few extra-curricular programs that guarantee leadership development, but it can be argued that participation in athletics provides an opportunity to facilitate and develop leadership traits. There is also a growing consensus that sport, under the right conditions, can build life and leadership skills (Danish, Petitpas & Hale, 1993; Gould & Carson, 2008). These conditions include a focus on task-orientated goals while also providing a supportive environment for the athlete to develop their skills both athletically and outside of athletics. The skills that athletes develop athletically can translate into leadership skills as well. The skills that

athletes develop through their athletic participation can translate into skills that can be applied throughout the progression of their life. (Gould & Carson, 2008).

Attributes Influenced by Athletic Participation

There are numerous skills and attributes that define leadership. This section will describe these skills and how participation in athletics influences the development of leadership skills. The following aspects will be the focus of this section: pursuit of excellence, pursuit of pleasure, perceived competence and intellectual function, context for achievement, followership, initiative, self-awareness, and resilience.

There are two reasons why an individual participates in any level of athletics that include the pursuit of excellence and the pursuit of pleasure. If athletic experiences are serious and intense, then the experience should strengthen and develop the leadership of the participant (Chelladurai, 2011). The pursuit of excellence is associated with rigorous and time-intensive training, as well as focusing on performing at the individual's ultimate level. This level of focus is often associated with professional and intercollegiate athletes. The level of dedication and focus increases the likelihood of leadership development when the athlete's pursuit is excellence (Chelladurai, 2011). There may be reasons that individuals reach different levels of leadership development such as the role that they played on the team, the number of years that they participated, as well as the amount of time of actual playing time.

Donaldson and Ronan (2006) found a correlation between perceived competence and athletic participation. Other studies that have been conducted found a connection between intellectual functioning and physical activity (Bailey, 2006; Ratey, 2008). Intellect and perceived competence are instrumental to providing the foundation for leader development.

The concept of context for achievement is related to leader development and is useful as the leader creates a definition of achievement. (Erhard, Jensen, & Granger, 2010). Student-athletes develop skills in mental training and goal setting that allows them to set standards that they consider success. There are distinct differences between athletes and their peers in relation to what is achievement and success (Gayles, 2009).

Another important aspect to leadership is displaying effective followership (Litzinger & Schaefer, 1982). Leaders once started as followers, and following can guide effective leadership. Chelladuari (2011) argues that participation in sports develops an individual's followership skills. Some athletic programs have a coach who dictates most aspects of the program, thus followership develops because most athlete's actions are conducted for the good of the team and not necessarily for the individual.

Larson (2000) argued that participation in sports enabled participants to develop their self-motivation and encompass their initiative. This step is important for the participants' development of leadership. Larson, Hansen and Moneta (2006) also found that participants in athletics reporter higher rates in teamwork experiences, initiative, and regulation of their emotions.

According to Simon (2004), those involved in athletics naturally develop a skill of goal setting, working towards those goals while analyzing their strengths and weaknesses, and making improvements to their weaknesses to become a stronger athlete. Throughout this process, athletes exhibit many traits related to leadership such as perseverance, making sound judgments and decisions, and analyzing and assessing their own performance as well as their competitor's (Simon, 2004).

Based on previous studies related to athletic participation, the research demonstrates that there is a connection between participation in athletics and the development of leadership skills. The next section will examine previous studies that focus specifically on leadership development through college in relation to intercollegiate athletic participation.

Intercollegiate Athletes

There are mixed results regarding the relationship that athletic participation has on leadership development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Astin (1993) found that participation in intercollegiate and intramural programs was predictive of leadership while other studies found no correlation (Cornelius, 1995). Subsequently, a study conducted by Kezar and Moriarty (2000) found that an individual's personal characteristics could influence the leadership development of the individual.

A majority of the research focusing on leadership development of athletes has centered on college athletes. Specifically, this research has focused on athletes who served the role of team captains. Grandzol, Perlis and Draina (2010) conducted a study of NCAA Division III athletes, which found that those who served as team captains demonstrated larger gains in leadership development than did their teammates who did not serve as captains (Hall-Yanessa & Forrester, 2004). In another study, Wright and Cote (2003) conducted a qualitative study, which focused on leadership development in a smaller group of athletes in a specific sport. There were four main concepts of leadership that emerged; a) cognitive sport knowledge, b) high skill, c) strong work ethic, and d) a good rapport with people. There were also four aspects that had a direct influence on the development of the four leadership skills; a) direct feedback, b) conversations with adults, c) support, and d) acknowledgement and interactions with teammates (Wright & Cote, 2003).

Other researchers have studied the effects of intercollegiate athletics on the development of leadership in general terms. These studies looked at the development of interpersonal skills as a leadership outcome. A study conducted by Ryan (1989) utilized information obtained in a national survey of college athletes. This study found that participation in intercollegiate athletics had a direct impact on several factors including: satisfaction with college, the development of interpersonal skills, and motivation to complete their degree. McElroy (2005) conducted a study of community college students involved in either varsity athletics or student government. The study found that those who were involved in either group developed greater self-confidence and leadership skills than compared to students who were not involved. Also, Astin (1993) showed positive relationships regarding leadership growth and intercollegiate athletic participation, whereas Shulman and Bowman (2001) found the opposite of Astin in a separate study.

In a study conducted by Lambert (2001), intercollegiate athletes scored themselves slightly lower in all categories of socially responsible leadership (SRL) dimensions except for the category of change compared to non-athletes. This study utilized data from the 2010 Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) for one institution in the Southeast Conference (SEC). Collaboration was the only category that showed a significant difference. These findings go against most research as it highlights that athletes do not demonstrate an overall development in leadership. It can be hypothesized that participation in intercollegiate athletics takes away opportunities for leadership development through other extra-curricular activities as a result of the time demands placed on the athlete (Lambert, 2011).

Beard and Weese (2001) conducted a qualitative study of male and female former student-athletes. The study found that the participants believed that their athletic participation led to lasting and significant contributions to their leadership development. Both groups believed

that their experiences prepared and developed their leadership skills, which helped them later in their lives. From the interviews that were conducted, there were four main areas that the respondents credited their leadership development to; a) sport, b) coaches and teammates, c) self, and d) reflection. In another qualitative study, McAllister (2006) found that the experiences in sport gave the participants an opportunity to practice and develop their leadership skills. This study, which involved women administrators, asked their participants to focus on goal setting, collaboration, teamwork, reflection and assessment, and self-esteem. Finally, the women involved in the study felt that their participation in sport had affected them positively in their professional careers.

In a quantitative study conducted by Anderson (2012), it was found that students who participated in intercollegiate athletics developed different levels of leadership skills than students were not participants. This finding is important for college athletic programs because it demonstrates that intercollegiate athletic programs are more than just recruitment and retention tools for college campuses.

Generally, the research supports the concept that participation in intercollegiate athletics developed leadership skills in its participants. There remains a gap in the literature though of the direct relationship between participation in sport and the enhancement of the participant's leadership skills. The next section will review the theoretical foundations upon which the study will be centered.

Theoretical Foundations

This qualitative study sought to examine whether college athletes develop leadership skills as a result of their participation in intercollegiate athletics. There are three primary social science theories supporting this study. They are Senge's (1990) learning organization, Astin's

(1993) theory of involvement, and Burngardt's (1996) theory of leadership development. Rosabeth Moss-Kanter's (2006) "Confidence" will serve as an additional leadership framework as well as identify the specific skills that will be the focus of this study. Kanter's (2006) framework is based upon the principles of accountability, confidence, collaboration, and initiative. All of these principles are applicable to the leadership skills that college athlete's develop.

These theoretical frameworks were selected because they are transferrable to intercollegiate athletics. Senge's (1990) concept of a learning organization was selected because members of a team must learn to work together for the success of the program. Astin's (1993) theory of involvement allows the student to develop their skills through their involvement in college activities. Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development details the process that an individual progresses through in their development of leadership traits, and Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence provides a framework for the development of specific leadership skills.

Senge's Learning Organization

The first theoretical foundation is Peter Senge's learning organization. Senge's (1990) book, *The Fifth Discipline*, examined the idea of a learning organization "where people continually expand their capacity to create results…where people are learning to see the whole together" (p. 3). According to Senge, there are five disciplines that the individual must progress through including systems thinking, shared visions, mental models, personal mastery, and team learning (Senge, 1990). Each stage provides the framework for understanding the changes that must occur, and mastery must be demonstrated in each area for true change to have occurred.

Personal mastery, the first discipline, refers to an individual who is mastering his or her own knowledge in order for the organization to succeed (Senge, 1990). This mastery is realized

through a journey that the individual progresses through to attain knowledge. An organization's growth is dependent upon the learning that occurs within the individuals in that organization (Senge, 1990). Individuals with a high level of personal mastery live in a constant state of learning. Senge (1990) stressed that personal mastery never ends. It is a continual process, and individuals with a high level of personal mastery are aware of their deficiencies and the areas that they need improvement.

Mental models are the second discipline in Senge's (1990) learning organization. This discipline challenges individuals to push past their comfort levels and to remain open to new methods and ideas. Consequently, the organization will be able to reach new levels as a result of the individuals within the organization. Shared vision, the third discipline, encourages individuals to work together toward a common goal. All members of the group have the desire to accomplish the same goal and not because they are told to do so. The group must support one another and listen to each other in order to accomplish the task.

Team learning is the fourth discipline according to Senge (1990). This type of learning highlights the concept of learning from each other and being open to others thoughts and ideas. This process involves an openness and trust among the individuals that results in an accelerated learning by all members of the organization. The last discipline, systems thinking, fuses the four previous disciplines together. This last step requires the ability to take a step back and view the situation from a distance.

Senge's (1990) concept of a learning organization clearly translates into intercollegiate athletics. Whether an individual is a member of a team sport or an individual sport they must be able to work together with their teammates to accomplish the collective goal of the team. Those who use this type of learning must be adaptive and malleable. This flexibility is important as the

members of the team are in control of their success, and if they are not a cohesive unit they will not be able to accomplish their shared goals.

Astin's Theory of Involvement

Astin's (1993) theory of involvement is the second theoretical framework for this study. Youth develop their own perceptions of self through their involvement in activities and interactions with their peers. Involvement in activities provides the opportunities for individuals to witness and apply their leadership skills. Astin's (1993) theory of involvement is helpful in explaining the process of leader development in college-aged students.

Astin (1993) linked involvement and the development of leadership, which he defined as "the investment of psychosocial and physical energy in the collegiate environment" (Astin, 1985, p. 36). The amount of learning that an individual progresses through is related to the quantity and quality of involvment of the individual. This theory suggested that an individual's development of leadership skills is directly affected by the level of responsibiilty that the individual accepts.

Student involvement in co-curricular and intentional programming assists institutions in achieving the learning outcomes set for their students (Astin, 1993). There are five basic assumptions with Astin's (1993) theory of involvment. The first is that a student's involvement requires an investment of physical and psychsocial energy. The second is that a student's involvement is continous and that dependent upon the student the amount of effort and energy invested will be different. The third assumption is that there will be both qualitative and quantitative aspects of involvement. Additionally, the extent to which the student was involved in the activity directly impacts the gains that the student will experience. The last assumption of Astin's (1993) theory of involvement is that a student's academic performance and their involvement in co-curricular programming has a direct correlation with each other.

There are several opportunities for involvement in college such as: student government, academic honors organizations, fraternities and sororities, academic study groups, intramurals and athletics. Astin (1993) shared three basic beliefs with regard to the levels of student involvement. The first belief is that involvement is both physical and psychological. For example, serving in a specific postion on the team and learning from the experiences that comes from holding that position. The second belief is that involvement is continually changing (Astin, 1993). An individual's roles and experiences will change over time. The individual's knowledge will grow based on their experiences as well as the amount of time spent with that specific role. For instance, each year that an individual is a member of a team their knoweldge of that team, the coaches, and the other members of the team will grow and develop. The last belief of Astin's involvement theory is that the amount of time spent on the experience compared to the quality of the experience impacts the development of the individual (Astin, 1993). As an individual becomes more involved the experiences within that organization will allow them to grow and develop in their leadership skills. Consistent with Astin, Sax (2008) found that the amount of time spent in student groups and clubs, which included athletics, was a positive predictor of the development of leadership.

According to Astin's (1993) longitudinal study, there are several types of involvement related to on-campus participation. The first, peer interaction, had the strongest effect on leadership. This is often found in group activities such as student government and athletic groups. The second involvement, faculty-student interactions, was found to have a positive effect on leadership. This interaction is often found through advising of student organizations. The last type of involvement is participation in organizations on campus (Astin, 1993). Examples of these groups are student government, fraternities and sororities, intramurals, and athletics. An

individual's involvement in these types of groups is a contributing factor to the leadership development of the individual.

Astin's (1993) theory of involvement interconnects with intercollegiate athletic programs as the theory supports the idea that involvement in athletics develops leadership skills. Through the athlete's involvement year after year their experience with leadership will develop and grow through peer interactions, coach-athlete interactions, and throughout their athletic participation.

Brungardt's Theory of Leadership Development

The last theoretical framework for this study is Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development. Leadership development refers to the growth of an individual through a process that encourages, promotes, and assists the individual in their development. This journey is one that is a continual process that spans an individual's lifetime. Theoretically, individuals develop their leadership skills as they encounter challenges, gain experience and are exposed to situations that challenge them mentally (Brungardt, 1996).

Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development includes two different experiences that when combined together lead to the development of leadership skills. These experiences, leadership education and leadership training, allow for the growth and development of leadership skills of the individual.

Leadership education is an intentional process that exposes an individual to situations that are intended to foster and develop one's leadership attributes (Brungardt, 1996). These learning activities can exist as formal courses as well as indirect activities. Athletics, one example of an indirect activity, is designed to give feedback throughout the process that allows the individual to grow.

Leadership training is more specific than intentional programming and allows the individual to encounter challenges and refine their decision-making skills (Brungardt, 1996). The training is geared towards a specific task or job responsibility rather than general decision-making skills.

While the concept of leadership development is constantly evolving, Figure 2 illustrates Brungardt's leadership development theory (Brungardt, 1996). This illustration also demonstrates the connection between leadership development theory and learning leadership theory. These two theories incorporate the idea of the growth of leadership skills throughout the lifespan with intentional programming to assist with the development of leadership skills throughout the process (Brungardt, 1996).
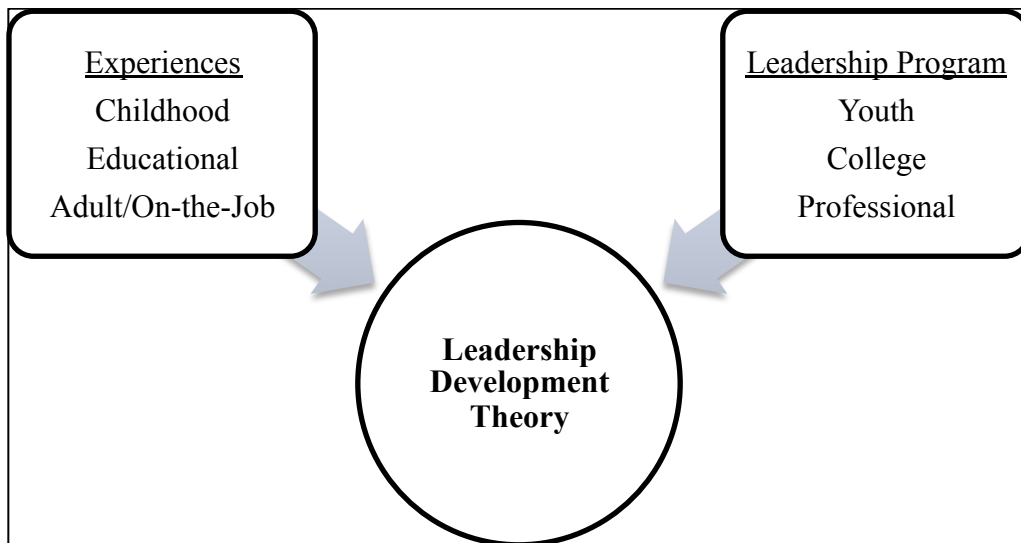

Figure 2. Author created depiction of life span of leadership development.

Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development relates to the development of leadership skills as the third theoretical foundation. This theory reviews the process that individuals progress through in their leadership development. Of specific interest to this study is

the role that student-athlete participation has on the athlete developing leadership skills, which impacts the individual's leadership development.

Rosabeth Moss-Kanter and "Confidence"

Rosabeth Moss-Kanter (2006) wrote of three principles in her book, *Confidence* that provide the framework for the leadership skills examined in this study. These skills, collaboration, accountability, and initiative provide the foundation for people and organizations to maintain success in any situation in life.

