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Coaching Behaviors and High School Athlete's Perceptions of Team Inclusion and Bullying

Laronce Deangelo Jamal Franklin Sr.
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

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Laronce D. J. Franklin, Sr.

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Review Committee

Dr. Patricia Loun, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty

Dr. Jesus Tanguma, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2024

Abstract

Coaching Behaviors and High School Athlete's Perceptions of Team Inclusion and

Bullying

by

Laronce D. J. Franklin, Sr.

MPhil, Walden University, 2020

MA, American Military University, 2015

BS, The United States Air Force Academy, 2011

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Educational Psychology

Walden University

May 2024

Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coach's behavior and their perceptions of team inclusion and their endorsements of bullying. Previous research has demonstrated that coach's behaviors influence student athletes at the college level. The theoretical base for this study is Bandura's social cognitive theory. The quantitative research questions investigated the relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coach's ethical and abusive behaviors and their perceptions of team inclusion and endorsements of physical, verbal, cyber-, and social bullying. The independent variables in this research question are the coach's ethical and abusive behavior. A multiple linear regression design was used for this study. The student athletes completed a modified version of the GOALS survey to assess student athletes' perception of team inclusion, ethical coaching behaviors, and abusive coaching behaviors. The athletes' endorsement of bullying was measured by their responses to scenarios of bullying behaviors. The research results reflected that student athletes who perceived their coaches as ethical leaders felt more team inclusion, $F(2, 68) = 30.408, p < .001, R = .693, R^2 = .480$. There was no relationship between abusive coaching and team inclusion. Additionally, the lack of ethical leadership from a coach along with higher perception of abusive coaching behaviors reflected higher endorsement of bullying by student athletes, $F(2, 68) = 9.518, p < .001, R = .473, R^2 = .224$. This research may help to provide positive social change through a better understanding about how coaching matters at the high school level and has influences on student athletes feeling of team inclusion and their views towards bullying behaviors.

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Dedication

I dedicate my efforts to my family. My beautiful wife and children are my entire purpose for this achievement. For you, I never accepted no for an answer when chasing my dream, and it doesn't stop here. I have only wanted to show you that the only thing in the way of your goals is yourself. With your family, love, and support, anything is possible. I am the first doctor in our family, but I will not be the last! The future is now.

WORK HARD, PLAY HARD!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In this study, I investigated the relationship between the high school athlete's perceptions of their coach's behavior and the athlete's perceptions of team inclusion. Additionally, I assessed the relationship between the high school athlete's perceptions of their coach's behavior and the athlete's perceived endorsements of bullying. Researchers have concluded that coaches fill one of the most important roles in a student-athlete's life (Ettekal et al., 2018; Steinfeldt et al., 2011; Steinfeldt et al., 2012; & Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). Ettekal et al. (2018) found through the views of athletic directors that character education through sport can be instilled through athletic administrations and organizations offering sports-based character education, tailoring programming that includes stakeholder such as coaches and parents, and improving the character of influencers at the top of organizations. Steinfeldt et al. (2011) suggested that coaches played a major role in the process of players learning masculinity norms and coaches also view football as a valuable learning environment for the players to have masculinity norms reinforced. Steinfeldt et al.'s (2012) results revealed that the moral atmosphere and adherence to male norms significantly predicted bullying. However, the biggest finding was that the perception of the most influential male in the players life being acceptant of bullying or not led to a strong connection of if a player engaged in bullying. Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015) held a collegiate study and found that the ethical and abusive behaviors of the coach were positively related to student-athletes college choice satisfaction, their perception of inclusion of the team, and their willingness to cheat.

Coaches and their coaching behaviors and styles come in many forms and variations which help to define player behaviors. Behaviors are a reflection of the coach's personality. This means that a coach with an intense personality, more than likely reflects aggressive coaching behaviors. A coach who has a calmer personality or demeanor may reflect more relaxed or gentler coaching behavior. Some coaches yell and scream while running a one mistake team. Some are more willing to explain what the player did wrong and allow as many chances as possible for their growth to occur. Any coach can fall within these two extremes of behavior while coaching. These behaviors can have a role in the student athlete's life. In this study, I focused on student's perceptions of coach's behavior.

Social identities, self-image, and the overall feeling of belongingness can all be affected through sport participation (Crain, 2011; Graupensperger et al., 2019). Therefore, identifying a connection between sport participation and player's sense of inclusion could help student-athletes develop stronger social identities, self-images, and feelings of being included. Bullying is also a huge topic among adolescents as it is recognized as a public health concern due to its existence throughout school systems (Huang & Cornell, 2015). Bullying affects social adjustment, emotional adjustment, and academic achievement (Huang & Cornell, 2015; Steinfeldt et al., 2012). The information from this study may lead to positive social change as it may help to improve the player coach relationship as well as improve student-athlete development.

Sections within this chapter include the background, problem statement, purpose, research questions and hypothesis, theoretical foundation, nature of the study, definitions,

assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, the potential significance of this study, and a summary. The background includes several studies that provide evidence of high school player-coach related issues related to coaching behaviors, player feeling of inclusion, and player level of endorsement towards bullying. The gap in current research will then be explained in detail in the problem statement. The section on the purpose of the study will identify and explain why this research is necessary. The research questions provide a clear understanding for the reader to grasp the relationship between the study variables. Next, the theoretical foundation will explain Bandura's social cognitive theory (SCT) and why it informs this research. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an explanation of the significance of this study to SCT, the practice of psychology, and social change.

Background of the Study

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) GOALS Study (2015) offered the Growth, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Learning of Students (GOALS) model. The GOALS survey is useful for measuring student-athlete's perceptions of team inclusion. This survey is a commonly used measure for college student-athletes to assess various areas of their college experience to determine their overall well-being. The GOALS survey was originally designed to be used at the collegiate level and will therefore need to be modified within this study to be more appropriate for high school student athletes. The GOALS survey was first modified by Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015), who decided to remove aspects of the survey for their research. Results by Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. yielded reliable results by removing specific topics that had

no relation to their research. Using this model in a modified form will allow for the assessment of high school student-athletes perceptions of team inclusion within their respective teams.

Steinfeldt et al. (2012) studied adolescents and the connection between the views of their role models and their attitudes towards bullying. This study revealed that male influencers of all kinds have the potential to impress acceptable behaviors upon adolescent football players. Fathers, brothers, uncles, coaches, etc. were among the many identified male role models to the student athletes who participated in this research. One of the many assessment tools was the use of possible bullying scenarios. Scenarios were written to assess the participant's response to bullying as well as their decisions during times where there is a choice between peace or participating/supporting bullying behavior. Similar scenarios were used in this study to assess student-athlete's endorsements of bullying.

Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015) focused on the relationships between student-athletes and their coaches at the collegiate level. This study used the GOALS survey to analyze the athlete's perception of their coach's behavior, their team's inclusive climate, and the level of satisfaction with their choice of college. This study is important because it highlights connections between a coach and their athletes. Additionally, the results helped the views of the student-athletes to be heard. This level of feedback helps to create improvements that benefit all involved. Creating a similar study to this one with modified variables will provide results at a high school level.

Ettekal et al. (2018) provided the views of the athletic directors on morals and the impact that coaches have on their athletes. This research was a sub-study to a much larger one that was conducted using a focus group. Coaches have a direct relationship with their players, while athletic directors' relationship is not as personal. The view of an athletic director is close enough to see what goes on during a daily basis but distant enough to develop an outsider's view, which provides some objectivity. This study is vital because it is another viewpoint within the development system, which also agrees that a coach's influence on their high school athletes can have a significant impact on their development.

Johnson et al. (2018) conducted a study that sought out the viewpoint of the coaches themselves. This study was conducted with 449 coaches taking the Moral Disengagement in Sport Scale. The survey measures multiple mechanisms of moral disengagement. Results revealed that there was a negative predictor between a coaches' moral disengagement and their perceived efficacy. This research validates that the behaviors of the coach can impact views from the players and the need to hear more from the student-athletes on their views of their coach to determine how those views influence them.

Fisher et al. (2019) discussed the relationship between elite athletic performance and a coach's ability to care for their player. The overall goal was to find information that could be useful in future coach development programs. Fisher et al. claimed that there are only three research studies from the United States of America, which addressed a coach's level of care in relationship to elite athlete performance. Fisher et al. (2017) focused on

collegiate coaches, Fisher et al. (2018) focused on collegiate assistant coaches, and Fisher et al. (2019) focused on the relationship between caring coaching and elite performance. Researchers in these three studies concluded that promoting caring coaching could enhance the athlete's performance. Kohlberg (1973) concluded that male athletes were morally more mature than female athletes due to their reasoning being more logical, and objective (or justice reasoning). Noddings's (1992) research highlighted that when individual acts are based on caring, individuals begin to construct the image of the ideal ethical person who they want to be. Gilligan (2008), in contrast to Kohlberg, claimed that justice reasoning was morally problematic. Gilligan found that relationships and the responses of individuals to one another was the primary importance in moral situations and moral decision making. These three studies revolve around Care Theory, which was developed by Gilligan and taken up by Noddings. Gilligan developed care theory under the mentorship of Kohlberg, who helped to influence the importance of moral reasoning being connected to the amount of care someone received. The study by Fisher et al. (2019) gave validity to the effectiveness of a coach's style of coaching by elaborating on how a coach can alter the behavior of an athlete by how they care for their players. My research is needed because it may improve the development of student-athletes and coaching fundamentals. Additionally, it can help to establish a stronger anti-bullying environment amongst student athletes by highlighting the connection between a coach's level of care to the behaviors of their players.