Collaboration, accountability, and initiative hold significant roles in organizations that are effective. According to Kanter (2006), accountability, collaboration, and initiative are listed as the three key pillars of a team, business, or institution. For groups of individuals to change their paths from a losing organization to a winning organization confidence must be developed. Developing the pillars of confidence: accountability, collaboration, and initiative when times are good allows for achievements to be reached (Kanter, 2011). This development of confidence also allows the individual to stay calm, adapt, learn, and keep going in difficult and uncertain times as well. This concept of confidence under pressure is what separates the winners from the losers (Kanter, 2011).

The first pillar, collaboration, is imperative for members of a team. Larry Luccino, President and CEO of the Boston Red Sox, stated regarding collaboration and team chemistry:

> I used to believe in biology, not chemistry. Give me big and strong and fast. But after twenty years, I'm a big believer now in club chemistry. You almost always have it when you win; and oftentimes it is team chemistry that leads to winning. But it's hard to say which comes first. Still, make no mistake: when we build teams, we build them with an

eye on chemistry, because we know how destructive the opposite can be. (Kanter, 2006,

p. 216)

Collaboration means that individuals want to work together, and that they take the time to

understand the other members of the team because they value the relationship (Kanter, 2006). It

is the realization that you are supported and that you support the people who surround you

(Kanter, 2011).

Accountability, the second pillar, is owning up to your own self and having the

realization that you are responsible to others. Kanter (2006) also recognizes that accountability

refers to contributing to the overall goals of the organization. An individual must take an active

role in the advancement of the team while also knowing the specific responsibilities needed for

such advancement. When individuals value accountability, the organization benefits because the

individuals are committed, and they make better decisions because they are more willing to

communicate to the group. Accountability means that the individual has analyzed and is aware of

his or her abilities and that they have worked hard in order to take ownership for their

performance in a situation (Kanter, 2011)

Initiative is Kanter's (2006) third and final pillar. Initiative is achieved when an

individual knows what the task is, understands the responsibility that is needed to complete the

task, and takes the initiative to do what is needed before being asked to do so. The ultimate sign

of confidence, initiative translates into action when the individual senses that he is in control

(Kanter, 2011). When an individual feels empowered and confident in his or her own skills to

seize opportunities, the organization will benefit.

"Confidence in one another produces the collective will and determination, the shared

knowledge of everyone's potential contribution, the generosity and the reciprocity that convert

individual effort into joint success" (Kanter, 2006, p. 255). This confidence in each other needs to be nurtured and is a continual process involving all individuals. Regardless of winning or losing, chemistry is necessary for a connection to occur among the individuals (Kanter, 2011). Through this development of chemistry, trust and respect improves enabling the group to confront any challenge that is placed before them.

Kanter's *Confidence* (2006) relates easily into intercollegiate athletics. Collaboration, accountability, and initiative are all skills and attributes that athletes must exhibit in order for the team to be successful and efficient. Kanter explained that people would work hard on the things that matter to them most, and if they remained focused, even during setbacks, that they will persevere (Kanter, 2006). Kanter's three pillars of confidence translate seamlessly to athletes as they are focused on the steps needed to complete the task that is placed before them. Kanter (2006) wrote, "even when problems seem overwhelming and when circumstances seem uncontrollable, that's when winners focus on whatever they can control; how prepared they are; how hard they work; and how many steps they can take" (Kanter, 2006, p. 366).

Analysis of Literature

After review of the literature on leadership and athletic participation, there were several themes that emerged. The first theme is that participation in athletics has a positive effect on the development of leadership traits in college athletes, and the more the student is involved in co-curricular activities the greater the development of their leadership. This theme is consistent with Astin's (1993) theory of involvement. The students that hold leadership roles, and the longer that they are involved with the team, increases the development of leadership skills that the athlete experiences (Grandzol et al., 2010). The second theme that emerged is the concept that self-confidence is developed through athletic participation. This theme is consistent with the

framework developed by Kanter (2006). Self-confidence is an attribute of leadership and can contribute to effective leadership. The final theme is that each athlete has a different role on the team, which can lead to different experiences. This theme is consistent with Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development. Different experiences can have an impact in the different traits and levels of leadership skills that are developed in each athlete.

There are numerous reasons as to why athletes may not develop leadership skills as well. It is critical to look at the focus, time commitment, and energy that athletes must put toward their sports while also realizing that this commitment takes them away from other potential leadership opportunites. Komives and Wagner (2009) found that the more athletes are involved in their sport, the more there was a decrease in their leadership development. Athletes face this type of dilemma on some college campuses as the time commitment to their sport prohibits the athlete from becoming involved in other activities and organizations on campus. The over commitment to sport may be found more often in high profile sports rather than lower profile sports (Gayles & Hu, 2009). While there is not a known cause for the difference between the two groups, it could be a result of the time constraints and pressures of being a higher profile sport and the lack of available opportunites for those athletes to be engaged in another organization (Gayles & Hu, 2009). Although at the moment, sport takes precedence over other opportunities, given the time to reflect, the athletes involved can still experience growth in their leadership skills. Looking at athletic participation through reflective perspectives will allow this study to grasp the leadership development of athletes beyond college.

Summary

After a review of the literature, a gap exists regarding the development of leadership skills as it relates to participation in college athletics (Dupuis, et al., 2006; Eiche, et al., 1998;

Glenn & Horn, 1993; Holmes, McNeil, Adorna, & Procaccino, 2008; Loughead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006).This study aimed to lessen this gap specifically by examining the development of leadership skills through athletic partipation, while also assessing the influence that these skills have had on the development and growth of former participants beyond college.

This chapter has reviewed the relevant literature related to the relationship between leadership development and participation in college athletics. It has also reviewed the theoretical frameworks of Senge (1990), Astin (1993) and Brungardt (1996). Taking into account Kanter's (2006) framework for leadership skills: confidence, collaboration, accountability, and initiative, these learned traits are expected to influence the development of leadership skills of college athletes. These four specific attributes will be further examined throughout the study.

The next chapter will review the methodology used in this study. The study's theoretical foundations will be presented to describe the relationships between leadership development and college athletes, as well as identifying the specific skills that are developed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the leadership skills gained as a result of participation in intercollegiate athletics, and the influence that these skills have had on the development and growth of former athletes beyond college. Athletic administrators of intercollegiate athletic programs make the assertion that they develop a variety of skills in their athletes (Fondas, 2014; Meany, 2013; Rees, Howell, & Miracle, 1990; Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Whan, Jr., 1965). Through the review of past studies, this study examined what leadership skills are acquired as a result of participation in an intercollegiate basketball program.

As noted in Chapter 2, experiential learning (Hamachek, 1985; Kolb, 1984) explains how skills and techniques are developed by an individual's participation in extra-curricular activities. Astin (1993) found a substantial correlation between students who are involved in co-curricular activities and the development of those students' leadership skills. Also, students who participated in Kuh's (1995) study viewed their experiences outside the classroom as an opportunity to prepare and develop their knowledge for real world experiences. Research questions and the interview protocol were influenced by Senge's (1990) concept of a learning organization, Astin's (1993) theory of involvement, Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development, and Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence. Senge's (1990) concept of a learning organization and Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence provide the framework for the concepts of learning among a team, collaboration, accountability and initiative. Astin's (1993) theory of involvement and Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development provided the framework for the involvement in co-curricular programs which result in learning and the development of

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leadership qualities. The transferance of this knowledge to life after athletics will be examined using these theoretical frameworks.

Data were gathered through a series of personal, in-depth interviews with six to eight former NCAA Division II basketball players, a collection of demographic information, as well as an examination of personal artifacts that demonstrate their leadership development through their college athletic career. The face-to-face interviews were conducted over a span of two to four weeks for a period of one 60-minute session per participant.

Qualitative methodology was chosen for this study as this method enables the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the leadership skills developed through participation in intercollegiate athletics. A qualitative framework is well matched to this type of study, as the researcher is the primary tool to gather the data as well as immersing in the experience that the participants had in their intercollegiate athletic career.

Research Questions

This research utilized information gathered through interviews with ten former college basketball players to more fully understand the impact that participation in intercollegiate athletics had on the leadership skills gained and utilized in their life after athletics. This basic interpretive qualitative approach addressed the following research questions, which guided the study:

1. What are the perceptions of former intercollegiate athletes regarding leadership skills gained through team participation?

2. How do former intercollegiate athletes describe the influence that leadership skills gained through athletic participation have had on their development and growth after college?

Data Collection

This study examined the leadership skills that develop as a result of participation in an intercollegiate athletics program. Data for this study were collected through a basic interpretive qualitative approach. Each participant's responses were collected using this approach as a basic interpretive study allowed for a gathering of information in a systematic manner, which provided the researcher with a glimpse into the life of the participant (Berg, 2001).

This qualitative, interview study required thorough planning and advanced forethought as well as provided a deeper understanding of information than through quantitative means such as a survey. In-depth interviewing and narrative analysis were used to answer the two research questions and served as the primary method of data collection from the former student-athletes. In-depth interviewing is a highly personalized method of obtaining information based on the participant's experiences, as well as it allows the researcher to explore the participants subjective experiences in more detail (Bell & Hartmann, 2007).

Population

Purposive sampling was selected as the technique for this study and was the method used to identify the participants (Creswell, 2007). The interview study required advanced planning, and a part of that planning was the selection of the target sample. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to determine differences between the participants, which increased the likelihood that those differences were reflected in the results (Creswell, 2007). Through the selection of criteria such as gender and years removed from the team, there was a higher likelihood of discovering different perspectives, which is ideal in qualitative research.

The characteristics of the population determined the participants selected for the study, as purposive sampling does not intend to be statistically representative (Creswell, 2007). It is the

identification of specific characteristics and traits that makes a purposive sample ideal for a small, in-depth study. Members of this type of sampling were chosen with a purpose, as they represent a specific population, as well as enabling the researcher to understand the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Purposive sampling also allowed the researcher to make larger inferences from a smaller group of people (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The interview study required substantial thought and planning prior to conducting the interviews, and a part of that process was selecting the appropriate population that would have the experiences necessary to shed light onto the issues of the study (Creswell, 2007).

The sample population for this study was drawn from a mid-sized NCAA Division II institution in Southwestern Pennsylvania named "Rivers College" (pseudonym). This particular institution was selected based on the historical success of the men's and women's basketball programs. The participants were former student-athletes who graduated from the institution at least ten years ago. Six to eight former players were selected and these former athletes were participants of the men and women's basketball program for at least a three-year period.

After obtaining IRB approval from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and IRB and site permission from "Rivers College" (pseudonym), six to eight participants were selected. Creswell (2007) stated that five case studies should provide ample opportunity to identify themes as well as cross-theme analysis. The current athletic director and the university's alumni association were consulted in the identification of participants who fit the selection criteria. The researcher contacted participants who fit the selection criteria via phone, email, or in person. At that time, the researcher determined if the participants met the criteria to qualify for the study by asking the following: (a) a graduate of the study site, (b) graduated a minimum of ten years ago, (c) were

between the ages of 30 and 50, and (d) participated on the men's and women's basketball teams for a minimum of three years.

After verification that the potential participants met all of the criteria, the researcher presented the study to the potential participants which included the purpose, criteria for participation, risks and benefits, and contact information. The researcher encouraged the potential participants to ask questions to ensure their understanding of the study. Lastly, the researcher explained the instructions for submitting the informed consent to participate, invited them to participate in the study, and provided them with the informed consent forms via email to avoid the risk of coercion. The potential participants had one week to decide to participate and return the signed consent form via email or in person. A follow-up email was sent to those participants who had not responded within the week to remind them of the opportunity to participate.

Potential participants were assured in writing via the informed consent procedure, and reiterated through the researcher verbally, that they may withdraw from the study at any time if desired by contacting the researcher via phone, email, or in person with the contact information provided in the informed consent letter and form. If the interview was underway, they could also state their desire to terminate the interview and simply exit the interview. To ensure confidentiality, participants, "Rivers College" (pseudonym), and any other identifiers were noted with pseudonyms in this dissertation and any scholarly presentations or publications that resulted from this research.

Participant Interviewing

A qualitative study that utilizes interviews involves a process that enables the researcher to submerge herself into the lives, perspectives, and feelings of the participants (Creswell 2007).

The researcher must rely on the assistance of others who they may not have a relationship with, and begin a process that examines emotional responses of the participants. This process of understanding the emotions and perspectives of the participants is called empathetic regard (May, 2002).

Data were collected from face-to-face semi-structured interviews, a collection of demographic information, and an examination of artifacts related to the participants' participation in intercollegiate athletics such as awards, mementos, and documents. Qualitative studies often use in-depth interviews to gather data as they provide an opportunity for the participants to describe their personal perspectives (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Interviews also allow for an in-depth focus and enable the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the participant's experience (McDonald, 2005).

After receiving consent, each participant was sent an email to schedule the semi-structured interview. Available times were gathered from each participant before the appointment was scheduled. Once the researcher reviewed the available times with her schedule, she contacted the participants to schedule the interview and provided them with the interview protocol. The interviews took place at mutually convenient public locations for the participant and the researcher and were audiotaped or videotaped with the participants' consent. If distance prohibited an in-person interview Skype or other technology was utilized. The instrument required participants to provide demographic information (Appendix A), reflection on their athletic experiences and development of leadership skills, and their perceptions as to how their leadership skills have impacted their life after athletics.

The semi-structured interview protocol was created by the researcher and utilized when conducting the interviews. The specific design of the interview questions allowed for flexibility

so that the unexpected and unknown could be uncovered (May, 2002). The design of interview

questions focused on asking questions in which the intent was to understand the responses rather

than to receive particular data (Maxwell, 2005). The questions were designed to gather the

perceptions of leadership skills gained through participation in intercollegiate athletics, as well as

how those leadership skills have impacted the participant's life after college. The interview

protocol was provided to participants in advance in order to ponder questions, reflect on their

experience, and prepare well-rounded verbal responses.

Expert Review

An expert review was performed prior to the interviews being conducted to refine the

interview questions as well as provide clarification for the research design (Yin, 2003). An

expert review was performed to assess the quality of the instrument and to identify any potential

researcher bias as a result of the interview protocol being created by the researcher. To improve

the interview protocol, the researcher interviewed individuals with the same or similar inclusion

criteria as the main study.

The interview protocol was performed on a small sample of individuals, three college

coaches, who are also former college athletes, and are currently employed at the researchers

institution. Each individual was asked to respond to each question as if he or she were involved

in the main study and also to comment on the clarity of the questions. Responses were recorded

using an audio recorder. At the end of the interview, each individual was asked for feedback on

the entire experience of being interviewed with the protocol. Revisions were made according to

the respondents' feedback and the researchers own experience of using the protocol and

recording responses. The expert reviews were audio recorded in order for the researcher to

review, critique, and modify the protocol once the interview was completed. This technique also

allowed the researcher to improve the data collection tool as well as identify her pre-study

thoughts and assumptions regarding what the participants may say in response to the questions.

No information from this expert review was included in the main study and no data from the

review was used to inform the actual study.

Interview Protocol

The alignment of interview questions with the research questions is contained in the

Interview Question-Research Question Matrix (Appendix B).

1. Think back on your time at "Rivers College" (pseudonym). What were the benefits and
   leadership skills that you developed through your athletic participation?

2. Please give an example of a situation in which you used one of more of the leadership
   skills during practice, competition or a team activity?

3. Please give some examples of a situation in which you used one or more of the leadership
   skills gained from athletic participation after you graduated college?

4. What was the functional position that you played on your team, and how did that role
   enhance the leadership skills that you developed?

5. What are the leadership skills that you have learned as a result of your participation in
   college athletics?

6. How did the relationships that you developed with your teammates and coaches impact
   the development of your leadership skills?

7. Do you believe that you would have gained the same or different leadership skills if you
   had not participated in college athletics? Please explain.

8. What aspects from your athletics participation are you able to apply to your present life?
   Please explain how you have applied those skills?

9. Do you believe that your athletic participation prepared you for life after college? Please elaborate.

10. Are there any specific leasdership skills that you learned through your athletic participation that you believe are critical to success in life after college?

11. Is there anything else that you would like to add to our discussion regarding your leadership skills gained through college athletics?

Data Anaylsis

Data analysis in qualitiative research consists of collecting data and analyzing it by coding into themes so that a narrative can be developed (Creswell, 2007). Data analysis methods related to qualitative guidelines in the literature about systematic, useful ways of interpreting research data were followed. The researcher conducted a thorough review of interview transcripts to highlight significant statements related to the research questions. Analysis techniques such as categorizing, coding, and themes were utilized followed by an analysis to identify new or reoccurring themes (Moustakas, 1994).

Individual interviews were transcribed, read, and coded by the researcher. The first step of analysis involved identifying specific statements in the transcripts that provided information about the perceptions of the participants and organized them in a table to discover the range of perspectives related to each interview question. Notes and concepts were notated in the margin of the transcripts to identify important statements and emergent themes.

The next step involved deleting statements irrelevant to the topic and others that were repeated or overlapping. The identified significant statements were then coded and organized into themes. Each interview question was analyzed to identify commonalities and differences among the participants responses (Creswell, 2007). Patterns and associations were identified

within each particular theme to answer the research questions. While analyzing the transcripts, the researcher identified concepts and occurances that fit into categories. Once the categories were determined, the process of coding the occurances into themes and sub-themese occured. The codes were then be combined into general themes, which encompassed the categories and subcategories (Creswell, 2007). The combination of categories into themes is referred to as clustering (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Clustering is the term given to the forming and sorting of categories. This type of analysis allowed the researcher to gain a better understanding of the research through grouping items that have similar characteristics. Clustering typically begins with regularities that frequently occur, and then patterns are transformed into categories in which items are sorted (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Overall, the data were synthesized into a composite description of perceptions that the participants had related to their athletic participation, leadership skills developed, and how their athletic participation has affected their lives after college.

Analysis of data in qualitative research involves the creation of a narrative that brings to light emergent themes (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The narrative was created through a careful and deliberate process while also allowing the writer to be creative. Writing the narrative involved creating a detailed description of analysis of the data while highlighting the story line that emerges from the data collected (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The researcher kept in mind four important dymanics when creating the narrative: conception, which is the development of the story; form, which is the timeline of the narrative; structure, which are the layers that unfold in the themes that emerge; and cohesion, which is the integrity of the narrative (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

In qualitative anaylsis, there are three critical reasons for interpretating the data correctly which include critical common sense, self-understanding and theoretical understanding (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The researcher immersed herself in the data as familiarization of the data is a crucial part of research anaylsis (Creswell, 2007). As the reseacher develops a deeper understanding of the data, the foundation is formed which allows the researcher to identify the patterns that exist and begin to account for why those patterns occur (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

Reliability and Validity

Validity and reliabilty in qualitative research are viewed as well grounded and sustainable (Maxwell, 2005). The researcher needs to have dependability, confirmability, credibiltiy and transferability as these concepts strengthen the data obtained in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Research allows for readers to question if they believe the results, thus the importance of validitiy in the study. Validitiy also provides for a straightforward way to reference the credibility of a conclusion, interpretation or explanation (Creswell, 2007; Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011).

Validity should always be viewed upon as a goal of the researcher as it provides the support for determining which accounts are credible and which are not (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011; Maxwell, 2005). The process of qualitative research enhances the validity of the study. As a result of the researcher being present during the collection of the data, the validity is strengthened. However, a qualitative researcher is not a passive participant which presents itself as a concern (McDonald, 2005). The verbal and nonverbal cues that the researcher uses can have an effect on the type of response received from the participant, thus the researcher needs to be aware that the participant can be influenced. Also, the researcher must be aware that personal

bias can impact the validity of the study (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011; Maxwell, 2005).

A method to increase the validity of this study was to utilize an expert panel to review the interview questions prior to the beginning of the study. Current college coaches, who were former college athletes, were asked to respond to each question as if they were a part of the main study, as well as to comment on the clairty of the questions. Each expert was asked for feedback on the entire experience of being interviewed with the protocol. An expert panel review allowed the reasearcher to improve the data collection tool prior to the commencement of the study as well as to identify her pre-study thoughs and assumptions regarding what the participants may say in response to the questions. This expert panel review process provided an opportunity to assess researcher bias, frame questions, and refine the research instrument (Creswell, 2007).

Triangulation

Validity of this study was also increased through the triangulation of multiple sources of data. Triangulation of data is an accepted practice to strengthen the validity and reliability of qualitative studies. Data that is triangulated also reduces the risk that biases occur, while providing a broader and deeper understanding of the data (Adler & Clark, 1999; Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011).

This study triangulated data using three sources to gather information which included interviews, artifacts demonstrating leadership development, and member checking. Through the collection of multiple interviews, document analysis, and member checking, the validity of the qualitative study was strengthened through the collection of data (Creswell, 2007; Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011). Also, interviewing multiple participants reduced the risk that the evidence provided reflected bias.

In addition to interviews, triangulation also involved artifact analysis. Participants were asked to bring to the interview personal mementos or documents that demonstrated their leadership development during their previous athletic participation. Artifacts consisted of personal documents such as letters, photographs and media related items (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

Member checking, the third part of triangulation, allowed for the solicitation of the participants' views on the credibility of how the data was interpretated (Creswell, 2007; Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011). This validation of the data is the most critical technique for establishing credibility as it required taking data back to the participants to verify that the interpretations are accurate and credible (Creswell, 2007). Participants were provided with the transcribed interview as well as the researcher's initial thoughts on emergent themes. The researcher followed up with each participant one week later to confirm that the emergent themes were interpretated correctly by the researcher.

The triangulation of multiple sources of data allowed the reserarcher to discover themes through the use of multiple methods of data collection. However, there are times that similar themes may not emerge. It is then that the researcher must look toward divergent themes which tell a different story (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011; Maxwell, 2005). The researcher must attempt to organize the data while listening for perspectives that fall outside of the emergent themes (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The researcher must also be aware of discrepant data, as it can be a serious threat to the validity and reliabililty of the study (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011; Maxwell, 2005).

Summary

This study utilized qualitative methods with a research design of a basic interpretive approach as it allowed for the analysis of how participation in intercollegiate athletics impacted the participant's development of leadership skills. Basic interpretative qualitative studies also limited the researcher's potential manipulation of results. Purposive sampling was employed as the main method of selecting the participants as it allowed for the participants to be statistically representative.

In this study, six to eight former student-athletes at a NCAA Division II institution in the sports of men's and women's basketball were interviewed. Through the primary data collection of personal interviews, this study will recognize the leadership skills that were developed as a result of participation in college athletics, as well as determining how those leadership skills impacted the former athlete in their life beyond college.

Significant amounts of data were obtained through different forms including interviews, a collection of demographic information, artifact analysis, and member checking. It is the researcher's goal that this research provides insight into the leadership skills that are developed as a result of participation in an intercollegiate athletic program.

CHAPTER 4

DATA AND ANALYSIS

Chapter Four includes the results of the interviews conducted of seven former men's and

women's basketball players at an NCAA Division II northwestern institution. This institution

was selected based on the historical success of its men's and women's basketball programs. The

purpose of this study was to examine the leadership skills gained as a result of participation in

intercollegiate athletics and the influence that those skills had on the development and growth of

former athletes beyond college.

The first section of this chapter will review a demographic analysis of the participants

that includes their ages, years spent on the team, residency, undergraduate majors, highest degree

earned, and current profession. Additionally, an overview of how the interviews were conducted

will be included.

The second section of this chapter will be divided into three distinct sections and will

examine the themes that emerged throughout the interviews that were conducted. The analysis

will begin by exploring the skills of accountability, collaboration, initiative and confidence as

identified by Kanter (2006) as skills that determine success in life to determine if the participants

developed or enhanced these skills as a result of their participation in intercollegiate athletics.

This analysis relates to the first research question presented in this study.

The third section of the analysis will involve an analysis of the interviews to determine if

the participants' involvement in intercollegiate athletics impacted their life after college, as well

as identifying the skills that the participants believe are critical to life after college. This analysis

relates to the second research question presented in this study. The final section of the analysis

will identify the additional emergent themes that evolved throughout a review of the interviews conducted with the participants in the study.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Demographic Analysis</h2>

Seven former participants of River's College's [pseudonym] men's and women's basketball program participated in this study. Four females and three males participated with their ages ranging from 30 to 50 years of age. Four participants were in the 30-35 age range, with the remaining three participants in each of the three remaining age ranges.
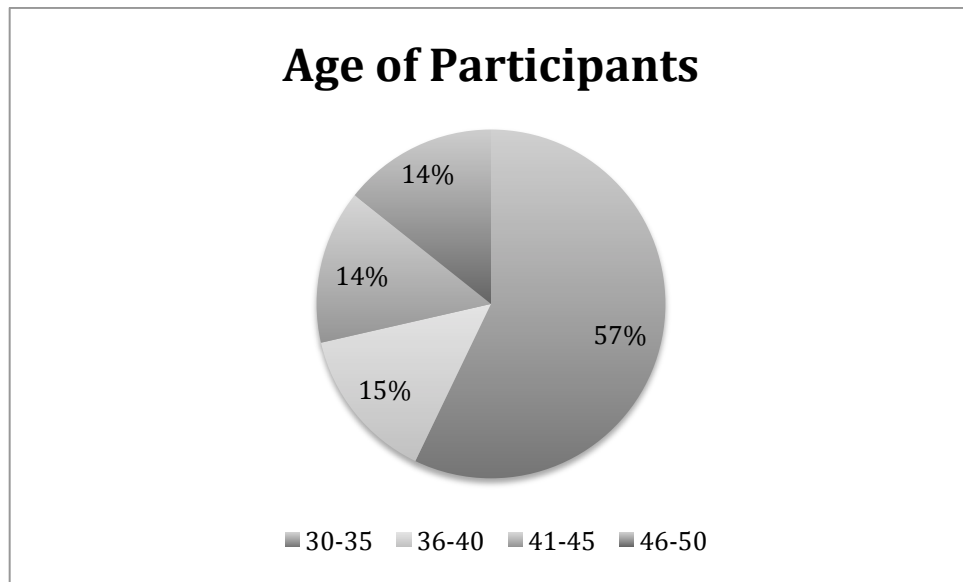
Figure 3. Ages of participants.

All participants are residents in the states of Maryland, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. During their undergraduate career three participants were education majors, three were sports management majors, and one was a business marketing major.

Undergraduate Major

14%

43%

43%

Business Marketing   Education   Sports Management
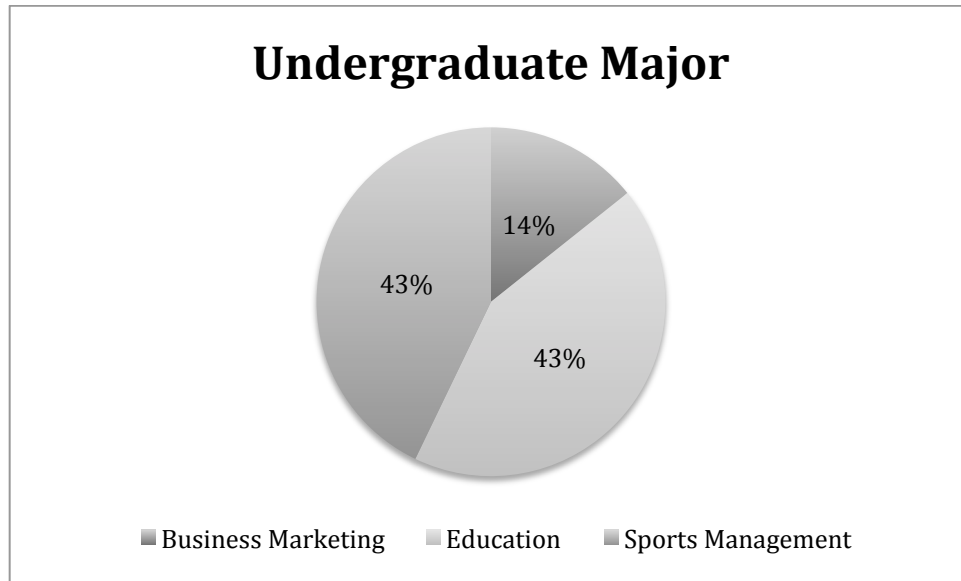
Figure 4. Participant's undergraduate major.

Three of the participants spent three years on the team, one spent three and a half years, and the final three participants spent four years on the team. Five participants defined their role on the team as a point guard/shooting guard, one as a small forward, and one as a power forward. All seven participants were recruited to play on the teams and all of the participants received some type of athletic scholarship for their participation on the team.

Five of the participants indicated that they were a starter on the team, whereas two of the participants indicated that they began as a practice player and worked their way to a starting role throughout their time on the team. Six of the participants have earned a master's degree and one participant has earned a bachelor's degree.
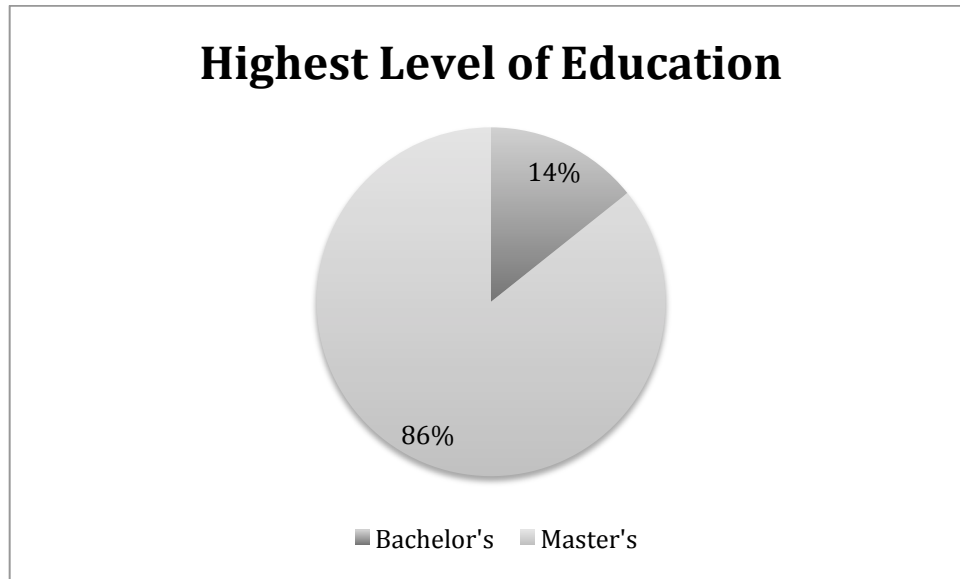
Figure 5. Participant's highest level of education.

Six of the participants indicated that they were involved in some level of collegiate coaching after they had exhausted their eligibility. Five of those participants conducted their collegiate coaching at Rivers College with four of the participants coaching with the same coaches that they played for.

Currently, three of the participants are involved in collegiate athletics, three are involved in secondary education (with two of those also involved in high school athletics), and one is a marketing manager for a major apparel company.

Table 1

Participant's current profession/position

Participants [pseudonym]	**Current Profession/Position**
Lee	Assistant to the Athletic Director for Business
Philip	Athletic Events Manager
Caroline	Collegiate Coaching
Mae	Director of Special Education
Ward	High School Teacher/High School Basketball Coach
Jennie	Marketing Manager
William	Special Education Teacher/High School Basketball Coach

All interviews were completed in the thirty minutes to one-hour range. Three of the participants chose to be interviewed at a local coffee shop, three interviews took place at the participant's place of work, and one interview occurred at a local establishment. All participants were friendly and open to sharing their experiences. Furthermore, the participants were excited to share their stories and one participant even described the experience as a therapy session. Reminiscing and reflecting on their athletic participation enabled the participants to describe actual events that occurred during their participation on the basketball team.

All interviews were video-recorded in their entirety. Four of the participants also shared artifacts that they believed demonstrated leadership skills that they developed throughout their intercollegiate athletic participation. All interviews and artifacts that were provided by the participants will be described in the following sections.

Emergent Themes

The following sections will identify the themes that emerged through interviews with the seven participants in this study. Additionally, the examination will include artifacts that the participants provided as examples of the leadership skills that they developed throughout their intercollegiate athletic participation.

The analysis will first begin by analyzing the interviews to determine if participants developed the specific skills of accountability, collaboration, initiative, and confidence. Kanter (2006) believed that these skills affect the success of the individual in life. Next, an examination occurred regarding the impact that the leadership skills gained through intercollegiate athletic participation had on the participant's life after college as well as the specific skills that the participants identified as critical to life after college.

The final section of the analysis will include an examination of the additional emergent themes that arose from the interviews. The additional emergent themes will include the areas of the coach's impact on the leadership skills developed by the participants, the development of skills that assisted the participants in dealing with adversity, and the importance of understanding roles and the value that each individual brings to the success of the team.