Problem Statement

It is common for athletes to look to their coaches for guidance to improve within their sport. As a result of a coach's successful advice, the relationship can become a trusting one to the point where the athlete eventually begins to respect the coach's opinions on subjects outside of the game. Topics can include school, family situations, feelings, attitudes, and even bullying. Athletes are victims of bullying, bystanders to bullying, and even bullies themselves (Nery et al., 2019). Coaches and other role models who address bullying behavior among adolescents provide an opportunity to influence young players' attitudes on bullying (Nery et al., 2019).

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS; n.d.) stated that there are courses required by each state to be a coach of a high school sports team. Standard courses include first aid, recognizing heat exhaustion, and understanding how to identify and treat a concussion in real-time (NFHS, n.d.). The NFHS provides essential guidance on expected behaviors and traits of a coach through courses (NFHS, n.d.). How a coach should represent these behaviors, characteristics, and best practices are not referenced with the intent of preserving each coach's style and philosophy (NFHS, n.d.). The lack of direction in how each coach specifically exercises the best coaching behaviors, and traits allows for teams to develop their own identity and coaches to develop their players individually. Through flexible designs in development, coaches are able to help each player reach their highest level of athletic ability (NFHS, n.d.). Coaches possess a strong ability to impact their player's lives and development (Ettekal et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2018).

Ettekal et al. (2018) conducted a study that based on a more extensive evaluation of the character development program after attending training from the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA). The PCA is a program that consists of athletic directors and coaches that focuses on character education in sports (Ettekal et al., 2018). This smaller study was conducted through a qualitative approach using a focus group, including four high school athletic directors (Ettekal et al., 2018). The goal of this study was to discuss what was believed to be critical factors to develop youth sport-character from an athletic directors' point of view (Ettekal et al., 2018). Ettekal et al. conducted a focus group with four high school athletic directors, which led to the collective understanding that coaches play an integral part in the development of athletes. Results also suggested that improvement could start within six primary themes that each would be broken down into specific actions. The six topics include beliefs about character development, motivational locus, available funding, participants and group formation, scheduling and venue, and staff involvement. The results were then integrated into a more extensive study that discussed character development education within schools (Ettekal et al., 2018).

Johnson et al. (2018) also focused on the role that coaches play in the development of their high school athletes. Johnson et al. recruited 449 coaches as a sample from a statewide population and conducted a quantitative research study through the use of an online survey. The purpose of the study was to measure the coach's efficacy, moral disengagement, and levels of hostile aggression through player punishments (Johnson et al., 2018). Results indicated that coaches who were more aggressive enforced punishments such as reduced playing time or physical conditioning

(Johnson et al., 2018). Overall, Johnson et al. suggested that coaching education on the topics of coaching philosophies and approaches to athlete discipline was necessary due to the level of influence coaches have on players.

Steinfeldt et al. (2012) investigated bullying behaviors and beliefs among football players by measuring the player's perspectives of the masculine views of their role models, which included coaches. Steinfeldt et al. conducted this study with 206 high school male football players. The football players were administered the Meanings of Adolescent Masculinity (MAMS) survey (Oransky & Fisher, 2009). The MAMS is designed to measure the endorsement of traditional masculinity among adolescents. To measure bullying, along with consultations amongst school administrators, football coaches, and psychologists, Steinfeldt et al. (2012) used four modified scenarios to reflect potential bullying encounters within four categories (physical bullying, relational cyberbullying, verbal bullying, and social bullying). Steinfeldt et al.'s goal was to discover the degree at which the players endorsed each scenario. Steinfeldt et al. found that the behavior of a football player's male role models directly influenced their perception of morals and masculinity. In turn, the high school players' beliefs and behaviors toward bullying were directly influenced by their male role models. Football players who endorsed traditional male role norms and perceived a poorer moral atmosphere were more likely to support bullying (Steinfeldt et al., 2012). What this study does not focus on is the amount of influence that a coach's behavior may have on their student-athlete's endorsements of bullying. High school football players identified their

male role models as 66% fathers, 14% brothers, 12% other, which included uncles, sports figures, etc., and only 8% for coaches.

Another example of a coach's influence on their players is research conducted by Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015), which investigated ethical and abusive behaviors of college coaches and how those behaviors influenced their student-athletes. This quantitative research included 19,920 student-athletes throughout the NCAA and used the GOALS survey (NCAA GOALS Study, 2015). The GOALS survey is a NCAA study of student athlete's well-being and experiences by assessing subjects such as their academic college experience, feelings of inclusion, school selection satisfaction, and willingness to cheat. Characteristics of an ethical leader are mutual trust, concern, respect, follower satisfaction, honest, trustworthy, caring, open to input, respect for others, and principled (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). Abusive leadership was defined as a leader's engagement in hostile behaviors, both verbal and nonverbal, excluding physical contact (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). To measure abusive coaching, Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015) questioned behaviors such as making negative comments and verbal persuasion in the form of discouragement.

Results indicated that student-athletes' perception of feeling included with their teams and their satisfaction with their school choice were positively associated with the ethical leadership style of their coaches (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). Abusive supervision was positively correlated to team member's willingness to cheat. There was a negative correlation found between abusive supervision and both the perception of inclusion and satisfaction with their choice of school. These results, along with Joaquim's

(2014) findings of children being most impressionable during the adolescent years, opens the door to consider how the behavior of a coach can influence the sense of inclusion on a high school team. Additionally, Steinfeldt et al. (2012) suggest that there is a relationship between athletes, bullying, and the influences of coaches, but did not directly measure the perceptions of coaches' behaviors. Therefore, this research was conducted to address the gap in research of how perceived coaching behavior relates to high school athletes' perceptions of team inclusion and their endorsement of bullying.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the relationship between high school athlete's perceptions of their coach's behavior and their perceptions of team inclusion and their endorsements of bullying. Student athlete's perceptions of the ethical and abusive behavior of their coach was measured as the two predictor variables. Coaches' behaviors were measured using two subscales of the GOALS survey that measure ethical and abusive behavior separately. The first outcome variable of the athlete's perception of team inclusion was measured using the GOALS survey as well. The second outcome variable of the endorsements of physical, cyber-, verbal, and social bullying was measured using multiple scenarios acquired from the Steinfeldt et al. (2012) study. Questions from the GOALS survey was modified/removed as necessary to account for the differences between high school and college student-athletes.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1: What is the relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors and their perceptions of team inclusion as measured by the GOALS survey?

H₀1: There is no relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors and their perceptions of team inclusion as measured by the GOALS survey.

H₁1: There is a relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors and their perceptions of team inclusion as measured by the GOALS survey.

RQ2: What is the relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors as measured by the GOALS survey and their endorsements of physical, verbal, cyber-, and social bullying as measured by bullying scenarios?

H₀2: There is no relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors as measured by the GOALS survey and their endorsements of physical, verbal, cyber-, and social bullying as measured by bullying scenarios.

H₁2: There is a relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors as measured by the GOALS survey and their endorsements of physical, verbal, cyber-, and social bullying as measured by bullying scenarios.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical base for this study is Bandura's (1986) SCT. Influencing factors are identified through SCT of moral thought and action (Johnson et al., 2018). Through SCT, learners learn through models that they are exposed to. Both Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015) and Johnson et al. (2018) conducted similarly focused studies and yielded successful data as a result of using SCT as the theoretical work. Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. used SCT to explain modeling of behaviors within the athletic environment from coaches and how it impacts their athletes and chose SCT and the focus on coaches due to their leadership role as well as their direct ability to serve as models to their athletes. Johnson et al. used SCT to identify the influencing factors on athletes based on moral thoughts and actions. Johnson et al.'s intentions were driven by SCT, suggesting that regulation is influenced by ethical conduct through behavioral, environmental, and personal interaction. Bandura's SCT has been essential in the explanation of how individuals attempt to replicate what they observe. Bandura's SCT theory will help to provide logical reasons for answers to both of this study's research questions.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was quantitative using a survey design. Through the use of online surveys, this study sought to understand the relationship between an athlete's perceptions of ethical and abusive behaviors of their coach along with both an athlete's perception of inclusion and their endorsements of bullying. The participants were student athletes of various local high school sports teams. Parental permission was necessary for

all participants who are under the age of 18, which was most of my expected sample. The surveys were conducted through Survey Monkey. Multiple linear regression analysis was applied to all research questions.