Leadership Skills Developed Through Participation

Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence analyzed why winners continue to win and why losers continue to lose. Through her research, Kanter (2006) discovered three skills that are the cornerstones of building confidence and determine what makes individuals successful in life: accountability, collaboration, and initiative (Kanter, 2006). Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence was the guiding leadership framework for this study as the researcher sought to determine if former college athletes developed the skills that Kanter believed develops confidence. The following sections will examine the skills of accountability, collaboration, initiative, and confidence to determine if involvement in intercollegiate athletics had an effect on the development of those particular skills.

Accountability

The skill of accountability was the first skill examined in this study. All of the participants identified accountability as a leadership skill that they developed through their participation in college athletics. The participants described accountability as being accountable for your own actions, following through on individual and team goals, being responsible and accountable for your actions, owning up to mistakes, putting in the effort necessary for success, rising to challenges, and being an example to others.

Jennie [pseudonym] described accountability as the top skill that she developed through her athletic participation, and it is a skill that she finds invaluable in her professional career as a marketing manager for a major apparel company.

> If we didn't make a time on a run during conditioning workouts, and the coaches would ream us out, it taught us that it's just being accountable. I think so many times you just want to blame something else. The coach didn't start the stopwatch on time or my teammate wasn't going to make it so I just stopped trying to make it. Being accountable was a huge skill that I took away from my athletic participation and I know that it has helped me in my professional life because we all make mistakes. With my particular job managing client's accounts, I touch every department within the company but I don't necessarily own every aspect of the process. There are a lot of times where something goes wrong and it is out of my control, but my name is on the schools that I represent. I have to own up to the mistake that is made and say that it is my fault and I won't let it happen again.

Jennie also attributed her athletic participation with providing her with the opportunity to engage in competition that placed her into challenging situations. These athletic experiences enabled her to develop her skill of accountability.

> I would not have been put in those situations. Being a student is one thing but I don't think that you are challenged to that degree. I don't think that you are put in a position where you have to manage your time. You're tired, you don't want to be at practice, and you have a big test the next day. But you have to learn, the same as in real life, that there's all those things that are waiting for you at home. If you're going to put everything into your job, which you should for the time that you are at work, you have to block that

out and prioritize, complete a task, and tackle this task next. Accountability is my huge takeaway from athletics as it has lead to my success in work. Even if you're the new kid on the block and you mess up, and sometimes people wait for you to, you need to take ownership of it.

Ward [pseudonym], a special education teacher and high school basketball coach, described how his development of accountability has enabled him to teach his high school basketball team similar lessons.

One thing I've strived for with my team is that at the end of the game it doesn't matter what the score is. It's about looking internally and asking have I done everything I can to be as good as I can be? Have we done everything we can do to be as good of a team with whatever time that we have together? At the end of the day if I've done everything that I'm supposed to, I can look myself in the mirror and say I've done everything that I can. Those lessons of accountability have been huge in my students succeeding academically and our team being competitive. It's about getting them to understand that you have to put in the time and put effort into your work in order to get something in return. My experiences have enabled me to teach them that you can't have it one way and expect to get something in return and not put in any effort.

Rising to challenges and pushing yourself are all aspects of accountability that Philip [pseudonym] developed through his athletic participation. Philip, an athletic events manager for a university, was a starter at Rivers College [pseudonym]. Being in that role developed his skills of accountability because it forced him to exceed the expectations set forth for him. Being a starter, he realized that he was accountable for his actions and understood that as a starter he was providing an example to his teammates.

Mae [pseudonym], a director of special education in a school district, began as a role player and worked her way into a starting role on the women's basketball team. That transition enabled Mae to develop her skill of accountability.

> When I started making the transition of a role player to a starter at the end of my sophomore year I realized that my junior season was about to begin. I realized that I needed to become more accountable for myself, and that meant taking my pre-season training over the summer more seriously. That summer I also found myself transitioning into more of a leader, getting into better shape, and working on my leadership skills so that I could be the leader and the player that our team needed.

As evident in the above analysis, developing the skill of accountability enabled the participants to understand the importance of responsibility, setting standards for themselves and their teammates, and then translating those skills to assist others in their pursuit of their own skill of accountability.

Collaboration

Collaboration was the second skill examined in this study. All seven participants described in various ways the impact that involvement on a team had on the development of the skill of collaboration. For some it was the ability to work with others and understanding the importance of working with other individuals toward a common goal. For others it was the opportunity to experience a diverse group of people as well as learning how to communicate with their coaches and teammates.

Philip discovered that working with a team enhanced his skill of collaboration. Furthermore, working with others, the exposure to both cultural and racial diversity, and understanding different personalities impacted Philip's development of collaboration. Philip

stated, "Being able to deal with different personalities enabled me to understand that people are motivated differently. Team members, both within athletic teams and in an organization, react differently. Being able to work well together and understand what motivates everyone is what makes a team successful."

William [pseudonym], a high school teacher and basketball coach, attributed the development of collaboration to learning how to work with others as well as his exposure to diversity.

> There are valuable life lessons taught from being a part of a team. Playing sports you are a part of a team and in the professional world you will be on a team in one way or another. You have to learn how to accept your role and work with other people. If you're on a team or you work on a team, everyone shares the same goal which is to make that team or company successful. Sports teaches you how to do that, how to come together, do the same type of work together, build each other up, and be someone else's crutch. Through sports that's what I always learned.

William also spoke about how his athletic participation exposed him to the diversity of other individuals. This exposure allowed him to experience individuals with different cultures and backgrounds. Participating in intercollegiate athletics, and in his current position of coaching high school athletes, has enabled William to meet many different people and develop numerous friendships. This exposure to diversity has enabled William to grow and learn on a personal level as he has enjoyed experiencing different backgrounds. He has also been able to gain a broader understanding and a deeper appreciation of the backgrounds of other people.

Caroline [pseudonym], a college basketball coach, also attributed her enhancement in collaboration to her intercollegiate athletic participation. Specifically, Caroline believed that

effective collaboration among a group is impacted by the communication skills of the individuals involved. Caroline described herself as a good communicator before college but attributed her athletic participation to strengthening those skills as well as learning how to be more honest, direct, and open with her teammates.

Participation in intercollegiate athletics has also enabled Jennie to develop her skills in collaboration and teamwork. Her experience has allowed her to not only gain a better understanding of what collaboration means but also how it has benefited her personally.

Teamwork is another skill that employers expect. They want to hire team players, but I wonder if people really know what that means. It means taking responsibility for something that may not be your fault because at the end of the day we are all in this together. Not everyone is like that. You will have people possess that sense of teamwork and ones that do not but I think understanding the importance of teamwork is what sets you a part from other people. At the time you might not see that it's making you stand out or putting you ahead but it definitely does in the long run.

Ward witnessed through his intercollegiate athletic participation that the teams that had better collaboration and teamwork were more successful than the teams that had better talent in the individual players.

When you get a collection of guys together who have different personalities and priorities it's a delicate balance. A big thing for me in college was making that transition of understanding teamwork, figuring out my role, and understanding the pecking order that then ensued. For our team to be successful everyone had to do his part. I was a part of teams that were more athletically talented, but the teams that had better communication and collaboration were more successful. The year we went to the NCAA Elite 8 and the

NCAA Final Four everyone meshed together on that team. We had the pieces in place

and from my prospective I was able to start seeing how important collaboration and

teamwork was early on. I would say that some of that realization of the importance of

collaboration skills started to develop in high school but I think that it took being with my

college coach to really start understanding its impact. I don't think I was mature enough

in high school to fully understand it yet.

The skill of collaboration was something that Mae learned through her intercollegiate athletic

participation and it is something that she has found invaluable in her professional career.

I learned how to value others and I've learned that it does take a team no matter where

you work or what you do. Participating in sports goes back to roles, leadership skills, how

to work together and communicate, and trusting one another. It taught me that if you are

able to hire your own staff or hold a position, that you as a leader don't have to have the

answers to everything. And you can't be the expert on all things. So you have to make

sure that you surround yourself with people that can enhance your own leadership ability

and make your team stronger because of their own expertise in their areas.

Lee [pseudonym], a college athletic administrator, believed that communication and teamwork

were the most important skills that she learned through her athletic participation. Lee was the

point guard on her team and was forced to use communication techniques with her teammates on

a regular basis. Lee described herself as a very quiet individual when she first entered college

and how her participation in basketball, and more specifically how her role as a starter, enhanced

her communication skills.

For me in general, with my personality, I think being a starter was the only way that I

would have developed communication skills. If I was a role player and didn't play much I

probably wouldn't have been able to develop those. I was forced to be vocal. My freshman year, at Oak Hill University [pseudonym], I didn't talk. I didn't speak and I was the point guard. The coaches kept getting mad at me because I would not talk. In order to teach me how to communicate they put me in a locker room and I would have to yell. The assistant coaches would be outside of the locker room and I would have to yell loud enough that they could hear me outside because I would not speak. That helped me to break through and realize that I needed to talk and develop the skills to communicate.

The importance of collaboration was apparent to Lee quickly as she realized that her team needed to communicate and work together. When asked what happened if teams do not collaborate and communicate she responded,

You lose. More than likely we wouldn't have been as successful. Not just my individual success but the success of the whole team. We would not have been as successful as we were without everyone being good communicators and working well together. Learning those skills starts at the top with the coaching staff and it trickles down to the team.

Lee also stated that she would probably be the same quiet person that she was before college had it not been for her participation in intercollegiate athletics. Being in the leadership roles that she is currently, Lee believed that she would not possess the communication or collaboration skills necessary to be successful personally or to lead a successful organization.

Lee selected a sculpture of the 2004 NCAA National Championship team as an artifact that represented collaboration among the team and the success that can occur when communication and teamwork are present within a group. The sculpture is a replica of the starting five and it symbolized for Lee how effective communication, teamwork, and discipline were key characteristics and qualities that lead to her successful team.

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Figure 6: 2004 NCAA National Championship statue.

It is evident from the participant's responses that teamwork, communication, and collaboration are integral to the success of a team or organization. Their participation in intercollegiate athletics impacted the development of collaboration as well as increased their understanding of its importance in working with others toward a common goal.

Initiative

Kanter's (2006) skill of initiative was the third skill examined in this study. All of the participants indicated that initiative was a leadership skill that they developed throughout their intercollegiate athletic participation and it was the skill that was identified the most throughout the interviews. The participants described initiative as leading by example, displaying perseverance, and having a strong work ethic. Being an example to others, setting individual

goals, dealing with pressure, being a vocal leader, and allowing actions to speak louder than words are all attributes of initiative that the participants identified.

Ward indicated that one of the first leadership skills that he developed was initiative. He identified the specific skills of work ethic, discipline, focus, and determination when thinking of initiative. "When developing initiative you need to start with prioritizing yourself and setting individual goals. You then must have the work ethic, determination, and drive to get there. No one is going to hand it to you. You have to go out and take it."

Ward also indicated that remaining focused on the goals that you set for yourself must be a priority. "Striving to do your best all of the time. Knowing that there are going to be bumps in the road and that there are going to be failures along the way. Even with those failures you can't just quit and stop things. You have to continue to do your best."

Leading by example was the first leadership skill that Caroline thought of when asked what skills she learned through her intercollegiate athletic participation.

> I would have to say the first skill was leading by example. People think that a leader is someone who is vocal, but you can be a very effective leader through your actions without saying anything. I would say that leading by example would probably be the #1 thing that I was taught. I always had a good work ethic but my coaches always reminded me that leading by example was important. You don't always have to be the person to say something. People will follow you just through your actions and how you carry yourself.

Caroline also indicated how stressful situations, such as athletic competitions, provide opportunities for individuals to display their initiative under pressure. "If you are in a pressure situation, or something is not going well, you must continue to hold your head high, don't panic,

or get emotional. I think people respect the ability to remain calm and they will follow your example."

Mae also indicated that leading by example was a skill that she learned through her intercollegiate athletic participation. "During practices I always tried to be that person that worked as hard as possible because I wanted to set an example for everyone else on my team. I was never that person who would take a play off or slack and then expect others to do more."

Philip was the point guard on the men's basketball team and through this role he developed his skills in vocal leadership.

> From a basketball perspective, the analogy of the quarterback of the team, is very true with my position. It enhanced my vocal leadership skills and being able to vocalize what needed done on the court. You're the quarterback. You're the coach of the other four teammates out there. My role on the team did play a part in my development of becoming a vocal leader.

Being a vocal leader and leading by example were skills that Philip developed through his participation. "Leading by example is always key. To tell someone to do something is always different then seeing them actually doing it themselves. Leading by example is a great way to show a teammate how it can be done. Showing rather than speaking."

Philip selected an artifact that he felt demonstrated his leadership skill of initiative and leading by example. *Street & Smith's College Basketball* magazine's (2001) preseason annual preview analyzes each collegiate team and conference in the nation and makes preseason predictions. Philip was selected as the preseason pick for the Mahoning Valley Conference [pseudonym] Freshman of the Year and was featured inside the magazine. As someone from a small, rural high school, the selection was very meaningful to Philip. Despite being a freshman,

he found that the coaches often turned to him to lead by example during preseason conditioning, study tables, on the court, or watching game film. At the end of the season Philip was named a member of the Mahoning Valley Conference All-Rookie team and he was very proud of being looked upon as a leader on his team despite being a freshman.

Lee, who also served as a point guard, attributed her team's success to all of her teammates serving as leaders and leading by example. "We had a lot of good leaders. I think everyone knew their role. There wasn't a vocal leader on the court. Most of us led by example more than vocalizing anything. Our coaches were the vocal leaders so our team instead led by example."

Leading by example and initiative were leadership skills that Jennie also developed throughout her athletic participation. She learned early on in her collegiate career that there are different types of leaders but she believed that leading by example was the most influential with a group of people. Jennie also described how her coaches enabled her to understand her own personal initiative through the expectations that they set forth in workouts.

> Our hardest times were during preseason when we were getting into shape and had a
> grueling schedule of workouts. During those workouts there would be occasions where
> the coaches would pinpoint the upperclassman and captains and push them to see if they
> were going to break. The coaches would give me a harder time to make that was
> borderline unrealistic just to see if I was going to give up or show that I was going to
> push through and take on the challenge. I think now, and I learned this coaching with
> them, that I'm sure that I didn't get those times because they were unrealistic. But if I
> pushed through and had that determination and led by example to the underclassman then
> the coaches were satisfied. Whether it was at the track or in the gym, they would push us

to see if we were going to throw in the towel. I think of that example all of the time because there are days that you just needed to push through. There were times that you just don't think you can do it anymore. Those are the days that you just get through and it goes back to pushing through when you don't think you can run anymore. I don't know if I would have that mindset if it weren't for athletics. It's about finding a different way to get the task done.

Jennie also spoke about how her personal initiative benefited her financially through earning a full-ride athletic scholarship.

When our season started my freshman year I was the sixth or seventh man, but even then I was definitely more of a role player on the team. I was never on the starting team at practice and I was always on the team practicing against the starters. It was around Christmas time and we were playing in a tournament. I entered each game as the sixth or seventh man and had a really good tournament. After the tournament we were driving back to campus and Coach Washington [pseudonym] called me to the front of the bus and told me that I should get my cell phone out and call my parents. She then told me that I would want to tell them that when I come back to campus from Christmas break that I would be on a full scholarship and that I earned it. Being on a full ride was never an option or something that was discussed as an option so I was very emotional. It was so rewarding for me to know that my hard work and initiative paid off and was being recognized by my coaches.

Developing the skill of initiative also translated into Jennie's professional career as a marketing manager at a major apparel company.

That exact situation of having the skill of initiative and working hard translated into my career at Searight Style [pseudonym]. Before being hired at Searight Style, I was a college basketball coach. When I resigned from college coaching I had applied for a job at Searight Style but didn't hear anything back. College coaching was my job, my salary and benefits and I went out on a limb leaving. I moved back home and was working at a retail store to make some money. I continued to call Searight Style once a week to follow up on the status of the position. It wasn't until October that I was called for an interview and it had been eight months since leaving my coaching position. I had the same mentality with my job search as I did during my freshman year. I stayed persistent and continued to pursue the position at Searight Style. I thought, I'll come scrub toilets and show you that I can work hard. I take it less for granted because it wasn't about knowing anyone or having connections at Searight Style. Getting hired was about my initiative.

When asked to provide an artifact that represented a leadership skill gained throughout athletic participation, Jennie selected an image of her team after winning the conference championship her freshman year. The picture shows the team and coaches huddled together surrounding the conference championship trophy. Each member of the team is also holding a miniature replica of the larger conference trophy. Jennie described this picture of being representative of her determination and perseverance throughout her freshman year. It also demonstrated how her hard work and initiative enabled her to earn a full athletic scholarship.