Definitions

Abusive behavior: Sustaining a display of hostile verbal and nonverbal engagement (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015).

Bullying: Behavior that is intended to inflict harm or stress, occurs repeatedly over a period of time, and involves an inequity of strength or power (Steinfeldt et al., 2012).

Cyber-bullying: Bullying behaviors which take place online or through technology—includes verbal bullying, relational bullying, and/or physical harm (McHugh et al., 2017).

Ethical behavior: An act that is moral—moral meaning honest, trustworthy, caring, principled, respectful to others, and open to input (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015).

Physical bullying: Bullying that is conducted through contact such as hitting, pushing, kicking, etc. (Steinfeldt et al., 2012).

Social bullying: Bullying that is conducted through social interactions such as social exclusion or rumor spreading (Steinfeldt et al., 2012).

Social cognitive theory: A theory which explains that individuals learn by observing and imitating the behaviors of models (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015).

Verbal bullying: Bullying that is conducted vocally such as making threatening remarks, name calling, teasing, etc. (Steinfeldt et al., 2012).

Assumptions

Many assumptions are made in the foundation of this quantitative study. The initial assumption was that participants will be honest and truthful in their responses; this assumption is made because they are the only source of day-to-day interactions with their coaches in a competition environment. To help alleviate the question of truthfulness, participants will be reminded that they, along with their responses will be anonymous and their total honesty is desired. The next assumption was that participants actively and equally participated in their teams' functions. This assumption was needed as less committed student-athletes to their sports would have skewed interactions and perceptions of their coaches. As a result, their behavior would have less to do with their coaches' behaviors and more to do outside factors.

The next assumption was that all outside factors are equal, which include home factors, class behavior, and at least minimum requirements to participate in team sports. This was assumed as outside factors can restrict players from team and coach interactions which would not allow for accurate assessments of a coach's behavior. Lastly, the fourth assumption was that the student-athletes sports team is their primary social circle. This was assumed as it is believed through SCT that social groups help individuals define their identity.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study included high school student athletes from ninth through twelfth grade. Both male and female student athletes were eligible to participate in this study. Student athletes younger than high school age or in college were excluded from participation. One delimitation is that the student-athletes was only asked questions pertaining to their head coach or their positions coach, whichever they spend the most time with or view as the most influential. Another delimitation is that student-athletes who are a part of individual competitive sports (tennis, gymnast, golf, wrestler, bowler, etc.) were not able to participate.

Limitations

This research had some limitations, some of which were a direct result in capturing the views of the student athlete. Other research about athletes and sports programs have been conducted through the views of coaches and their coaching strategies. These studies create the views of the student-athlete as a limitation, but my study excluded the views of the coaches and places the focus on the student-athletes. Student-athletes can potentially have multiple teammates also participating in this study. Being coached by the same coach can result in players having a similar mentality towards what behavior is correct and what is not, which can skew data. The response to this issue of student athletes potentially having similar thoughts is that the data will be collected anonymously. This measure is taken to have the probability of student-athletes sharing similar extreme opinions less probable.

Significance of the Study

This research may help to improve the development of student-athletes and coaching fundamentals as well as help to establish a stronger anti-bullying foundation among student athletes. This study addressed the gap of how high school athlete's perception of inclusion, as well as their endorsements towards bullying, are related to their perception of their coach's ethical and abusive behavior. Many head-to-head on collisions can lead to a football player developing chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) years beyond being active in the sport (Brain Injury Research Institute, n.d.). CTE has led to the modification of clothing, equipment, and even rules of certain games due to safety issues. CTE can only be identified after an individual is deceased. Development of student-athletes into productive adults is also something that takes place within the person through understanding and connections made by the student-athlete. Therefore, the long-term effects of poor development of student-athletes can only be realized once the student-athlete has either moved on to the college level or moved on as an adult. Their actions, behaviors, and mindsets reflect their training interactions over the years. The numerous long-term problems athletes can face based on their coaches' ethical and abusive behavior is not fully understood. The expansion of a greater understanding of the influences of coaches on their student-athletes will serve as a building block in sports psychology and the development of more supportive coaching and player training. Social changes within daily interactions with coaches, teammates, teachers, peers, and parents will be provided with improved methods to support and develop student-athletes.

A bully, further defined, is an individual who is cruel, threatening, or insulting to those who are weaker, smaller, or vulnerable (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Kuehn, Wagner, and Velloza (2018) stated that bullying is prevalent within the United States as a whole. In 2015, there was an estimate of 20.2% of all 12- to 19-year-old youth within the United States who reported to have been bullied and 15.5% experienced electronic bullying (Kuehn et al., 2018). Kuehn et al. (2018) stated that bullied youth are two to 11 times more likely than nonbullied peers to attempt suicide. The numbers of suicide have been increasing since 2010 and suicide has become a major health concern for the United States as well as other countries across the globe (Kuehn et al., 2018).

Bullying can be evaluated within high school sports. This research can serve as another step towards eradicating bullying. This study will not result in the answer to end all bullying; however, the results from this study may help to inform coaches, schools, and communities on how coach's behaviors influence their students. Coaches have interpersonal relationships with their players within the sports environment and can influence their athlete's ability to perform at the highest level of competition. This research can lead to the improvement on building and maintaining better player-coach relationships. Improved relationships can lead to a higher sense of inclusion and reduce bullying behavior as the sense of belongingness will help to lessen the desire to threaten, tease, or physically harm anyone.

Significance to Theory

The significance of this study to SCT consist of further explaining the connection between observed behavior and the likelihood of it being replicated. The competitive

sports environment is filled with influential figures who young athletes idolize and respect. A high school player who views LeBron James as being the best player in basketball could influence everything from the child's style of play to the way he dresses for games. The significance of this study is that it will shed a greater light on the level of influences of the coaches' influence on their high school student-athletes. In this study role models from other areas are not eligible and the sports coach is the primary focus.

Significance to Practice

The significance of this study to the practice of coaching is that it will help to improve the quality of the coach by providing reliable feedback from student-athletes within the high school sports community. The psyche of the athlete receives a lot of attention on the collegiate level. Being an athlete begins much sooner than the collegiate level and this study will help to identify just how important giving attention to student athletes on the high school level can be. The idea is to prepare student-athletes for the next level. High school coaches will be able to improve their behavior and techniques in a way that will help to develop better student-athletes.

Significance to Social Change

Potential implications for positive social change consist of improvement of the high school coach hiring process and the student-athlete development within schools. The hiring of high school coaches is different across the country in terms of required training, experience, and other prerequisites that must be completed before filling a coaching position. The evaluation of the coach's behavior and how it aligns with a school's vision for their sports teams is not valued as much in the high school coach hiring process as it

is on the collegiate level. This is evident as typical high school coaches are teachers or members of faculty who volunteer for the extra coaching task. A school's vision for their sports programs is what allows for schools to be known for specializing in certain areas of sports. A college typically known for its accomplishments in basketball will usually replace an old coach with a new coach who fits the system as opposed to filling it with anyone who meets criteria. This does not usually occur on the high school sports level.

The most significant potential for social change in this study is for better development of student athletes to feel more included. Another significant potential for social change is better development in appropriate responses during moments where bullying behavior is present. Improved structure for high school student athletes can be further developed so that student-athletes can go on to be more productive, better balanced, achieve greater heights in both academics and athletics. This study can lead to the creation of an improved version of the "well-rounded" student-athlete. Higher quality of feelings of inclusion can lead to the improvement of the student-athletes self-efficacy. Being better equipped to respond to bullying behavior regardless of perspective (bully, victim, or witness) will allow for improvement in prosocial behavior development. Focusing on the behavior of the coaches will develop social change by creating improvements for student-athletes during their ideal learning stage of adolescence. Improving the behavior of coaches will reach high number of student-athletes and allow for a greater span of social improvement on inclusion and bullying.

Summary and Transition

In this quantitative study, I investigated the relationship between high school athlete's perceptions of their coach's behavior and their perceptions of team inclusion and their endorsements of bullying. Researchers have discovered the strong importance of the role of a coach in guiding a student-athlete in sports and in life (Ettekal et al., 2018; Steinfeldt et al., 2011; Steinfeldt et al., 2012; & Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). Their guidance can affect many areas, which include self-image and bullying. Social identities, self-image, and the overall feeling of belongingness can all be reached through sport participation (Crain, 2011; Graupensperger et al., 2019). Bullying is recognized as a problem within schools and the sports world (Huang & Cornell, 2015). Bullying affects social adjustments, emotional adjustments, and academic achievements (Huang & Cornell, 2015; Steinfeldt et al., 2012).

Several researchers have conducted similar studies that are different in population or focus but their research helps to validate the need for this study. For example, Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015) focused on the relationships between student-athletes and their coaches at the collegiate level. This study used the GOALS survey to analyze the athlete's perception of their coach's behavior, their team's inclusive climate, and the level of satisfaction with their choice of college. The GOALS survey is useful for measuring student-athlete's perceptions of team inclusion (NCAA GOALS Study, 2015). Also, Steinfeldt et al. (2012) studied adolescents and the connection between the views of their role models and their attitudes towards bullying. This study revealed that male

influencers of all kinds have the potential to impress acceptable behaviors upon adolescent football players.

Athletes are victims of bullying, bystanders to bullying, and even bullies themselves (Nery et al., 2019). Coaches and other role models who address bullying behavior among adolescents provide an opportunity to influence young players attitudes on bullying (Nery et al., 2019). Additionally, researchers have discovered that student-athletes' perception of feeling included with their teams and their satisfaction with their school choice were positively associated with the ethical leadership style of their coaches (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). This is why there is an open area for improvement in how coaches are perceived by their student-athletes. The NFHS provides essential guidance on expected behaviors and traits of a coach through courses (NFHS, n.d.). How a coach should represent these behaviors, characteristics, and best practices are not referenced with the intent of preserving each coach's style and philosophy (NFHS, n.d.).

This quantitative research was based on Bandura's (1986) SCT. Influencing factors are identified through SCT of moral thought and action (Johnson et al., 2018). Through SCT, learners learn through models that they are presented. The results of my research have the potential to help to improve the development of student-athletes and coaching fundamentals as well as help to establish a stronger anti-bullying foundation among student athletes. My research can potentially lead to further explaining the connection between observed behavior and the likelihood of it being replicated. My research can potentially help to improve the quality of the coach by providing a direct feedback look from student-athletes within the high school sports community. My

research can also potentially create positive social change that will lead to the improvement of the high school coach hiring process and high school student-athlete development.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Sports have become an important element in many children's everyday lives as nearly 70% participate in school-based or community-based sports (Ettekal et al., 2018; Lindgren et al., 2017). Sports serve as one avenue to meet a child's need to feel included, which is labeled as belongingness in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Crain, 2011, p. 376). In addition to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, being included in a team creates social identity and influences self-image (Graupensperger et al., 2019), which can make being part of a sports team highly desirable. However, the need to feel included has led athletes to become susceptible to events such as hazing, which are ritual acts of humiliation, and other abuse to attain group acceptance and feelings of belongingness (Heil, 2016).

The growing desire to join sports teams results in coaches having significant impact on child athletes. Many role models (parents, uncles and aunts, siblings, etc.) have influence on athletes (Steinfeldt et al., 2012), but research has shown that coaches can provide important guidance for their players (Ettekal et al., 2018; Steinfeldt et al., 2011; Steinfeldt et al., 2012; & Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). An example of this is when NBA Hall of Famer Allen Iverson acknowledged his late college basketball coach, John Thompson, as saving his life through his coaching and mentorship (Tanenbaum, M. 2020). Interviews of athletic directors have reinforced the importance of coaches' effects on their athletes (Ettekal et al., 2018). The influence of coaches on athletes will be the primary focus of this study.

Steinfeldt et al. (2012) focused primarily on measuring the role of masculinity and morals based on the role models of high school football players to help address violence and bullying in school. The mental and physical health of adolescents around the world has been gaining attention as awareness of bullying as a serious threat has increased (Steinfeldt et al., 2012). Huang and Cornell (2015) echoed the importance of addressing bullying. Bullying is being recognized as a public health concern that has an impact on the emotional and social adjustment as well as academic achievements of its victims (Huang & Cornell, 2015). This recognition has led 49 out of 50 states to mandate that school authorities take action in bullying prevention (Huang & Cornell, 2015).

In the current study, I investigated the relationship between the high school athlete's perceptions of their coach's behavior and the athlete perceptions of team inclusion. Additionally, I assessed the relationship between the high school athlete's perceptions of their coach's behavior and the athlete's perceived endorsements of bullying.

The purpose of this literature review was to examine research on the behaviors of high school coaches and their influence on the perceptions of team inclusion as well as the athlete's perceptions of bullying. In this chapter, I explain several key areas of sports inclusion, which include views of participation and development gained from participation. I also explain the various forms of bullying that will be addressed throughout this research. In the following section, I provide the strategies and keywords used in my literature search.

Literature Search Strategy

This literature review is based on the results of a search of online databases such as Psychology Databases Combined Search through which I simultaneously searched keywords in PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, PsycEXTRA, and PsycINFO. The search included the following keywords: *sports AND bullying* (114 articles), *inclusion AND team* (1,318 articles), *team AND inclusion AND sports* (84 articles), and *coach AND behavior* (19 articles). When searching *sports AND bullying* and *team AND inclusion and sports*, I maintained the parameters between the years 2000-2020 and scholarly peer-reviewed journals. I maintained the parameters between the years 2010-2020 and scholarly peer-reviewed journals for the *inclusion AND team* search. In addition, for the *coach AND behavior* search I kept the parameters between the years 2015 and 2020, scholarly peer-reviewed journals, and the specific subject selections: coaches, athletes, coaching, college students, team sports, athletic participation, and athletic training.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical base for this study was Bandura's (1986) SCT. Bandura, an environmentalist, believed that people learn the most from their ability to imitate what they see (Crain, 2011). As explained by Bandura, the ability to imitate requires cognitive processes through which people are able to mentally code what take in from observing models. Learning through observing models requires four components to be successful: (1) attentional processes, (2) retention processes, (3) motor reproduction processes, and (4) reinforcement and motivational processes. Bandura's subprocesses of social cognition suggest the viewer must pay attention to the model to imitate it. Next, the viewer needs to

find some way to retain the information they observed to successfully imitate it. In addition, the motor skills must be adequate to continue to replicate the behavior. Lastly, there needs to be some form of reinforcement or direct motivation as people are more likely to imitate others if a reward is involved.

Influencing factors identified in SCT are moral thought and action (Johnson et al., 2018). According to SCT, learners learn through models that are presented to them. Both Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015) and Johnson et al. (2018) conducted similarly focused studies that yielded useful data by employing SCT as the theoretical framework. Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. used SCT to explain modeling of behaviors by coaches in the athletic environment and how it impacts their athletes. Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. chose SCT to focus on coaches' leadership role as well as their direct ability to serve as models to their athletes. Johnson et al. used SCT to identify the influencing factors on athletes based on moral thoughts and actions. Johnson et al. used SCT in suggesting that regulation of decision making is influenced by ethical conduct through behavioral, environmental, and personal interaction.

Bandura's SCT theory helped to answer both of this study's research questions. The basis of this research was to see if there is a connection between the behaviors of high school coaches and the behaviors of their athletes, specifically addressing athletes feeling included and bullying. All four of Bandura's components exist within the coach/athlete relationship, providing an accurate tool for explaining imitated behavior. The research questions for this study were built on Bandura's theory. Moving from the general aspect of the four components leading to imitation in any arena, this research will

augment current research by focusing on the specific views of those in the high school athletic community.

Literature Review

Coaching Influencing Behaviors

Through day-to-day interactions, coaches can (a) develop an athlete's skills for optimal game-time success, (b) help them achieve greater satisfaction in performance, and (c) further improvements in other areas in an athlete's life (Rocchi et al., 2018). A coach may be the first and most impactful positive influence of a student-athlete's behavior and character development (Ettekal et al., 2018; Rocchi et al., 2018, Rocchi et al. 2020).

Ettekal et al. (2018) described the impacts of coaches on their athletes' moral development from the athletic directors' perspective. Ettekal et al. discovered higher quality of programs will better teach a healthy concept of competition and provide opportunities for players' character development through positive coaching behaviors. The participants included four mixed-gender athletic directors who had at least 5 years of experience in the position. Ettekal et al. conducted their qualitative research through a focus group. Their conversation resulted in three major steps for coaches: deciding to engage with the program, the implementation of the program, and the perceived effects of the program. The researchers then assessed the details of how to best transition from one step to another. All athletic directors believed that the coaches were the most essential group of people to begin the process of improving athlete character development as coaches play the biggest role in their player's character development. The athletic

directors found that the character education of their athletes needs more attention, and the implementation of the steps to improve the character development of student-athletes would be most effective by starting with the coach. This study is vital to my research because it provides the viewpoints of athletic directors on the development of student-athletes. Ettekal et al. supported the idea that a coach's actions can have a significant impact on the development of high school athletes.

Rocchi et al. (2018) used self-determination theory (SDT) to evaluate the relationship between a coach and their athletes. SDT proposes that when three psychological basic needs are met (competence, autonomy, and relatedness), individuals begin to develop an inner desire and drive to improve. This study was conducted with 53 coaches from figure skating and basketball. Participants also included 250 female adolescents from the same two sports. All coaches were recruited after competing in their respective championships in Canada. The coaches completed the Interpersonal Behaviors Questionnaire-Self while the athletes completed the Interpersonal Behavior Questionnaire and the Basic Need Satisfaction in Sport Scale. Following SDT, the results of the surveys assessed six types of interpersonal behaviors that coaches can exhibit with their athletes: autonomy-supportive, autonomy-thwarting, competence-supportive, competence-thwarting, relatedness-supportive, and relatedness-thwarting. In each of these six categories, Rocchi et al. recorded the agreement levels of coaches and athletes: overreporting, when the coach's views of themselves were higher in rating than those reported by their athletes, reporting equal to that of their athletes, and underreporting, when coaches' views of themselves were lower in rating than reported by their athletes.