William also indicated that initiative and work ethic were skills that he was able to develop throughout his athletic participation. Being a captain and starter his sophomore year, he was able to recognize when individuals needed to have the initiative to lead the team. Being a

leader of a team requires the ability to recognize the needs of the team while also realizing how to lead the group so that they are successful.

> As a player there were those times where you got in a rut and weren't playing very well. There was a time at Rivers College where we were on a losing streak. Some of the members of the team, including myself, decided to have a team meeting without the coaches. We needed to restructure everything and play together. Taking this initiative helped our team to refocus their priorities and goals.

William also developed a sense of work ethic and leading by example through his collegiate participation and applies those skills to his role as a head high school basketball coach. "One thing that I do with my players when I put them through a workout is that I do the workout with them. I'm teaching them that people will work harder when they see you doing it." William also strongly believes in teaching his players about hard work. "When you get a job in the real world you are going to work hard to get promoted. So I teach my players that in sports you have to learn to work hard to earn your spot and that hard work will get you promoted within the team."

It is evident through the analysis, that the participants developed the skill of initiative as a result of their athletic participation. Developing the skill of initiative enabled the participants to develop a strong work ethic, understand the importance of leading by example, setting individual goals, developing perseverance, and understanding that actions speak louder than words.

Confidence

The ability to be confident as a result of participation in intercollegiate athletics is reflected in the fact that five of the seven participants identified confidence as one of the main skills that they developed through their athletic participation. The participants defined confidence as self-confidence, to believe in yourself, belief in your own abilities, and a full trust and belief

in others. Interactions with their coaches, being placed in stressful or adverse situations and overcoming those challenges, leading with a quiet confidence, and displaying confidence as a new member of the team are all examples of situations that developed the participants confidence.

When asked to describe confidence and how intercollegiate athletics enhanced the development of it, Jennie attributed her development of confidence to her coach.

Coach Washington [pseudonym] was an intense coach and would scream, yell, and would say some pretty mean things at times. I feel now that there is nothing that anyone can say to me that's going to make me crawl in a corner and cry. There's one example that I can relate to my professional career now, working for Searight Style and a specific situation that dealt with the wrestling coach at Cricket Lane College [pseudonym]. When my company becomes partners with a university there are some teams that do not want to change. Some teams have a side contract with another smaller company where they got certain perks and it's hard for them to understand that the contract with our company is bigger than them. So, it's not a matter that the coaches can go out and find the brand that they want to wear anymore. It's that we are paying the department so much money and the teams have to be in our apparel. So, there's a lot of push back from coaches not wanting to change and those coaches thinking that our product isn't as good. So I went into a meeting at Cricket Lane College, just myself, and I was in a room with the whole wrestling staff. It felt like I was a boxing match and I didn't have any gloves. I knew quickly that the coaches didn't have a problem with me, or the service that I provide, but it was more about the product. Anything that I would say it was a black and white situation. The way that I handled myself in that meeting was that I didn't get flustered, I

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didn't get a shaky voice, and I didn't get intimidated. I just listened to the coaches and marinated their comments. Entering college I was not like that. I was super sensitive and was a people pleaser. My athletic participation enabled me to be in a work environment that is intense and competitive. There are highs and lows because you're in sports and that's what sports teaches you. Playing in college athletics definitely gave me a lot more confidence then I had going in for sure.

Lee, a participant on the same team as Jennie, encountered the same coaching staff and had a very similar experience. She stated, "I don't want to get into negative things but being a college athlete and playing in a specific style of coaching, once you get through a program like that you basically feel like you can do anything. There's nothing that can come your way that you can't overcome."

Mae attributed her development of confidence to the stressful and adverse situations that her athletic participation put her in. She also believed that the preparation that she put into each practice and competition enabled her to become more confident as well.

Athletic participation taught me to go into every situation confident. I might have been a little nervous, but I was nervous before every game. Even though I knew that I was prepared to play, I always had the nervous butterflies. Always. And then once you start getting into the game the nervousness fades away, the confidence takes over, and you do what you need to do.

When asked how she relates that to her life after college Mae said, "I always make sure to try and be prepared. You know you are going to be nervous but you need to have that self-confidence to do what you need to do, have the self-confidence and belief in yourself, and do what you need to do."

Confidence in yourself does not always mean having to be the leader and to lead with a vocal style of leadership. Philip commented that his athletic participation enabled him to develop confidence as well as an awareness of the differences in leadership styles.

> There are hundreds of various types of leadership qualities that you can say you gained from athletics. Each individual would be a little bit different on how they answer that question. I considered myself more of a vocal leader on the court but not necessarily in the office or workplace. I see myself more as a role player or team player in a professional setting. At this point in my professional career I am more of a team player and helping out with the general task at hand rather than someone that stands on a pedestal and is the vocal leader than maybe I was as a basketball player. My involvement in athletics enabled me to recognize the difference in leadership styles and to develop the confidence that I could adjust between those styles depending on what the situation needed.

Transferring into a new university, and being the new player on team, can be an intimidating situation. William joined Rivers College his sophomore year, after transferring from a Division I program. Immediately, William knew that the coaches looked upon him to start right away, often times before upperclassman who had been with the program longer. William placed higher expectations on himself while being humbled by the acceptance of his fellow teammates.

> I had to work extra hard to go right in as a sophomore and serve as a leader in order for us to be successful. I was fortunate that the seniors let me join and display my leadership abilities because they had been there for four years. Being a starter and knowing that I had to come in and perform definitely gave me better sense of confidence in myself.

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After a review of the interviews, the participants all indicated that confidence was a skill that they developed as a result of their participation. Developing the skill of confidence enabled the participants to increase the belief in themselves and their own abilities, enhance their self-confidence, and to foster a full trust and belief in others.

Based on the review of each interview, all of the participants supported the belief that the skills that Kanter (2006) believed are critical to being successful in life; accountability, collaboration, initiative, and confidence, could be developed through participation in intercollegiate athletics.

In addition to the skills that Kanter (2006) believed are crucial in leadership and success in life, this study also sought to examine how the leadership skills developed through athletic participation impacted the former student-athlete in their life after college. This next section will examine occasions in which the participants have relied on their skills developed through their participation in their life after college, as well as the skills that the participants believed are critical to success in life after college.

Impact of Leadership Skills after College

Participants were asked to reflect on the leadership skills that they developed throughout their intercollegiate athletic participation that they have relied on in their life after college. Work ethic, communication, self-discipline and respect, communication, collaboration, and teamwork are all skills that the participants identified as skills that they have relied on in their life after college.

When asked to reflect on the impact that participation in intercollegiate athletics had on her life after college, Lee believed that her participation taught her leadership skills such as self-discipline and respect, as well as made her more attractive to future employers.

The biggest thing that I learned being a part of a team was self-discipline and respect. Those are just simple things that I don't think young kids are taught these days. If a coach yells at you it's not personal. They are trying to help you improve and to teach you self-discipline. It's hard for coaches to discipline players now because they take things so personally. The coaches are just trying to get the best out of you as they can.

Lee also believed that her participation in intercollegiate athletics made her more marketable to employers.

I believe that student-athletes carry a different skill set than someone who was not a student-athlete. If you're a student-athlete in college you are more than likely more competitive. You can take that as a negative or a positive but I take it as a positive. You're going to work hard and your time management skills and organizational skills are going to be very beneficial in the work force. You learn early on that as a student-athlete that you need to manage your time.

Ward was confident that his participation in intercollegiate athletics prepared him for life after college. Without basketball, William described seeing himself settling for mediocrity and easily falling into a rut. His participation also enabled him to develop a strong work ethic and the ability to communicate with others.

I teach my players and students now that you have to put in time and effort in order to get something in return. You can't have it one way and expect to get something in return without putting in any effort. I teach an Algebra I class and often times students don't want to be there. I tell them that if you feel stuck here why don't you give everything you can and see what you can do and make the most out of the situation.

The ability to communicate with others is another skill that Ward was able to develop through his athletic participation. Ward now instills the skill of communication in his players through basketball. "I try and teach my young men that communication is important. Not only communicating among the team but also having the confidence to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and concerns to me as their coach." Ward believed that his ability to communicate was enhanced through his athletic participation. He also believed that social media makes it easy for young people today to avoid learning how to communicate. Ward is taking the skills that he learned through his athletic participation and is putting them into effect by teaching his high school team the importance of communication.

Caroline attributed the opportunities that she was exposed to as a student-athlete as the most impacting factor on her development of leadership skills. "College, in general, prepares you for life, but I think that when you are a student-athlete you have more of an edge because you are exposed to a lot more situations than your average student would be."

Being a better role model and developing a sense of discipline, respect, communication, and loyalty are other leadership skills that Caroline believed impacted her life after college athletics.

> I think you will be a better role model for kids. In my time at Rivers College, when I was coaching and when I was not, I know I must have done something right because of the students who reach out to me and still talk to me. And they tell me what they learned from me. I think you learn how to be a good role model for them. And a lot of these kids, you know as well as I do, you're their parent. Through my time as a student-athlete, I was always very disciplined. That was my upbringing in high school but I think I learned how to be more disciplined while playing in college. I also learned how to become a much

better listener because I think in order to be a good leader you have to be a good listerner. I always thought that I was a good communicator and being open but I learned how to become a much better communicator and more open. I also think that I really learned loyalty. All of those skills just come with being a student-athlete.

Caroline learned a lot about respect from watching other coaches throughout her athletic career. Specifically, she witnessed the men's coach, how he handled his team, and the respect that he demanded from them and she was able to learn from that. Although he was not her coach she learned from him through her observations of him and she was able to apply what she learned into her life after college.

Accountability and not making excuses are two skills that Jennie developed that impacted her life after college and in her career with Searight Style.

Accountability is my huge takeaway as it has lead to success in work. Even if you're the new kid on the block and you mess up, and sometimes people wait for you too, you need to take ownership of it. Working with athletic directors and coaches, if there is an order with a mistake, situations can get heated. But when you own up and admit the mistake, guarantee to make it right, and tell them that it won't happen again it makes the situation much better. Sometimes people don't know what to say when a mistake happens, and I've learned in the workforce, that most people don't own up to their mistakes.

Another skill that Jennie also learned though her intercollegiate athletic participation, and has been able to apply to her life after college, is to not make excuses. She has found that co-workers will make any excuse to get out of work including inclimate weather prohibiting them from making it into work. She recalled days where she could have made an excuse to not make

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practice or to skip a class, but she was taught never to take shortcuts. Jennie attributed her no excuse attitude to her intercollegiate athletic participation.

William attributed his exposure to diversity to his intercollegiate athletic participation. "Basketball has allowed my family and myself to meet a diverse set of people. That has helped us with learning and growing." Coaching at three different high schools and the exposure to different groups of people has allowed William to experience different backgrounds as well gain a broader understanding and appreciation of how others were raised.

Being a talented basketball player in college also gave William the opportunity to travel the world and play basketball in various countries. Venezuela, the Czech-Republic, and Australia are three of the countries that he had the opportunity to compete in. "Through my basketball career I have traveled all over the world and have met all kinds of people. Being an athlete has definitely helped me to grow as a person, see how other people have been brought up, and how other countries work as well."

Participation in intercollegiate athletics enabled Mae to develop her skills in collaboration, teamwork, and managing others. In her role as a director of special education in a school district, she has to not only manage the various responsibilities that her position entails, but also to provide support and direction to others in her group in order to work towards common goals.

> Leadership is about understanding the roles that I have to play not only in my office but also in working with principals, teachers, and personal care aides. As a leader I must be able to provide the group with the tools to work as a team. Being able to bring the group together as a team I have to be a leader and have the ability to understand all of the different roles that I play. It is also the ability to understanding all of the different

personalities within the group. Who needs coddled, who needs encouraged, and it's always about giving those individuals value back. Everyone needs to feel valued because if they don't think that they are valued then you will not get productivity out of them. It's the same way with sports. Every player has a role. Even the practice players have a role. They have to practice just as hard as the starter does because if they don't push that starter to be better then the team will not be as successful.

Philip indicated that although he would participate in intercollegiate athletics if he had to do it all over again, he did believe that there were things in college that he missed out on because of his involvement in intercollegiate athletics. "I never had a real job until I was done playing collegiate basketball. I was 23 or 24 years old before I had a real job because up until that point basketball was my job."

Although at times he feels as though he missed out on experiences that normal college students experience like the social aspect, he would follow the same path and participate in intercollegiate athletics again. Athletics provided him with opportunities and experiences that he believed normal college students do not receive, as well enabled him to develop his leadership skills of teamwork, communication, and building relationships.

I think overall, what little bit you might miss out on being an athlete compared to the general student population, being an athlete completely outweighs that. I would do it all over again. I am very appreciative of the opportunities that I was afforded through college basketball. The relationships that I have built with my teammates and coaches are something that is special and unique to a college athlete.

Communication, work ethic, teamwork, collaboration, self-discipline, and respect are all skills that the participants indicated they learned through their athletic participation that they have been

able to apply to their life after college. The next section will examine the leadership skills that participants identified as critical to success in life after college.

Critical Skills Learned

Participants were also asked to reflect on the leadership skills that they believed were critical in life after college that they developed through intercollegiate athletic participation. Communication, working with others, dealing with stress and adversity, developing work ethic, drive, and determination, perseverance, and a never give up attitude are all skills that the participants identified as critical in life after college.

As far as the skills learned through her athletic participation, Lee believed that communication and collaboration have been the most impactful skills. In her professional career as an athletic director, communication has been a skill that has been extremely beneficial. Lee identified the ability to communicate with people, work with others, and relate to others as the most important skills that she developed.

Participation in intercollegiate athletics enabled Mae to encounter situations in which she needed to have the skills to make effective decisions. Her athletic participation enabled her to develop her skills of reflection in stressful moments, the ability to handle pressure situations, and the opportunities to build critical thinking skills.

> Sports and leadership have taught me how to make life decisions. We all go through life and there is going to be stress, nothing is perfect. There are going to be things in your life that come up, even like the things that we have had happen in our school district on how to deal with crisis. You learn how to deal with those situations no matter what they are.

Learning how to work with others and working together as a team are skills that William believed are critical to success in life after college. William described being a leader as getting to know the people that you are going to be working with and getting to know your employees.

Sports is something that helps everybody out. You can learn from it whether you're a starter, a role player, or you hardly get any playing time. There are valuable life lessons learned from being a part of a team. Playing sports you are a part of a team and in the working world you will be on a team in one way or another. You have to learn how to accept your role and work with other people. If you are on a team or you work on a team everyone has one goal to make that team or make that company successful. Sports teaches you how to do that, how to come together, do the same type of work together, build each other up, and be someone else's crutch. Through sports that's what I always learned.

William selected a photo of his high school basketball team that he coached as an artifiact that demonstrated the leadership skills that he developed through his athletic participation. Those leadership skills have benefited him in his life after college and he finds himself teaching those same skills to his high school basketball players. The photo that William provided is a team photo of a girls high school basketball team that William coached. In this photo the team had just won the league championship, all of the players are holding up the number one sign, and William is wearing the basketball net that they cut down around his neck. Through his role, William was able to apply the leadership skills that he learned into his life after college and to his high school players as their head coach. Teaching the young women to work together as a team, believing and trusting in one another, and leading by example are all skills that William was able to instill in his players.

Perseverance is a skill that Jennie believed was critical to life after college. She described perseverance as never giving up and remaining focused on something if you truly want it. She reflected on her persistence with Searight Style. There was a seven-month period that she called the human resources department every week to follow up on a job that she had previously applied. Jennie realized that her persistence paid off when she received an interview and she recognized that most people would have just given up and not continued to follow through.

Never giving up and dealing with adversity are skills that Philip believed are imperative to life after college.

> The never give up attitude and dealing with adversity are critical to success in life after college. If your down 15 with a minute to go there are still strategies to come back and try to get that victory. The never give up attitude and being positive are critical in all aspects of life and you can carry that mentality throughout your life. If it's getting a bid out on something, understanding time management, or being able to move forward are all skills that participation in intercollegiate athletics teaches you.

Caroline reflected upon the skills that are critical to success in life after college and determined that communication was a key attribute to being a great leader. With effective communication also comes having the ability to be extremely honest. Being a good listerner, being upfront, and honest are all traits that Caroline believed lead to success in life. "Whether it's something that another person wants to hear or not you have to tell them regardless. If you don't have people's trust then you will never be a good leader."

Ward spoke about the importance of determination, goal setting, and perserverance as skills that were critical to life after college. Intercollegiate athletic participation enabled Ward to learn about prioritizing individual goals, knowing yourself, and setting goals for yourself. Work

ethic, determination, and drive are then important skills to accomplish those goals. Ward's coach instilled in him early on the importance of perserverance and tencity, skills that he now instills in his high school basketball players.

> I remember him telling me that you will always have those days where you don't feel like doing it, but those are the most important days to go and push through. I tell my athletes in practice that we are going to have the days where you don't feel like being here or you just can't find it but somehow, someway you have to find a way to dig down to that spot where you have never been and find it. I'm not sure if our kids know what they have inside of them all of the time because they have never had to go there consistently. Until you have to get to that point occasion after occasion you don't really know. To hit that point once doesn't mean that you know how to get there all of the time. Athletics is one thing that pushes you mentally on a consistent basis.

Communication, developing work ethic, working with others, communication, and developing skills to deal with stress and adversity are all skills that the participants identified as critical to life after college. Based on the participants reflections, it is evident that all of the participants viewed their participation in intercollegiate athletics as an activity that not only impacted their life after college but that also enabled them to develop leadership skills that they believed are critical to success in life after college. The next section will examine additional themes that emerged throughout the interviews with the seven former college basketball players.

Additional Emergent Themes

Through the analysis of the interviews, three additional themes emerged from the data collected. First, the relationship that the participants had with their coaches had a strong impact on the development of leadership skills in the participant. Secondly, the participants identified

the ability to deal with adversity as a skill that they felt had an impact on their leadership development. Lastly, the involvement on the team in which players had specific roles to fulfill (practice player, role player, starter) enabled the participants to develop a broader understanding of roles and their correlation to life after college. The following three sections will further explore the additional emergent themes of coaching style, dealing with adversity, and understanding roles.

Coaching Style

The participants indicated through their interviews the impact that their coach had on the development of their leadership skills. The coaches enabled the participants to develop skills in the areas of dealing with criticism, witnessing and learning from their coach's mistakes, reflective decision-making, and differences in coaching styles and impact that those differences had on their leadership skills.

Philip's coaches taught him how to not only understand constructive criticism but also how to translate that criticism and put it into action. He highlighted the importance of developing a relationship with the coaches that centered on trust. Once that relationship of trust exists, the athletes are more receptive to their coach's criticism because they know that the criticism exists to make the team more successful.

Caroline and Ward both learned what not to do from their coaches. They both described instances where even from a bad experience that they were able to learn and develop their leadership skills. Caroline described that someone is always watching and that you can learn from others successes and failures.

One mistake that our coaches made was always putting teammates against each other without realizing that it did not cause good competitiveness among the team. As a result

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we were never a close-knit team. Also seeing that our coaches were not always in

agreement with each other and not on the same page affected us as a team. Some people

may say that through a bad experience that they did not learn anything, but you can learn

what not to do. You pull from what worked and what didn't work. Part of a coach's job is

not just to teach their athletes X's and O's, but also to teach them life lessons that they

are going to take with them five to ten years down the road. And if you do it right, your

going to know you did it right, because your former athletes are going to let you know.

Ward had similar sentiments as Caroline regarding learning from mistakes that his coaches
made. He also spoke to the influence that his coaches had on his leadership skills and how that
influence ultimately led him to a career in teaching and coaching.

Having all different kinds of coaches is good because you get to pick the good and

discard the bad, which I think is important. When I was playing with Coach Mallard

[pseudonym] I spent a lot of time with him. Probably more so than other players did. My

time with him started to intrigue me and led me towards a career path of teaching and

coaching. As I played for him I started to look at things not in the sense of being a player

but as a coach and I started to look more in a broad spectrum. It then became clear to me

and I realized that I was meant to coach, to be a teacher, and to work with kids. Once I

realized my career path, my time as an athlete was great but I wanted to learn and

understand what my coach was doing and why he did things in a specific way.

Being reflective and giving your time to process decisions was a skill that Mae learned from her
college coach.

One of the things that I remember from my college coach was that he never made snap

decisions. If there was an incident or something going on he was one that would take a

step back, reflect on the situation, get the information necessary, and then make a

decision. I use that skill a lot now because if you make snap decisions it's usually based

on emotionality. Sometimes you need to take that step back, get all of the information,

and you need to take your emotionality out of your decisions.

William described the impact that his coach had on the development of his leadership skills

through the personal connection that he felt with his coach. He played at a Division I institution

before he transferred to Rivers College. He felt that his Division I coach was more intense

because of the pressure that he felt to win, whereas his coach at Rivers College conveyed a sense

of genuine caring for his players. Both coaching styles motivated William to play hard for them,

but William felt that not all athletes would respond positively to the intense style of coaching.

"All of the Division I coaches that I know, their style is in your face yelling and screaming. I

can't speak for all coaches but with Coach Baden [pseudonym] he showed that he cared about

us. I find myself emulating that type of style with my players now."

Jennie had, what one would describe as, a very intense coach who's coaching style

wasn't always the most appropriate. Her players constantly sought her approval, an approval that

was very difficult to accomplish. Jennie described moments in which there were times that her

coach crossed the line of being ethical and was verbally abusive to the team. As difficult as some

situations might have been, Jennie still remains thankful for her coach and acknowledges that she

would not have developed the leadership skills that she did without her intense style of coaching.

Yes, she was tough. I could have so many resentful and bitter thoughts towards her,

towards the entire coaching staff, and I don't. I'm thankful. There were times that I

thought that she didn't need to go there and that her comments went a little too far. But I

don't know if someone who was less intense or less abrasive would have enabled me to

develop the leadership skills that I did. I really believe that I was broken down to be built

back up, but I don't know if I had to be broken down to the degree that I was. I don't

think I was that bad of a person going into college, but I do think that I was very weak

minded and very sensitive. So maybe I did. It's amazing that as bad as my coaches were,

and as much as people would say that they didn't have to be the way they were for our

team to be that successful, whether they even realized that they were doing it, it made our

team stronger and it developed me into the person that I am today.

Lee, who had the same coach as Jennie, also described the impact that her coach had on the

development of her leadership skills. She also reflected on how different coaching styles did and

could have impacted the development of her leadership skills.

I don't believe that just being a student-athlete develops leadership skills. I do believe

that it depends on who your coach is if you develop leadership skills. I probably would

have developed the same leadership skills that I did through my participation. Not

necessarily from my teammates but more so from my coach. You adapt to certain

coaches and their coaching style. I'm not saying that Coach Washington's [pseudonym]

intense coaching style created my leadership skills, but a good coach can create

leadership skills. They just went about it differently. When I left Rivers College I thought

that there was only one way to be successful and that was Coach Washington's way.

When I returned to Rivers College as an administrator, and have been around the

women's basketball team, I'm amazed by how different the two coaches are and how

successful they both are. The current coach opened my eyes and it has been a good thing.

It was like a breath of fresh air to see that it can be done differently, positively, and that

you can still be successful. Knowing my personality out of college I would have gravitated towards the current coach versus the one that I played for.

Dealing with Adversity

Developing perseverance, tenacity, and the mechanisms to handle adversity was the second theme that emerged in this study. All of the participants indicated that these were skills that they developed through their intercollegiate athletic participation.

Caroline not only developed adversity through her own athletic participation but also through watching other athletes compete. She described techniques in dealing with adversity as remaining calm, holding your head high, and keeping your emotions and actions separate. Caroline recalled supporting the women's softball team at Rivers College. The team was very successful, often competing for a national title. "Watching the women, even when they were down in a game 8-0, and there were two more innings to go you would just watch. Their faces never changed, they never got rattled, and they were persistent." Watching their perseverance and how they handled adversity enabled Caroline to learn from their example.

Mae also described how her participation in athletics developed her skills in dealing with adversity.

My athletic participation also taught me perseverance because life does have struggles. Just like in practice, sometimes you think that you don't have anything else to give. Just as in life you can find just that little extra ounce of effort to get you through that tough time and push you forward to whatever goals that you set to achieve.

Philip discussed the importance that his athletic participation played in his skill development in dealing with adversity.

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Athletics taught me that you must be able to handle adversity, as you never know when a difficult situation will arise. When a player goes down with an injury you must be able to adapt and make decisions quickly that will benefit the team. That same type of mentality occurs in life as things will occur that you never planned on. Being able to adapt and handle that adversity makes you a stronger individual in life.

Ward described the importance of being able to respond to adversity, as life is full of difficult moments. He developed techniques to handle adversity and he is now teaching those techniques to his high school basketball team.

I've hit on it a couple of times with my team. Learning from failure, working to learn from it, and turning a negative into a positive are all skills that I teach my young men. We are all going to have bumps in the road along life's journey. How you respond to it and pull yourself back up is huge, especially in young kids and the development of who they are going to become down the road. Dealing with adversity, not giving up, and learning how to deal with people in general are all skills that I developed through my athletic participation.

Understanding Roles

The ability to understand roles and the value that each individual brings to the team was the final theme that emerged in this study. Understanding and appreciating the role that each participant played on the team enabled the participants to value the role that individuals play in the participants' current professions.

Mae worked her way through all three roles during her college basketball career including the practice player, role player, and starter. Her role as a practice player allowed her to understand that her role was to push the starters to be better. Her objective as a role player was to

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understand that her role would change depending on the needs of the team. When she became a starter, Mae understood that her role now became to lead the team and to always have the needs of the team supersede her own needs.

> Participating in sports goes back to roles, leadership skills, how to work together and communicate, and trusting one another. It taught me how if you are able to hire your own staff or hold a position, you as a leader don't have to have the answers to everything. And you can't be the expert on all things. So you have to make sure that you surround yourself with people that can enhance your own leadership ability and make your team stronger because of the expertise in their own areas. My involvement in college athletics taught me to learn about other individual's roles and how their value and expertise plays an important part in the success of the team.

Ward also credits his understanding of the importance of roles within a successful organization to his participation in collegiate athletics. He understood early on that being a part of a team meant sacrificing your own goals for the success of the team.

> I found out real quick that I put winning above everything that I personally wanted out of things. The biggest thing for me was learning and understanding my role on the team and what it would take from me for us to be successful. And I sacrificed a lot for the betterment of the team. As a player, and now as a coach, understanding your role and your situation no matter what it is incredibly important. To be able to understand that it doesn't matter what you do, that everybody has their role, and the job is to make the team successful.

Philip also attributes his participation to his ability in understanding roles. Being able to deal with different personalities and understanding that everyone is motivated differently is

instrumental in the workforce. "Team members, within athletic teams and within the organization, react differently. Being able to work well together, understand the value that each person brings, and what motivates everyone within the team is beneficial to the overall success of the organization."

Summary

This chapter presented seven former college athletes' perceptions of the leadership skills gained as a result of their participation in intercollegiate athletics, how those skills have impacted their life after college, as well as the emergent themes that arose from the interviews. The reflections are composed of former college basketball players' interview narratives and artifacts that they considered representative of their leadership skills. Chapter four focused on Kanter's (2006) concept of "confidence" which is supported by the leadership theories of Astin (1993), Senge (1990) and Brungardt (1996) as well as the additional themes that emerged from the interviews with the participants. An analysis of the interviews found that the participants supported Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence. The participants also indicated that they developed the leadership skills of accountability, collaboration, initiative, confidence, understanding roles, and dealing with adversity. Furthermore, the participants indicated that the coaches and their coaching style had a significant impact on the development of their leadership skills. The final chapter will discuss the results and their relationship to the theoretical foundations of Senge (1990), Astin (1993), Brungardt (1996) and Kanter (2006), the implications and recommendations from this study, as well as suggestions for future studies.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Chapter Five examines the research questions initiated in the study through the

summation of themes that emerged through the interviews with seven former college athletes

presented in Chapter Four. This chapter also considers the relationship between the theoretical

foundations and how they relate to the findings from the interviews. The discussion will examine

the social science theories focused on in this study, the two research questions guiding the study,

the relationship to the theoretical foundations, the conclusions and implications of this study,

recommendations for college athletic programs, and recommendations for future studies.

The social science theories that this study examined through the theoretical foundations

are Senge's (1990) concept of a learning organization, Astin's (1993) theory of involvement, and

Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development. Additionally, Kanter's (2006) concept of

confidence served as the theoretical framework for the specific leadership skills examined in this

study. According to Kanter (2006), confidence is built upon the three principles of

accountability, collaboration, and initiative.

Senge's (1990) concept of a learning organization focused specifically on the concepts of

teamwork and collaboration. The five disciplines that he highlights include systems thinking,

shared visions, mental models, personal mastery, and team learning. These disciplines enable the

participant to enhance their skills in collaboration, teamwork, and goal setting which are all

essential aspects in team sports (Senge, 1990).

Astin's (1993) theory of involvement integrates the concepts of leadership development

with the involvement in activities throughout college. According to Astin, as individual's

become more involved in activities in college their leadership skills are further enhanced as well

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(Astin, 1993). Involvement, according to Astin (1999), occurs when an individual is provided with the opportunities to not only learn but also to apply their knowledge through experiences that are outside of the classroom.

Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development describes an individual's journey through their development of leadership skills. The journey occurs over the lifetime of the individual and it highlights the importance of adversities and challenges that the individual faces in their personal growth and development of leadership skills (Brungardt, 1996).

Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence provides the guiding leadership framework that is examined in this study. The attributes of accountability, collaboration, and initiative are the cornerstones of confidence and Kanter advocated that these skills provide the foundation for success in life (Kanter, 2006). These three skills, along with confidence, were examined in this study to determine if former college athletes perceived that they developed these skills as a result of their participation.

Research Question One: What are the perceptions of former intercollegiate athletes regarding leadership skills gained through team participation?

The first research question explored the former college athlete's perceptions of the leadership skills that they gained through their intercollegiate athletic participation. More specifically, the concept of how the former athlete's participation in a team sport impacted the leadership skills that were developed were examined.

Perceptions of Skills Gained

The participants in this study overwhelmingly agreed that their involvement in intercollegiate athletics impacted the leadership skills that they developed. Many of the participants agreed that they had developed some of their leadership skills before their

involvement in intercollegiate athletics, but they believed that they were not mature enough in high school to fully understand or appreciate the importance of those skills. The strengthening and enhancement of leadership skills through intercollegiate athletic participation is consistent with studies conducted by Astin (1993), and Pascarella and Terenzini (2005).

This results of this study found that former student-athletes believed that their intercollegiate athletic participation impacted the development of their leadership skills. All of the participants indicated that they developed the skills consistent with Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence: accountability, collaboration, and initiative. Furthermore, the participants also indicated that they developed skills in teamwork, understanding roles, determination, perseverance, and self-sacrifice. All of these skills are consistent with studies conducted by Pascarella and Smart (1991) and Rudd and Stoll (2004). The development of leadership skills through collegiate athletic participation is also consistent with a study conducted by Beard and Weese (2012).

Additionally, all of the participants also agreed that their involvement in intercollegiate athletics exposed them to opportunities to which they otherwise believed that they would not otherwise have been exposed. Mae stated, "I don't know that I would have gained all of those leadership skills because I would not have had experiences to enhance those skills. I think a lot of people don't learn how to utilize or learn those skills because they are not involved in team activities."

Philip also supported the concept that exposure to opportunities through college athletics enhanced his leadership skills. He stated:

> I think you can develop leadership skills without athletics but I don't think that it happens as quickly or is as easy to understand. The opportunity that athletics provides, especially

at the collegiate level, I can't think of anywhere else that you get those types of

experiences between the ages of 18 and 24. So, I think you can get there it's just that

athletics fast tracks your development of some of those leadership qualities.

The concept of athletics providing opportunities to experience growth in leadership skills is

consistent with Johnson and Harper's (2005) study which found that participation in athletics

enabled participants to develop an understanding of effective teamwork and a growth of intrinsic

leadership skills. Kuh (1995) also found that opportunities outside of the classroom such as

athletics enabled participants to develop, expand upon, and apply their leadership skills.

Finally, the participants also supported the notion that in addition to their actual

participation, that the coaches had the most influence on the development of their leadership

skills. Five of the participants indicated that their coaches had a direct influence on the

development of their leadership skills. Consequently, although Jennie and Lee described their

coaches as having a negative coaching style, they still indicated that their coaching style did

enable them to personally develop positive leadership traits. Furthermore, Caroline and Ward

both agreed that their coaches influenced their leadership skills but not in the traditional sense.

They learned what not to do from their coaches, which had a positive effect on the development

of their leadership skills. Through witnessing their coaches' mistakes, Caroline and Ward were

both able to learn from those lessons. Caroline stated that student-athletes always learn from

their experience even if that experience was negative.

Some people might say that they had a bad experience and didn't learn anything from it.