Five of the six categories were even between the three reporting levels. Competence-thwarting was reported to be 55% in agreement between coaches and their athletes. This means that 55% of all players and coaches agreed on competence-thwarting reports. The remaining resulted in 24% of the coach's overreporting and 21% underreporting. This means that 24% of coaches felt that they engaged in competence-thwarting more than perceived by their athletes and 21% felt that they engaged in competence-thwarting less than what was perceived by their athletes. The results of this study support that roughly 30% of coaches overrate themselves as being positive in their interpersonal relationships with their athletes compared to the ratings given by their athletes.

Rocchi et al. (2020) conducted a similar study using SDT that did not include coaches. This study's participants were 413 swimmers, including both male and female adolescents. Athletes used the Interpersonal Behaviors Questionnaire and the Sport Motivation Scale (SMS-II) to assess their coach's ability to address the three psychological needs of SDT as well as the six regulation subtypes. The swimmers were then tracked for 7 years to compare their initial opinions of their coaches' behaviors to their current assessment's years later. Results revealed that over the 7 years, the number of swimmers who continued to participate in a swimming program decreased as they either dropped out early (23%), which means they dropped out shortly after the study began; or had a delayed drop out (39%), which means they showed some improvement but dropped out after roughly three seasons. Other swimmers were labeled as stable (8%), improved (18%), and excelled (12%). Stable, improved, and excelled swimmers originally reported having less non-self-determined motivation. This means the behaviors

and encouragement from their coaches were not as vital to higher self-motivations. This was identified as those who experienced improvement in their sport and those who went on to excel in their sport received less motivation from their coaches. This research showed there is a significant relationship between coaches' behaviors and promoting a long-lasting athletic environment. Specifically, the relationship had an impact for athletes who were less self-determined. This is evident as 62% of the participants dropped from swimming, and their commonality was that they revealed less initial self-determination. Rocchi et al. only focused on the level of motivation or the lack of motivation. Therefore, the improved and the excelled swimmers continuing throughout the 7 years were not able to be separated beyond their being motivated. This study could not assess the athletes who stopped swimming during the study timeframe. Therefore, only the swimmers who maintained continued participation in swimming were able to be assessed.

Another example of coaches' influence on their players was in research conducted by Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015) who investigated ethical and abusive behaviors of college coaches and how those behaviors influenced their student-athletes. This quantitative research included 19,920 student-athletes throughout the NCAA and used the GOALS survey (NCAA GOALS Study, 2015). The GOALS survey is an NCAA study of student athletes' well-being and experiences by assessing subjects such as their academic college experience, feelings of inclusion, school selection satisfaction, and willingness to cheat. Characteristics of an ethical leader are mutual trust, concern, respect, follower satisfaction, honesty, trustworthiness, caring, openness to input, respect for others, and principled. Abusive leadership was defined as a leader's engagement in hostile behaviors,

both verbal and nonverbal, excluding physical contact. To measure abusive coaching, Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015) questioned behaviors such as making negative comments and verbal persuasion in the form of discouragement. Results indicated that student-athletes' perceptions were positively associated with the ethical leadership style of their coaches. The student athlete and their team's satisfaction with their school choice was also positively associated with the ethical leadership style of their coaches. Abusive supervision was positively correlated to a team member's willingness to cheat. There was a negative correlation found between abusive supervision and both the perception of inclusion and satisfaction with their choice of school.

Steinfeldt et al. (2011) investigated the influence of college football coaches' masculine messages and how they are conveyed to players within the context of football. This qualitative research was completed by interviewing 10 college football coaches. After reviewing the interviews, six domains emerged between the 10 coaches' statements. The themes were:

- A man means being accountable and responsible.
- Coaches teach players what it means to be a man.
- The sport of football teaches players what it means to be a man.
- Coaches reframe emotions.
- Coaches minimize the role of race.
- Psychologists have an important role.

Of these six domains, it was concluded that all 10 coaches viewed their roles in molding young boys into men as major and they felt that a football environment is a

valuable place for players to learn masculinity norms. The domains describe how influential a coach can be in a player's life. The most relevant domain for my study is how coaches reframe the player's emotions. Further looking into the core ideas provided by the 10 coaches for this domain, teaching about how to use violence and aggression on the field as well as how to not use it off the field was listed. Coaches reframing emotion was then broken down into the three categories of how emotions equated with energy and intensity, the control of emotions, and how to see in between the lines when dealing with emotions. This article is important to my research because it explains how important a coach is in developing players from the perspective of the coach. This article also goes into detail about how coaches specifically address the responsibility of their behaviors affecting their athletes.

Pulido et al. (2020) researched the views of a coach from a player's perspective. Pulido et al. examined the multilevel associations between the perceptions of a coach's interpersonal style, the perception of the player's basic psychological needs, and the athlete-perceived competency and satisfaction of their coach. The athletes' perceived coach's interpersonal style was measured by their supportive style and thwarting style. The player's basic psychological needs are measured by their satisfaction and frustration.

This study consisted of 640 European adolescent male soccer players from 45 teams. To analyze the player's perceptions of their coach's supportive or thwarting style, the Coaches' Interpersonal Style Questionnaire was used. The player's psychological need satisfaction was measured by the Basic Psychological Needs of Exercise Scale. The player's psychological need frustration was assessed using the Psychological Need

Thwarting Scale. The player's perceptions of the coach's competency were assessed using the Sports Athletes' Perceptions of Coaching Competency Scale II-High School Teams. The player's perceptions of their satisfaction with their coach were analyzed by the Satisfaction with the Head Coach Scale.

Researchers found that perceived supportive style was positively associated with the player's perception of their coach's competency. Thwarting was found to have a negative association with the athlete's perception of their coach's competency. As an effect, players lost confidence in their coach's abilities they felt that coaches applied unnecessary amounts of pressure. The player's perception of the coach's supportive style and need satisfaction was positively correlated with the player's satisfaction with their coach. Player perception of thwarting led them to have less satisfaction with their coach. Players gravitated more towards a coach who provided more support and gave more towards basic psychological needs. Players disliked playing for a coach if they felt they had a negative and controlling mentality. This article is important to this research because it provides greater insight into how influential a coach can be to their players through their behavior. Simply put, positivity from a coach is more likely to yield positive results from a player whereas negativity or bad behavior will result in the opposite.

In summary, influences from a coach's behavior are the most important when considering a student-athlete development in behavior and their character development (Ettetal et al., 2018; Pulido et al., 2020; Steinfeldt et al., 2011). Looking outside of the coach and player relationship, athletic directors were also found to believe that character education of student-athletes needs more attention (Ettetal et al., 2018). Also, athletic

directors believe that the perfect place to begin improvements are with better training of coaches as they are seen as the most effective in the development of the student-athlete (Ettetal et al., 2018). Coaches are viewed as being the most effective for student-athletes who are lacking in self-determination and regardless, of self-determination levels, coaches are the most significant factor in creating a long-lasting athletic environment (Rocchi et al., 2020). Lastly, an athlete's perception of inclusion has been positively associated with the ethical leadership style of the coach (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). A coach's behavior has been found by many to have a major influence on the student athlete's development and mindset, both in and out of the sporting environment.

Inclusion

The influences from the behaviors of a coach can create both internal and external struggles within the athlete. The struggles experienced can stem throughout an athlete's life to include their family, friends, and teachers to add to the already addressed influences from coaches (Erickson et al., 2017; Wall et al., 2019). One specific internal struggle is the idea of using drug enhancements to become bigger, stronger, and faster in hopes of excelling in a coach's expectation and gameplay (Eisenegger et al., 2017; Kanayama et al., 2018). Drug enhancements such as steroids help individuals promote dominance amongst their peers to maintain or gain social status and inclusion (Eisenegger et al., 2017). The bar to maintain social status and keep the feeling of being included has been raised so often that performance enhancements have become a common topic within the sports world (Kanayama et al., 2018). As a result, the fun of playing sports has had to compete with the seriousness of not being outdone or replaced.

The seriousness of sports play has led athletes to focus more on how to win as opposed to how to have fun.

The enjoyment of playing a game with and against friends is believed to no longer be the reality for the youth in the sports world (Lindgren et al., 2017). Sports have become adult-centered as the goal has been to win at any cost, which revolves more around talent and who the coaches feel will perform best for a victory (Lindgren et al., 2017). What is not accounted for is the athlete's best interest or their desire to simply participate and therefore an athlete can be on the team and still not have the feeling of inclusion (Lindgren et al., 2017). Also, researchers have found that abuse from coaches also leaves athletes to feel less included (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). According to scholars, the voices of athletes are minimized and mostly unheard of on the subject of their perceptions about participation and inclusion (Lindgren et al., 2017). As a result, the athlete is left questioning their place within the group's membership (Graupensperger et al., 2019; Ladd et al., 2017). This void shaped their social identities, competence, and self-images (Graupensperger et al., 2019; Ladd et al., 2017). Additionally, research suggests that participation in sports not only benefits the health of athletes but also their organizational work environment as adults (Brinkley et al., 2017). This is an example of the many long-term effects inclusion can have on an individual.

Lindgren et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative research study with the purpose of identifying visible issues within children based on their choosing to participate in team sports. In justifying their research, Lindgren et al. stated that the United Nations has identified rights of children in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

which was created in 1989. The article reports that children under the age of 18 are vulnerable and in need of special treatment. The article also emphasizes children having a right to resources, which includes health and education; protection, which includes being kept safe from discrimination, violence, and abuse; and participation, which includes having a voice and an active role in all matters affecting them. Based on the rights mentioned within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there is a rationale for equal participation in sports for all children. This is because sports have been found to foster the development of friendships, provide time for the development of children, and teach youth about important fundamentals of social interactions.

A study by Lindgren et al. (2017) was conducted through face-to-face interviews with 24 athletes aged between 10 and 11 years old. Through the interview questions, researchers identified four classifications and two frames that were able to be determined by the athlete's answers and stories. The four classifications of C++ represented the view that the best players/hardest workers play and playing time is unequally distributed (two girls and five boys), C+ represented the view that the best players/hardest workers play and playing time is equal (two girls and two boys), C- represented the view that all players are allowed to participate in games and playing time is unequally distributed based as a result of having fixed positions (two girls and three boys), and C-- represented the view that all players are allowed to participate and playing is equally distributed (six girls and two boys). The two framing categories were F+, which represented the view that the coach controlled the team selections, players playing time, and positions during games (all girls and all boys); and F-, which represented the view that the players

influenced the team selection, playing times, and positions during games (zero girls and zero boys). Based on the results, 50% of the girls felt that everyone was able to participate in games and time was equally distributed. For the boys, 42% felt that the best players were allowed to play and playing time was unequally distributed to favor those individuals. Through these results and further questions, Lindgren et al. (2017) found that the majority of the athletes played to enjoy the fun of the game, spending time with friends, being physically active and fit, and feeling included. Oddly enough, only two of the twenty-four interviewees mentioned winning as the reason for having fun or playing the sport. The desire to feel included that was highlighted by many of the athletes makes this article relevant to my research. This data provides credibility based on the athlete's voices and experiences that inclusion is one of their primary reasons for participation in sports.

Graupensperger et al. (2019) mentioned that there is an underlying rationale of social identification being connected to an individual's well-being and psychological health. The intent behind this study was to better understand how social and group structures within college sports teams relate to social identity. The participants within this study were 852 college student-athletes with 536 females and 316 males. The student-athletes participated in soccer, ice hockey, track and field, twirling, bowling, water polo, and team handball. Years of the college experience was fairly even, with 30% freshman, 22% sophomore, 24% juniors, 21% seniors, and 2% graduate students.

The survey measured social ties and social identification of the club-level college athletes. The purpose of focusing on these two specific areas is due to previous literature

suggesting that social ties and identification were connected to an individual's perception of their group's identity as cited in Bruner et al. (2015) and Martin et al. (2017). Social ties were measured by using a roster nomination survey to indicate ties to each member on their team roster and used a Likert-type scale to determine the social connections of teammates outside of the sports-related activity. Social identification was measured using Bruner and Benson's Social Identity Questionnaire for sport, which covers ingroup ties, ingroup effect, and social ties/social identification within team environments. Results for social ties were found to be positively related to an athlete's social identification strength. The data show that without much intent, these student-athletes' identity has been affected by the identity of their team and their perception of that identity. This research is important to my research because it shows how important inclusion can be to an individual as well as how detrimental to an individual's self-identity it is to be excluded. This understanding of how influential an inclusive team can be to the individual athlete validates the importance of a coach's role in creating an inclusive team environment.

In summary, inclusion has been found to have a major role in the development of student-athletes. Student-athletes have not been given much of a voice within the subjects of their perceptions about their level of participation and inclusion (Lindgren et al., 2017). The competitiveness of sports has grown so large that the focus has become less about having fun and the love of the game and more about winning (Kanayama et al., 2018). The majority of athletes in recent studies have been found to prefer playing for the love of the game, being with friends, staying active, and having a sense of belongingness (Lindgren et al., 2017). The focus of winning has been identified as one of the factors

leading to players feeling the lack of inclusion (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015).

Inclusion is important to student-athletes as there have been positive correlations between the student athlete's identity and the identity of their team (Graupensperger et al., 2019).

Inclusion shapes the student athlete's self-image, competence, and social identities (Graupensperger et al., 2019).

Coaching Behaviors and Inclusion

Research on high-level Olympic champions found that they all shared a common experience of adversity, which when combined with their positive attitude allowed for them to ultimately reach success (Kegelaers et al., 2019). From an ethical standpoint, coaches do not desire to create adversity for their players. However, Olympic coaches have begun to include planned disruptions into their training with the intent to duplicate results similar to surviving adversity. In the research of Kegelaers et al. (2019), nine high-performance coaches were used to collect their objective and subjective viewpoints using a pragmatic research paradigm. The overall aim of this qualitative study was to explore the various types of planned disruptions used during practice, games, and in areas outside of sport.

Nine themes surfaced as the influencers for planned disruptions: Location, Competition, Punishment and rewards, Physical strain, Stronger Competition, Distraction, Unfairness, Restrictions, and Outside the box. Manipulation revolved around inclusion was addressed within two of these main categories: competition simulations and unfairness. Within the raw data of these results, coaches revealed that the use of ranking by purposefully placing athletes lower than their status to promote greater effort

was a planned disruption. Additionally, coaches mentioned that being unfair in practice and games to a certain athlete is a planned distraction because it too can lead to a greater effort by the athlete.

The second effort from this study found exactly what coaches expected from implementing planned distractions upon their player. Familiarization, creating awareness, developing and refining personal resources, and promoting team processes. These four were the top desired outcomes coaches expect to see from their players. Coaches acknowledged that planned disruptions could lead to a strain on the coach-player relationship. This study accounts for many of the planned disruptions but for this research, I would like to focus specifically on competition simulations and unfairness. Competition simulations and unfairness are the two that directly connect to a player feeling the lack of inclusion, per the coach's examples. Some may see the lack of inclusion as a challenge and try harder while others may turn away from the sport and relationships will be damaged. This study is important to the research because it shows that the lack of inclusion can yield positive and negative results.

Bullying

Sports practices promote responsibility and improve coexistence (Mendez et al., 2019). Because of the united bond and comradery, sports have become very important worldwide (Nery et al., 2019; Kuehn et al., 2018). Physical and social development is conducted during sports practices and many adolescents spend most of their free time with their team (Nery et al., 2019). The sports world is not immune from the infection of bullying. Bullying is defined as a powerful individual repeatedly targeting someone

weaker to damage their sense of self (Huang et al., 2015; Lehman, 2017; McHugh, 2017; Nery et al., 2019; Steinfeldt et al., 2012). Bullying can come in the form of physical, cyber-, verbal, and social bullying (Huang et al., 2015; Lehman, 2017; McHugh, 2017; Nery et al., 2019; Steinfeldt et al., 2012). Addressing bullying within sports comes with many challenges and controversy that most individuals in powerful positions would often rather not encounter and therefore attempt to overlook bullying behavior (Heil, 2016).

Bullying often takes place within the school environment (Lehman, 2017). Bullying amongst school-aged children is recognized as a public health concern across the United States as well as throughout the world (Huang et al., 2015; Joaquim, 2014; Kuehn et al., 2018). Bullying has a detrimental impact on social and emotional development as well as in achievements academically (Huang et al., 2015; Joaquim, 2014). The victim of bullying typically has no idea when a bully will engage in bullying activity or the type of bullying behavior that will happen when it does. The unpredictability of the bullying event is what causes stress as the victim has a low sense of control and their ego has been threatened (Joaquim, 2014). Rural areas are at greater risk for bully victimization and the eventual emotional problems that come along with it (Evans et al., 2017). One of the discovered reasons for this is the lack of opportunities to participate in sports or activities and leads to bullying as a result of boredom (Evans et al., 2017). In a given year, it is estimated that there are 20%-28% of middle school and high school students victimized by bullying (Duggins et al., 2016; Huang et al., 2015; Kuehn et al., 2018; Evans et al., 2017).