Yes you did. You learned. Watching your coach do something that isn't working enables

you to learn that you don't ever want to do it that way. So your still learning something

from your participation. You take what works and you discard what doesn't. Those

experiences, both positive and negative, allow you to develop your own leadership skills.

As demonstrated through the data analysis, the former college athletes interviewed in this study

supported the suggestion that their participation in college athletics developed their leadership

skills. The next section will examine the second research question and examine how athletic

participation impacted the participants' life after college.

Research Question Two: How do former intercollegiate athletes describe the influence that

leadership skills gained through athletic participation have had on their development and growth

after college?

The second research question examines the seven former college athletes' perceptions of

how their athletic participation has impacted their life after college. Participants were also asked

to reflect on their athletic participation while also examining and identifying the leadership skills

they believed were critical to success in life after college.

Life after College

All of the participants agreed that their participation in intercollegiate athletics prepared

them for life after college. Caroline believed that college prepares students for life, but that

student-athletes have more of an advantage because they are exposed to more things than a

general student would be.

Lee and Ward also agreed that intercollegiate athletics prepared them for life after

college. Lee stated that athletics enabled her to develop a skill set that she believed was different

from a general student while also enabling her to become more attractive to future employers.

I believe that student-athletes carry a different skill set than maybe someone who wasn't

a student-athlete. As someone who has hired employees I always looked to hire athletes

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because I know that they are typically more competitive while also holding other

attributes such as an understanding of time management, dedication, and drive.

Ward also believed that without athletics that he could have easily fallen into a rut and settled for

mediocrity. "My involvement in athletics enabled me to discover my passion for working with

kids through academics and athletics. Without athletics, and the leadership skills that it has

taught me, I don't know where I would be right now."

Supporting the research of Eiche, Sedlacek, and Adams-Gaston (1998) and McHale,

Vinden, Bush, Richer, Shaw, and Smith (2005), Jennie was adamant that her participation in

athletics developed her self-confidence. She described herself as sensitive and a people pleaser

when she first entered college. Through the intense style of coaching and high expectations set

forth by her coach, Jennie developed a confidence in herself that she believed she would not

have developed anywhere else. "Playing in college definitely gave me a lot more confidence that

I had going in for sure. Sports brought me highs and lows, enabled me to learn how to deal with

those, and developed my skills of hard work, perseverance, and the ability to communicate

effectively."

William and Mae absolutely believed that their participation in athletics prepared them

for life after college. Through their participation they were able to develop their ability to

appreciate and value the individuals that they work with while also appreciating others'

background and diversity. Mae stated,

Participation in sports developed my ability to understand roles and develop my

leadership skills in working together as a group and learning to trust one another. Being a

leader you don't always have the answer to everything. You must be able to surround

yourself with people that are able to enhance your leadership skills and that you trust

because you can't have the answer to everything. By understanding others, working together as a team, and trusting in those within your team the team becomes stronger and more successful.

The ability to work with others, as highlighted by William and Mae, supports research conducted by Chemers, Watson, and May (2000), Chen and Bliese (2002), Hansen, Larson, and Dworkin (2003), and Shulman and Bowen (2001).

All of the participants' comments regarding the impact that college athletics had in their lives after college support Sommers' (1991) study. This study found a student's leadership skills after college were influenced by the number of activities involved in, the quality of the activities, and the role that the student served while participating. Kuh (1995) also found that students who were engaged in activities outside of the classroom are not only able to develop their leadership skills but are also given opportunities to practice and refine their skills before beginning their life after college. Furthermore, the impact that intercollegiate athletic participation had on each of the participant's life after college supports Gould and Carson's (2008) study that found that the skills developed through athletic participation could be applied throughout the participant's life after college.

Critical Skills

There were numerous skills that the participants believed were critical to success in life after college that they developed throughout their intercollegiate athletic participation. The ability to effectively communicate, understanding the importance of goal setting, the perseverance to push forward, and the ability to deal with adversity were several of the skills that were identified by the participants.

Ward expressed the ability to set goals while also exhibiting the work ethic, drive, and determination to accomplish the goals as skills that are critical to success in life.

> I tell my students that if you see a doctor, or a professional athlete, or you see someone who is a millionaire because he or she is an entrepreneur and started something new that it all comes back to their work ethic. You have to start with prioritizing yourself, knowing yourself, and setting goals for yourself. But then having the work ethic, determination, and drive to get there. I can't instill heart in a kid. I can teach you a lot but I can't teach you heart.

Ward's identification of goal setting, perseverance, and goal setting supports Gayles (2009) study that found that student-athletes developed skills in mental training and goal setting. The ability to set goals enables the student to set standards that they consider lead to success.

The ability to effectively communicate and work among a team are skills that Caroline and William highlighted as critical to success in life after college. Caroline's impression of a leader is someone who has the ability to be an effective leader while at the same time being extremely honest. As equally important as being an effective communicator is the ability to listen to others. William also spoke of the importance of communicating within a team setting, a skill that he learned through his athletic participation.

> Getting to know the people that you are working with is an important trait of leadership. If you are the leader then you need to know your employees, being open to listening and communicating with them, and understanding the importance that each person brings to the team. A successful organization is only as successful as the individuals that make up the team.

Communication and teamwork, as identified by Caroline and William, further increases and supports the findings of several studies in which participation in athletics develops the skills of its participants (Eccles, Barber, Stone & Hunt, 2003; Eitzen & Sage, 2003; Extejt & Smith, 2009; McAllister, 2006).

Mae, Philip, and Jennie all identified the skills of perseverance, dealing with adversity, and having a never give up attitude as critical skills that they developed through their intercollegiate athletic participation. Participation in college athletics enabled Mae to learn how to make life decisions, deal with times that are stressful and unexpected, and the ability to have perseverance because life does include struggles. Pushing through adverse times and having a never give up attitude are all critical skills that Philip identified as well. His athletic participation enabled him to develop the ability to always look for strategies to accomplish a task. Never giving up and having the perseverance to see a task through are skills that Jennie also identified as critical to success in life. Being strong minded and developing self-confidence are skills that Jennie also developed and apply to her life since graduating from college. Mae, Philip, and Jennie's abilities to face a task directly, and having the confidence that their skills will enable them to accomplish the task further enhances and supports studies conducted by Fox (1997), Holt, Tink, Mandigo and Fox (2008), and Levy and Ebbeck (2005).

As demonstrated through the data analysis, all of the participants interviewed in this study supported the suggestion that their participation in college athletics enhanced their life after college and enabled them to develop leadership skills that they believe are critical to success in life. The next section will examine the three theoretical foundations that the study was based upon as well as the guiding leadership framework, which identified the four specific leadership skills examined in the study.

Relationship to Theoretical Foundations

This study sought to examine three theoretical foundations and their correlation to participation in an intercollegiate athletic program. Senge's (1990) concept of a learning organization, Astin's (1993) theory of involvement, and Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development integrates the concepts of teamwork and collaboration, involvement in activities, and the progression and development of leadership skills. Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence provided the guiding leadership framework as well as identified the specific leadership skills examined in the study.

Senge's Concept of a Learning Organization

Senge's (1990) concept of a learning organization was the first theoretical foundation examined in this study. It encompasses five disciplines that individuals must progress through in order for the group to be successful. The ability of the participant to master each stage is dependent upon carrying the knowledge from the previous stages to assist the participant in his or her knowledge and growth of the current stage. The five disciplines of Senge's (1990) learning organization include personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking. Throughout all of the disciplines, the individual is developing skills, sharing a vision, and creating a sense of teamwork.

Throughout the interviews all of the participants stressed the importance of working together as a team, understanding the roles of each individual on the team, creating a sense of team chemistry, and the value that each person brought to the team. Mae reflected upon the importance of teamwork, "I learned how to value others and I've learned that it does take a team no matter where you work or what you do."

The participants also indicated that being a part of a small squad size increased their ability to develop close relationships among their team members. This concept that small squad size impacts the leadership skills of the participants was also found in a study conducted by Wright and Cote (2003). Ward indicated that team chemistry was not only integral to the success of his team but also required a delicate balance of managing each individual's different personalities. "I honestly don't know if anything is more important than getting the right group of guys together and just working it out. Team chemistry is very important for a team to be successful." Additionally, Lee and Jennie indicated that their team was closer as a direct result of the negativity displayed from their coaches. Jennie stated, "We all really wanted to play hard for them and play hard for each other because we saw each other being broken down. It created a bond between us and brought our team closer together."

Additionally, participants reflected upon their time on the team and how their skills increased throughout their years on the team. All of the participants began as regular members of the team and worked their way into a captain's role. Caroline viewed her role as team captain as "an extension of the coaching staff." Serving in the role as team captain, and the leadership skills gained from that role, further supports studies conducted by Grandzol, Perlis, and Draina (2010) and Hall-Yanessa and Forresster (2004).

Senge (1990) also highlighted the importance of having an awareness of goals throughout the process. Ward indicated that goal setting was a technique that his father instilled in him. "Having goals and working towards them was something that my father instilled in me. At the beginning of each year I would make a goal list, and the final goal was to accomplish all of the other goals. Those goals kept me focused and helped to motivate me."

As demonstrated through the analysis, the participants supported and enhanced the research of Senge (1990). Through their athletic participation they were able to develop and master the concepts of teamwork, collaboration, goal setting, and sharing a vision. Next, the analysis will examine the second theoretical foundation Astin's (1993) Theory of Involvement.

Astin's Theory of Involvement

Astin's (1993) theory of involvement was the second theoretical foundation examined in this study. This theory associates the quality of the opportunity and the quantity of time spent in an opportunity to the development of leadership skills. Sax (2008) also supported the notion of time spent in an activity and its direct correlation on the development of leadership skills. More specifically, Astin (1993) examined the impact of activities throughout college and the impact that those activities had on the participant's development of leadership. All of the participants indicated that their involvement in intercollegiate athletics directly impacted the leadership skills that they developed.

Astin (1993) had three basic beliefs in his theory. The first was that involvement is both physical and psychological. For the participants, their involvement in intercollegiate basketball involved not only the obvious physical aspect, but it also required them to develop psychologically regarding the skills needed to effectively operate as a team.

Astin's (1993) second belief was that involvement is continually changing. As each participant progressed through their three to four years on the team they continued to learn and grow. Some participants experienced a coaching change that forced them to learn a new style of coaching. Others experienced new players joining the team each year that caused them to continually refine their skills in building and developing relationships.

Astin's (1993) final belief was that the amount of time spent in an experience and the quality of the experience directly impacts the leadership skills gained. As each participant progressed through their collegiate career they all assumed leadership roles on the team such as serving as a captain. This distinction exhibited recognition from their coaches of the leadership skills that they had gained.

Astin (1993) found that there were three main types of involvement that had an effect on the participant's development of leadership skills. According to Astin, the interaction among peers had the strongest effect on leadership. Through the interviews with participants, this study found that the interaction among teammates had the least amount of perceived effect on the participants' leadership skills. Although all of the participants indicated that they learned about teamwork, communication, and how to develop relationships with others, when asked directly if their teammates affected their leadership skills all of the participants believed that they did not. Although the leadership skills of working within a team were developed by all of the participants, none of the participants made the connection between the development of their leadership skills and the influence of their teammates on the development of those skills.

The second type of involvement that Astin (1993) found that impacted leadership development was the faculty-student interaction. For purposes of this study, the coach-athlete interaction was examined. The participants in this study indicated that the relationships and lessons learned from their coaches had the strongest impact on the development of their leadership skills. All of the participants experienced a positive impact in their leadership skills despite having both positive and negative experiences with their coaches. Both Caroline and Ward indicated that they were able to "take the good and discard the bad" when it came to lessons learned from their coaches. Additionally, despite having a negative coaching style, both

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Lee and Jennie indicated that their coach enabled them to develop into confident and strong-minded women. William indicated that his coach enabled him to feel personally connected and cared about by his coach. Knowing that his coach genuinely wanted the best for him enabled William to want to play at his highest level.

The final type of involvement that Astin's (1993) study emphasized was that participation in organizations on college campuses developed leadership skills. This study sought to specifically examine the participation on an intercollegiate athletic team, and found that all of the participants were confident that their participation on a collegiate basketball team did develop and enhance their leadership skills. The participants indicated that their participation enabled them to develop their skills in accountability, initiative, collaboration, understanding roles, valuing others, and developing an appreciation of diversity.

As evident through the analysis, the participants indicated that their participation in intercollegiate athletics did impact their development of leadership skills. This finding further enhances Astin's (1993) theory of involvement. Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development will be the final theoretical foundation examined.

Brungardt's Theory of Leadership Development

Brundardt's (1996) theory of leadership development was the final theoretical foundation examined in this study. This theory involves two different types of experiences, leadership education and leadership training, that when combined together lead to leadership skills being developed. This study examined both experiences with the participants' involvement with the basketball team simulating leadership education, and leadership training representing those participants who served as captains on the team.

Leadership education is an intentional process that exposes the individual to situations that develop the individual's leadership skills. This study found that participants in college athletics are exposed to situations that enable them to reflect and make decisions as well as to receive feedback from their coaches enabling their growth of leadership skills. One leadership skill that Mae developed through her athletic participation was the ability to reflect and make decisions with a clear mind. Through witnessing her coach make decisions, and his intentional process of gathering information, enabled Mae to develop her own skills in decision making.

Philip's and Lee's involvement in intercollegiate athletics enabled them to develop their skills in receiving feedback from their coaches. Philip stated, "Understanding constructive criticism from my coaches and being able to incorporate that criticism into changes on the court were important lessons that I learned. A sense of trust needed to develop between myself and the coaches in order for me not to take the criticism personally." Lee also spoke of the importance of handling criticism from her coaches.

> If my coaches yelled at me I knew that it wasn't personal. They were just trying to help me improve. I think the current generation of young people gets so upset when someone criticizes them. It's hard for coaches to give criticism because the kids take everything so personally. They don't realize or understand that their coach is just trying to get the best out of them.

It is through their participation in intercollegiate athletics that the participants developed their leadership skills, and this participation is an extension of Brungardt's (1996) experience of leadership education.

Leadership training is the second experience of Brungardt's (1996) theory of leadership development. This type of training is more specific than leadership education and it involves

intentional programming that enables the individual to encounter challenges. The role of captain is an intentional type of programming that exposed itself during this study.

All of the participants served as captains on their team at some point in their basketball careers at Rivers College. Some of the roles began early on as sophomores, while a majority of the participants served as a captain during their senior year. As a coach-appointed position, Caroline viewed her role as a captain as an extension of the coaching staff. She felt that her role was to support the coaches' decisions while also finding ways to relate the coaches' goals to the team. Interestingly, Caroline believes that an assumption is made that you can't be a leader unless you are an upperclassman on the team. In her experience as a player and as a coach, participants that exhibited leadership skills were those that were calm during adverse times and carried themselves with confidence.

William, who transferred into Rivers College, personally experienced being named a captain as a sophomore.

> I had to work extra hard to go right in as a sophomore and serve as a leader in order for our team to be successful. I was fortunate that the seniors let me join in and display my leadership abilities early on because they had been there for four years. Being a starter and knowing that I had to come in and perform definitely enabled me to develop better leadership skills.

All of the participants were in agreement that a leader should embody certain leadership traits and that the age of the individual does not guarantee that they have developed the appropriate leadership skills to be an effective leader.

As demonstrated through the analysis, the participants enhanced and supported the research of Brungardt (1996). Through their athletic participation they were able to develop and

master their leadership skills through their exposure to situations while further enhancing their

reflective and decision-making skills through their role as captain of the team. Next, the

theoretical framework of Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence will be examined.

Kanter's Concept of "Confidence"

Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence provided the theoretical framework for this study.

The leadership skills of accountability, collaboration, confidence, and initiative were the specific

leadership skills examined in this study. Kanter (2006) believed that these skills are foundational

to success in life.

Kanter's first principle is accountability (Kanter, 2006). Kanter explained that when

individuals accept accountability they want to share in and take responsibility. As a result of

feeling committed they are more open to feedback for their self-improvement, their

communication improves, and they make better decisions (Kanter, 2006).

This study found that accountability was a skill that was developed by all of the

participants both in the sense of accountability for themselves as well as being accountable for

the team. Furthermore, each individual developed the realization that their actions directly

impacted the success of their team. Accountability was a huge takeaway for Jennie stating, "It's

so much easier to blame something or someone else for your failure. My participation enabled

me to understand that I'm accountable for my own actions. Being accountable means following

through on promises while also taking ownership of your mistakes."

Ward also developed a sense of accountability through his participation and it is a skill

that he is teaching the young men on his high school basketball team and his students at the

school in which he teaches. "I have been teaching my students and players to understand that

they have to put in the time and effort in order to get something in return. Success will not be handed to you, you have to be accountable to yourself and work hard."