Bullying situations can arise from relationship problems of any kind (Mendez et al., 2019). Female athletes have been found to encounter bully situations when they express attitudes that promote gender equality within athletics (Lehman, 2017). Male athletes do not face the same risk of encountering bullying situations for favoring gender equality within athletics (Lehman, 2017). This could be a result of contemporary views on masculinity influencing the socialized masculine ideologies within both, the male's physical and psychological lives (Ramacker et al., 2019). Theoretically, traditional masculine ideals are reinforced within the sports environment (Ramacker et al., 2019). Bullying creates both short- and long-term negative consequences to include the suggestion by researchers that victims are 74% more probable to experience depression as an adult (Duggins et al., 2016; Evans et al., 2017; Nery et al., 2019). Low self-esteem, homicide, suicide, and depression have all been linked to bullying (Joaquim, 2014; Cho et al., 2018). Suicide is the second leading cause of deaths within the United States among youth aged 12-19 and a better understanding of bullying is a major factor in intervention development (Kuehn et al., 2018).

Steinfeldt et al. (2012) investigated bullying behaviors and beliefs among football players by measuring the player's perspectives of the masculine views of their role models, which included coaches. Steinfeldt et al. conducted this study with 206 high school male football players. The football players were given the MAMS survey (Oransky & Fisher, 2009). The MAMS is designed to measure the endorsement of traditional masculinity among adolescents. To measure bullying, along with consultations amongst school administrators, football coaches, and psychologists, Steinfeldt et al.

(2012) used four modified scenarios to reflect potential bullying encounters within four categories (physical bullying, relational cyberbullying, verbal bullying, and social bullying). Steinfeldt et al.'s goal were to discover the degree to which the players endorsed each scenario. Steinfeldt et al. found that the behavior of a football player's male role models directly influenced their perception of morals and masculinity. In turn, the high school player's beliefs and behaviors toward bullying were influenced by the views of their male role models. Football players who endorsed traditional male role norms and perceived a poorer moral atmosphere were more likely to support bullying (Steinfeldt et al., 2012). What this study does not focus on is the amount of influence that a coach's behavior may have on their student-athlete's endorsements of bullying, as it focuses on all male role models. High school football players identified their male role models as 66% fathers, 14% brothers, 12% other, which included uncles, sports figures, etc., and only 8% for coaches.

Rivers et al. (2009) conducted a study to explore the impact of the mental health of those who witness bullying done to others. This study was conducted with the use of 2002 adolescence from 14 public schools within the North of England. The population was almost even on the subject of gender with 55% boys and 45% girls.

Several measurements were collected in this study. Perpetrator, victim, and witness status was collected through a 15-item antibullying inventory that was a modified version of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire. The purpose of the OVBQ was to allow the participant to state whether they have been a bully, been bullied, or witness specific forms of bullying. Mental health concerns were assessed through an adolescent

53-item version of the Brief Symptom Inventory. Common student concerns were collected through a 17-item questionnaire that provided questions about their concerns on specific things, which required a “Yes” or “No” response. Lastly, substance use questions were given that were derived from the 1999 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. This survey asked students if they have used, tried, or still use substances.

Results found that 20% of the students bullied, 34% reported being bullied, and 63% reported having witnessed bullying during their current term of school. Results also showed 27.6% of the sample reported not having any involvement with bullying to include witnessing it during the current term. Recorded data went on to show that 1.4% reported only being a bully, 6.7% reported being a victim only, 30.4% reported being witnesses only, 1.3% identified as both bully and victim, 6.7% reported being both bully and witness, 15.2% reported being both victim and witness, and 10.7% reported being bully, victim, and witness within the current term. These results revealed that bullying was a part of their daily lives for the majority of the students within their school district. No differences between genders were found except that girls reported slightly more observations of bullying than boys. Additionally, those who witness bullying showed mental health implications that are connected to depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and substance abuse. Overall, the data collected within this study led researchers to imply that bullying, being a victim of bullying, or witnessing bullying can all cause challenges with mental health. The information from this study is important for my research because it highlights the effects of bullying on adolescents from all angles. This highlighted information gives greater justification for the

importance of further understanding all aspects and influences of bullying that help bullying behavior continue.

In conclusion, bullying is a topic that occurs often in the sports environment but is often a challenging issue to address which can lead to the issue being overlooked (Heil, 2016). Teammates usually spend the majority of their time together and the bullying behavior can be normalized and not seen as an issue (Nery et al., 2019). This normalization can lead to a lack of understanding when an individual develops social, emotional, and academic problems (Huang et al., 2015; Joaquim, 2014). Another influence from the team perspective outside of teammates is the coaches who have been found to have a direct influence on their player's morals (Steinfeldt et al., 2012). Short-term and long-term consequences are a threat when being bullied, which includes the high percentage chance of experiencing depression in adulthood (Nery et al., 2019; Duggins et al., 2016; Evans et al., 2017). All positions around bullying (bully, victim, and witness) have been found to potentially create challenges with mental health (Rivers et al., 2009). These mental health challenges include substance abuse, paranoid ideations, hostility, depression, phobic anxiety, and anxiety (Rivers et al., 2009).

Coaching Behaviors and Bullying

Bolter et al. (2013) conducted a study to assess coaching behaviors and their effects on the sportsmanship of adolescent athletes. This study was conducted with the use of 418 adolescent athletes. Of those, 211 participants were female and 207 were male. These athletes were recruited from 34 sports teams (rugby, lacrosse, basketball, soccer, football, softball, ice hockey, and baseball). The average season that each player

played for their current head coach was 1.8 seasons and all players played their sport for an average of 6 years.

The measures used for this study were coaching behaviors related to sportpersonship and prosocial and antisocial behaviors. Coaching behaviors related to sportpersonship were assessed through the use of the Sportsmanship Coaching Behaviors Scale (SCBS) that is made up of 40-items that cover the eight mechanisms of a coach's influence. The eight mechanisms are (1) sets the expectation for good sportsmanship, (2) reinforces good sportsmanship, (3) punishes poor sportsmanship, (4) discusses good sportsmanship, (5) teaches good sportsmanship, (6) models' good sportsmanship, (7) models' poor sportsmanship, and (8) prioritizes winning over good sportsmanship. Participants also took the Prosocial and Antisocial Behavior in Sport Scale (PABSS) to assess the athlete's prosocial behavior towards teammates and opponents as well as their antisocial behavior towards teammates and opponents. The use of PABSS was to use the athlete's self-reporting of their behavior to validate the findings of the SCBS.

Results revealed that there was no difference in gender on the topic of coaching behaviors on sportpersonship and social behaviors. There was a positive correlation between reinforcing good sportpersonship with prosocial athlete behavior and minimizing antisocial behavior. There was a positive correlation between punishing poor sportpersonship with prosocial athlete behavior and minimizing antisocial behavior. There was a positive correlation between teaching good sportpersonship with prosocial athlete behavior and minimizing antisocial behavior. And there was a positive correlation

between modeling good sportspersonship with prosocial athlete behavior and minimizing antisocial behavior. Prioritizing winning over sportspersonship was the only value that was found to promote antisocial behavior and poor sportspersonship from their athletes. This study is important to my research because it explains how coaching behaviors effect athlete's social behaviors. Bullying is included within the many acts of social behavior. It has been explained throughout this literature review that coaches can influence their athletes and this research further explains how coaches can easily be tied to bullying.

Summary and Conclusions

In conclusion, the behaviors of coaches are important in the development of student-athletes (Ettetal et al., 2018; Steinfeldt et al., 2011; Pulido et al., 2019). Two of the major areas of developing the athlete are the ability of the athlete to feel included and their views and behaviors towards bullying (Lindgren et al., 2017; Rivers et al., 2009). Various leaders and influencers of high school football have voiced the major impact of the coach on their players (Ettetal et al., 2018). The identity of players is often a reflection of the identity of their team (Graupensperger et al., 2019). Therefore, not feeling included leads to the lack of a known individual social identity (Graupensperger et al., 2019). Seeming isolated often leaves individuals vulnerable to be bullied within the team environment (Lindgren et al., 2017). Proper coaching behaviors can develop student-athletes to respond better to refraining from bullying as well as giving better responses to bullying behavior when they witness it (Ettetal et al., 2018; Rivers et al., 2009). This is important because the victim, the bully, and the witness are all susceptible

to developing short- and long-term challenges to include depression and anxiety (Rivers et al., 2009).

A lot of research has been conducted revolved around coaching behaviors and inclusion and coaching influences and its relationship to bullying. None of the research on coaching influences focuses directly on high school athletes, coaches' behaviors, inclusion, and bullying. Rocchi et al. (2018) had 250 adolescent females who were figure skaters and basketball players, and their focus was only on evaluating the coach/player relationship. This study does not address inclusion or bullying. Rocchi et al. (2020) used 413 male and female adolescent swimmers further explore the coach/player relationship. This study does not address inclusion or bullying. Pulido et al. (2019) surveyed 640 male European adolescent soccer players for their research to explore the views of the coach's interpersonal style from a player's perspective. This study does not address inclusion or bullying. Steinfeldt et al. (2012) used 206 high school male football players to measure bullying behaviors amongst football players in comparison to the perspective views of their role models. This study does not focus on coaches and does not address inclusion. Rivers et al. (2009) used 2002 adolescent mix of male and females to explore possible mental health impacts from being a bully, being a victim of bullying, and witnessing bullying. This research does not address coaches or inclusion. Bolter et al. (2013) surveyed 418 male and female adolescent athletes to assess coaching behaviors and the effects on athlete sportsmanship. This research can be tied into bullying behavior but does not mention it specifically. This research also does not address inclusion.