Furthermore, all of the participants indicated that they felt that their accountability to the team developed more as they moved into starting roles on the team. Mae stated, "When I started making the transition to a starting role, I realized that I needed to be more accountable for my preparation for the season. I needed to be in better shape, I had to work on my leadership skills, and I knew that I needed to become a player that our team needed and could depend on."

The second principle of Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence is collaboration. Collaboration means the willingness to work as a group towards a common goal (Kanter, 2006). When collaboration exists, individuals are willing to work together and it creates a sense of togetherness that enables the individuals to be more receptive to suggestions.

This study found that all of the participants developed the skills of collaboration as a result of their intercollegiate athletic participation. While college athletes can sometimes be viewed as self-serving and only interested in their own personal accolades, the participants involved in this study were overwhelming aware of the importance of the success of the team, often sacrificing their personal goals for the success of the group. Ward described the sacrifice that he made for the betterment and success of the team.

> I was a big team guy when I played so working together as a unit was a really big deal for
> me. I personally put winning above everything else that I personally wanted. I sacrificed
> a lot so that the team was successful. I would pass up on shots because one of our leading
> scorers was open under the basket. I knew that him taking the shot and getting the points
> was better for our team because it kept him engaged in the game. When he was engaged,

and successful, we were winning. Team chemistry was important and I recognized that during my collegiate career.

Understanding and valuing the roles of the members of the team was another aspect of collaboration that many of the participants mentioned throughout their interviews. Specifically, understanding roles had a significant impact on the participant's life after college. Philip stated,

Being in the workforce, being able to deal with different personalities, and realizing that everyone is motivated differently are all skills that I learned through college athletics. Team members, within athletic teams and within professional organizations, react differently. Being able to work together and understand what motivates everyone on the team is very beneficial.

Mae also found that her athletic participation gave her a better understanding of the roles that individuals play as she worked her way from a role player to a starter during her four years on the team.

Transitioning from a starter out of high school to a practice player in college was an eye-opener for me. It gave me a new perspective because I had to push as hard as I could so that I would make the starters better. I realized that I would not see much playing time and found that my role was to encourage my teammates. As a role player I knew that my role would change depending on the team we were playing and what the needs of our team would be. As I transitioned to a starter I had a better realization that every role was valuable having experienced it for myself.

William found the value of his athletic participation in the sense that he learned how to work with others as well as appreciating the value that each individual brought to the team. Being on an intercollegiate athletic team enabled him to understand the importance of working together as

a team towards a common goal. Along with working as a team, William was able to develop an understanding that everyone has a role on a team, and that every role is important to the overall success of the group.

Kanter's (2006) third principle is initiative. Initiative develops when individuals feel that their actions will result in changes as well as that their effort can make a difference (Kanter, 2006). Initiative, the ultimate sign of confidence, is exhibited when the participant knows what needs to be done and takes the initiative to do so before being asked.

One of the first skills that many of the participants indicated as a skill developed through intercollegiate athletic participation was leading by example. Philip stated, "Leading by example is always key. You can be a vocal leader but leading by example is a great way to show someone how to do something." Lee also felt that leading by example exhibited initiative among her teammates.

> We had a lot of good leaders. I think that everyone as far as leadership or communication understood their role. There really wasn't a vocal leader on the court. Most of us led more by example more than vocalizing anything. Our coach was the vocal leader so my teammates and I led more by example.

Initiative and leading by example was a leadership skill that Caroline also believed that she developed through her athletic participation. "One of the main skills I learned was leading by example. You can be a very effective leader through action without saying anything and people will follow you based on your actions."

Initiative and work ethic are skills that Jennie learned through her athletic participation and are skills that she has translated into her professional career.

Working my way to a full scholarship my freshman year, through hard work and taking

the initiative to develop my skills, enabled me to experience that hard work can be

rewarded. I now take everything that comes across my plate with work or different

opportunities that are presented and I go about it with that same mindset. I don't know if I

would have that mindset if it weren't for my basketball career.

Confidence is Kanter's (2006) final principle of the leadership framework. Confidence allows an

individual to develop a strong mindset, to believe in their self and their abilities to overcome

adversity. Kanter (2006) describes that hard work and possessing a strong personal confidence

leads to success. Although not specifically stated, all of the participants indicated that their

athletic participation developed their leadership skills both during their participation and in their

life after college. Lee described that her participation made her feel like she could do anything.

"Getting through four years of a tough program like the one that I was in built my confidence.

There is nothing that can come my way that I don't believe that I can overcome."

Mae shared the same sentiment as Lee in that her athletic participation developed the

confidence in herself. "It taught me to go into situations confident. I may be a little nervous, and

I was before every game, but I knew that I was prepared to play. You know that you are going to

be nervous but having confidence in yourself is imperative."

Jennie also developed her confidence through participation, and specifically shared how

another player on the team influenced her confidence.

Playing in college definitely gave me a lot more confidence then I had going in for sure. I

worked everyday to even get a spot on the court while my teammate, Valeri, had the

starting spot. She made me grow up and get tough skin. To this day she apologizes for

how she treated me but instead I thank her. I now translate that to work. There's no

perfect place to work and sometimes there will be a co-worker that will be envious of something or doesn't have that team mentality. I deal with it all the time. If I didn't have my college athletic experience I would probably be a little more sensitive because I was super sensitive going into college. My teammate Valeri helped me to build my own confidence and to believe in my own abilities.

This study examined Kanter's (2006) concept of confidence and found that the participants did develop all of the skills that Kanter believed enables individuals to be successful in life. As is apparent through the participant's interviews, individuals that are surrounded by a culture of building confidence through accountability, collaboration, and initiative have the mindset that they can tackle any issue and be successful in their life.

Conclusions

The findings of this research provide a broad level analysis of participation in intercollegiate athletics. Each athlete can share similar experiences as well as having experiences that differ from each other. Specific aspects of athletic participation should continue to be explored as well as examining the role and intensity that athletes play on the team and how that impacts the development of leadership skills.

An examination of some of the factors that influence leadership in college students occurred but more studies need to occur to examine all factors. This study specifically examined the skills that are developed as a result of participation as well as how those skills impacted the participant's life after college. The results of this study are promising as they show that athletes who do participate in college athletics both enhance and develop leadership skills. These results support growing research in this field that under the right conditions leadership and life skills can

be enhanced through participation in intercollegiate athletics (Danish, Petipas & Hale, 1993; Gould & Carson, 2008).

Furthermore, all of the participants indicated that their involvement in college athletics prepared them for life after college. As a result of this study examining participants in a small team sport, further examination needs to occur with participants involved in larger team sports as well as those participants involved in individual sports. The results also increase the support for Cornelius' (1995) assertion that athletic programs are a valuable asset to the leadership development of college students. This is an important finding for college campuses because it will enable institutions of higher education to evaluate their athletic programs to determine if they are providing the opportunities for leadership development in their students.

Additionally, this study brings to light the importance of athletic department's role in the leadership development of their student-athletes. More intentionality needs to occur so that students are able to realize and reflect on the skills they are developing while they are still in college. This study found that there numerous leadership skills that students are indirectly developing through their college participation. As a result of these skills being developed, colleges and universities need to be more intentional in assisting the participants in making the connection between their leadership skills and their participation while they are still in college.

Implications

As supported in this study, students who participate in a collegiate athletic team develop leadership skills throughout their participation. Bailey (2006) and Ratey (2008) supported the notion that there are cognitive benefits that can impact a student's performance in many areas including leadership. Therefore, participation in athletics should be a tool that is looked upon as valuable to the development of leadership. There should be more intentionality to allow the

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students who are participating to reflect on how their athletic experiences are able to transfer to other aspects of their lives including leadership skills. The impact of the coach, personal growth of the athlete, as well as the relationships built among the team, appear to be important opportunities for college students to develop leadership.

The results from this study suggest that students who participated in a college basketball team did at some level either develop new leadership skills or enhance leadership skills that they had previously developed. This finding has significant implications for college athletic programs and institutions of higher education because it supports the view that athletics is more than just a recruitment and student retention tool. The findings are also important for leadership educators on a college campus as it provides evidence that formal educational programming should incorporate opportunities to apply leadership skills through involvement in opportunities outside of the classroom. Being purposeful in collaboration between athletic departments and leadership educational programming should occur as it could provide a greater impact on the development of leadership skills for the students that are involved in these programs.

Additionally, this study highlighted that the potential exists for leadership skills to develop in those students who participate in college athletic programs. Athletic programs have the ability to be structured in such a way to enable the participants to be more reflective throughout their athletic careers. Being more intentional while students are engaged as a student-athlete would facilitate the growth and development of leadership skills both among team and individuals within colleges and universities. The evidence continues to grow, demonstrating that programs that are designed to develop leadership through sport are effective (Danish, 2002; Gould & Carson, 2008). It cannot be assumed that athletics by itself develops leadership skills, but is can be suggested that a relationship does exist between the two. Athletics enables

participants to learn by example from their coaches and teammates, the ability to practice their skills, and a safe environment to learn from their failures. Based on the levels of leadership gained through the participants in this study, it is the researcher's belief that with intentional programming within a college athletic department that leadership traits among the participants can be further enhanced and the participants will be more aware of the skills that they are developing.

Recommendations for College Athletic Programs

College athletic programs represent a potential area for the development of leadership skills. There is an opportunity to build upon on the levels of leadership skills that are already being developed among the people that are participating in collegiate athletics. While the application of leadership skills to athletic participation is not occurring automatically, enabling the participants to be more aware of these skills while they are developing may assist in the realization that these skills are developing as well as understanding their application to life after college.

One of the main recommendations from this study is athletic administrators in colleges and universities, as well as high schools, should understand their student athletes are developing leadership skills as a result of their athletic participation. Additionally, it is important for athletic administrators to further recognize that these leadership concepts are not automatically being labeled or realized by the student athletes. Furthermore, student athletes should be given an opportunity to comprehend the application of their leadership skills later in life while they are in the process of developing their skills. The ability to realize these skills are developing will enable the student athletes to appreciate the growth of these skills while establishing a deeper understanding that their athletic participation is more than just about participating in athletics.

Athletic administrators are encouraged to engage in thoughtful and meaningful assessment of their student athletes to determine if they are fostering leadership skills while they are enrolled at the institution. As a result of the findings of the assessment, athletic administrators can then provide practical applications such as motivational speakers and leadership building activities within each team or within the athletic department to assist the student athletes in their realization of the leadership skills that are developing. Through intentional programming within an athletic department a deeper development of the student athletes leadership skills can occur. Furthermore, intentional programming provides relevant application to allow improvements to occur in the realization that leadership skills are developing as well as understanding their application to later in life.

The emphasis of the development of leadership skills within intercollegiate athletic programs needs to be occurring as highlighted by Chelladurai (2011). Cultivating self-efficacy, hard work, envisioning, teamwork, and goal setting are all skills that Chelladurai (2011) found to be occurring throughout athletic participation. Furthermore, Gass (1985) found that athletics enables the participants to develop leadership skills through the following methods: enabling athletes to internalize their learning and practice transfer through experiences, developing opportunities for feedback, and placing the responsibility for learning on the participant.

Chelladurai (2011) and Swalley (2003) suggested that participants in intercollegiate athletic programs need to have the opportunity to think critically about how their leadership skills developed through college athletics and to be able to transfer those skills to their life after college. Athletic administrators, coaches, and staff external to athletic departments should play an active role to support students in their awareness of the leadership skills gained. There is some

awareness of the skills gained as a result of their participation in athletics, but there needs to be more intentionality occurring within athletic programs.

Development of leadership skills depends on the individual and often takes time for the skills to manifest themselves (Kouzes & Posner, 2005). As a result of this delay, it can be difficult to determine when participants developed or realized that they developed their skills. This study was important because it looked at participants who were at least ten years removed from college which enabled the participants to be more reflective on the impact that college athletics had on their development of leadership skills.

Furthermore, this study supports the findings of other studies related to collegiate athletic programs (Chelladrai, 2011; Dugan & Haber, 2007; Dugan & Komives, 2007; Komives & Owen, 2007; Wilson, 2009) and provides further evidence that college students who participate in intercollegiate athletic programs do develop leadership skills as a result of their participation. College athletic programs can use this information to provide more intentionality in their student's realization of the leadership skills being developed as well as assisting their students to make the connection of how those skills can impact their lives after college. Also, the findings from this study indicate that participation in an intercollegiate athletic program positively impacts the participants and their development of leadership skills. This study demonstrates that it is important to build athletic programs that are intentional and support the development of leadership skills.

Recommendations for Future Studies

This study investigated the leadership skills that are developed as a result of participation in intercollegiate athletics as well as how those skills have impacted the participants' life after college. Additional research is needed to continue to understand the impact that athletic

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participation has on the development of leadership skills, as well as how participation in athletics impacted the participant's life after college.

This study explored leadership skills in relation to a small team sport. Further research is needed with other demographic groups such as larger team sports or sports classified as individual sports. For instance, individual sport participants such as golf, swimming and diving, tennis, or track and field may develop different leadership skills as they experience a different "team" interaction than those participants in authentic team sports. Chelladurai (2011) suggested that student-athletes involved in independent sports are focused on their own tasks, whereas participants in proactively dependent sports are more likely to develop interactive skills such as teamwork and collaboration necessary in leadership. The proposed model has the ability to be applied to similar studies in the future.

Of the studies that have occurred surrounding this topic, many are similar to this study in that they include a small sample size and are qualitative in nature. Further research including mixed methods with a quantitative aspect involving a larger participant population could allow for greater generalizability. This type of study may provide a clearer sense of the impact that participation in intercollegiate athletics had on the development of leadership skills. Also, this is one of the only studies that has occurred which has examined the impact of intercollegiate athletic participation on the participant's life after college. More research needs to be conducted in this area to examine the transfer of leadership skills from college to the participant's life after college.

The impact of the coach on the development of leadership skills was not an outcome that was anticipated. Specifically, further research should examine the type of coaching style and how that either positively or negatively impacted the leadership skills that were developed.

Several of the participants described an intense style of coaching, where there were instances of verbal abuse. Although the participants did not condone this style of coaching, they did attribute their leadership skills of accountability and initiative to that style of coaching. When asked if they would have developed the same skills with another style of coach, they agreed that they would not have developed the same types of skills. For the participants who had more positive and encouraging coaches, they did not believe as though they were pushed as much, while others who transitioned from an intense coach to a positive coach were pleased to see that the team could be successful using a more diplomatic and interactive style of coaching. The style of coaching and the impact that the coach has on the development of leadership skills in his or her athletes is an area that should be further examined.

Additionally, there needs to be further exploration of the impact of relationships with teammates and how that impact correlates to the leadership skills such as teamwork, collaboration, understanding roles, individual's values, and working toward a common goal. Although participants in this study all indicated that they had developed the skills to work within a group, none of the participants connected the development of those leadership skills to the relationships among their teammates. Further examination needs to occur in this area to determine why this correlation by the participants did not occur.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership skills gained as a result of participation in intercollegiate athletics and the influence that these skills have had on the development and growth of former athletes beyond college. The findings of this study demonstrate that participation in intercollegiate athletic programs do develop and enhance the leadership skills of the participants. Also, this study found that the leadership skills developed

through intercollegiate athletic participation had a positive impact on the participant's life after college. The transfer of these skills to the participant's life after college, and the recognition that these skills were developed through their participation in intercollegiate athletics, is encouraging for intercollegiate athletic departments.

As a result of this study, institutions of higher education should look to their intercollegiate athletic departments as an opportunity to develop leadership skills in their student-athletes. Furthermore, this study is significant because it enhanced the outdated research in this area, addressed the leadership skills that are indirectly or directly taught to college athletes, while also exploring how those leadership skills have translated into and enhanced each participants' life after college.

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APPENDIX A

Demographic Questions

1. Gender

    a. Male   b. Female

2. Age

    a. 30-39

    b. 40-49

    c. 50-59

    d. 60-65

3. Undergraduate Major - _____

4. Years on Basketball Team - _____

5. Position on Team - _____

6. Recruited to play basketball

    a. Yes   b. No

7. Scholarship Athlete

    a. Yes   b. No

8. Role on the basketball team

    a. Starter   b. Role Player   C. Practice player

9. Highest Level of Education

    a. Bachelor's

    b. Master's

    c. Doctorate

Current profession/position - _____

Appendix B – Interview Question/Research Question Matrix

Research Questions	Research Statements/Questions
1.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
2.	3, 8, 9, 10