This is important because students are easier to influence during their adolescent years. This present research will fill this gap of better understanding the relationship between high school athlete's perceptions of their coach's behavior and their perceptions of team inclusion and the relationship between high school athlete's perceptions of their coach's behavior and their endorsements of bullying. The knowledge gained from this research will provide a more in-depth understanding of how coaches are influencing student-athletes feeling of inclusion and their endorsements of bullying. Better understanding in these areas will allow for improved methods for the development of adolescent student-athletes.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coach's behavior and their perceptions of team inclusion and their endorsements of bullying. This study was quantitative in nature and will focus on high school student-athletes in all grades. A better understanding on this relationship will help to improve student-athlete development and can also help to improve the coach-player relationship. A similar study to this one was conducted by Steinfeldt et al. (2012), which focused on collegiate student-athletes. The purpose of this study was to begin the focus earlier to help develop student-athletes better and sooner than college. Questions from the GOALS survey used in Stienfeldt at al. were removed as necessary to account for the differences between high school and college student-athletes.

Major sections of this chapter include research design, methodology, population, sampling procedures, recruitment procedures, instrumentation, my data analysis plan, and threats to validity. The research design explains the independent and dependent variables. The methodology section discussed the specific methods of this study. The threats to validity section thoroughly explained the internal, external, and construct validity as well as the ethical treatment of the participants of the study. At the completion of this chapter, the research will be able to be replicated accurately to make comparisons of future findings.

Research Design and Rationale

My first quantitative research question sought to find the relationship between high school athlete's perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors and their perceptions of team inclusion. The independent variable in this research question were the coach's ethical and abusive behavior. The dependent variable were the student-athlete's perceptions of team inclusion. This research design is consistent with other research revolving around student-athletes on a collegiate level.

My second quantitative research question sought to find the relationship between high school athlete's perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors and their endorsements of physical, verbal, cyber-, and social bullying. The independent variable in this research question was the coach's ethical and abusive behavior. The dependent variable was the student-athlete's endorsements of physical, verbal, cyber-, and social bullying. This research design is consistent with other research revolving around the assessment of student-athletes on a collegiate level.

Multiple regression was the chosen statistical method of this research. Multiple regression analysis is an advanced form of a regression analysis as it allows the assessment of the effects of multiple predictor variables (Jackson, 2012). The rationale behind using a multiple regression analysis is that interactions normally have several variables which lead to an outcome (Jackson, 2012). This specific type of analysis allows for the use of several variables to see how they influence another variable (Jackson, 2012). This design was appropriate for my research because we are attempting assess the ethical and abusive variables of a coach's behavior and the extent to which those

variables influence the perceptions of inclusion and the endorsements of bullying. There are no time or resource constraints with the selection to use a multiple regression design.

Methodology

Population

The target population for this study were high school student athletes from a county in Texas. The student athletes were male and female freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. This county has 74 high schools that account for 48,495 students. A high school within this county has 1,553 students of which 833 (54%) are also athletes. The amount of student athletes at this high school is right along the national percentage of 55% of high school students being involved in sports. In comparison to this county student population, this high school falls roughly 300 students less than the mean of all of the county high schools. Statistically, there are roughly 26,700 high school student athletes within this County.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

This research used nonprobability sampling by the way of convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is defined as recruiting participants based on their convenience or availability (Creswell et al., 2018). This strategy is usually less desirable due to the lack of randomly selecting participants, which would allow for a broader generalization in results. However, convenience sampling was best for this research due to circumstances revolving around specifically focusing on high school athletes and the local environment making a slow recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, sports have had a slow return as a result of COVID-19 and deciding on all the restrictions necessary to keep

all who participate safe during training and competitions. These two reasons hinder the ability to go directly to schools and request participation from several entire teams within a high school. As a result, finding student athletes who are involved in other programs, specifically mentoring programs, are much more accessible and makes convenience sampling the best choice.

The population will be sampled from student athletes within the Kappa League mentoring program. The Kappa League mentoring program is a sub-organization of the Guide Right program. The Guide Right program is a national service initiative within the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. organization and has been providing service in the form of national mentoring since 1969.

There are other fraternities and sororities that also contribute to the mentoring of high school students within the community. Each mentoring organization will be introduced to the study to participate: Alpha Mentoring Program (Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.), Omega Gents Youth Mentoring (Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.), Sigma Beta Club (Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.), Iota Youth Alliance (Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.), Exquisite P.E.A.R.L.S. (Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.), Delta GEMS (Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.), Archonettes (Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.), and Rhoers (Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.). These eight organizations along with Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc make up the Devine Nine Greek organizations. Participation from all mentoring programs was sought out for this study.

In the case that COVID-19 or the COVID-19 Delta Variant causing issues, I planned to implement my secondary or third method of recruitment. If the pandemic

causes for the organizations of the Divine 9 to not allow for members due to safety precautions, I would have moved to the use of the school system. The mentor program is an optional organization and in the case of the pandemic growing it would be one of the first set of gatherings to be halted. School on the other hand is a necessity and conditions would have to be extreme before school participation is placed on hold. Therefore, continuing with convenience sampling, I would reach out to Harlan High School and William H. Taft High School to request participation of their school from their athletic directors. The third option was the least desired and it would only be implemented in the case of the pandemic resulting in another complete shutdown. This option would involve reaching out to Survey Monkey to share the study for me. This will allow for the results to remain anonymous, but it would bring additional variables to the study such as the allowance for participants to be paid, which could skew results.

The inclusion criteria I used was male and female, who have played at least one season or had an entire preseason with their current high school coach, a member of a team sport, and in any grade in high school. Individuals who are not in high school, individuals who have not practiced under their current high school coach for at least one preseason, and individuals who play individual sports (such as boxing or tennis) were excluded from participating in this research study.

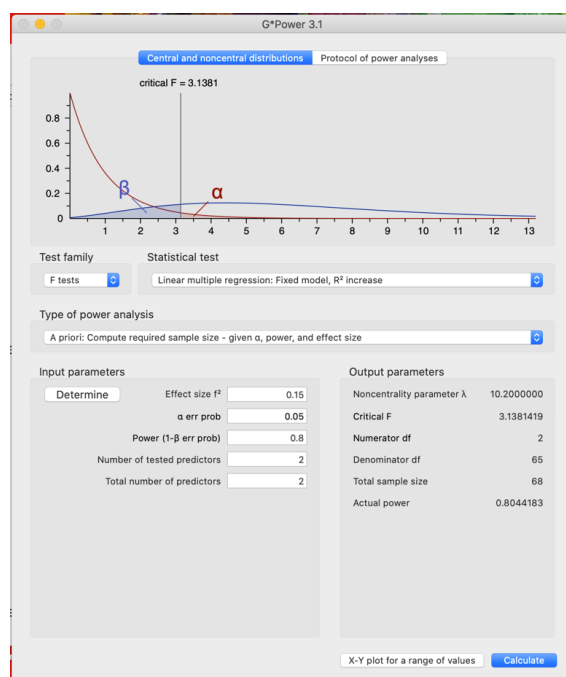
Sample Size Analysis

Using the software G*Power software version 3.1.9.6 to estimate the sample size needed, the analysis found that a total of 68 participants is needed to detect significance. The number of participants were a result of an effect size (f^2) of 0.15, alpha of 0.05, a

power of 0.80, with a total of two predictors. The statistical test used was a “linear multiple regression: fixed model, R² increase” with the type of power analysis set to “a priori: Compute required sample size,” please see Figure 1.

Figure 1

*G*Power Calculation*



Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection (Primary Data)

Recruitment

Recruitment of participants began with reaching out to the previously mentioned organizations of the Divine 9 and their mentoring organizations. These organizations mentor youth ranging from third grade to twelfth grade. In the case that there is a medium threat to health and these organizations activities are cut, then I would move to the

previously mentioned schools. If safety concerns cause for a complete societal shutdown, then I will move to the third option of recruiting via Survey Monkey.

Participation

The first step in finding participants was to attend their mentoring meeting and present the study to the mentees and their parents. To do this, I needed to reach out to all of the organization's directors to find out their meeting schedule and request a time slot to speak. Once determining allotted times to come to their scheduled meetings, I would then approach parents about their children's participation. I would briefly state the purpose of the study and request for anyone who meets the criteria of being a high school student athlete to volunteer participation. With the expectation that all participants would be under the age of 18, I needed parental consent before officially allowing any participation. Once parents were comfortable and consented to their children participating, I explained to the student athletes the importance of my research in the attempt to improve the high school student-athlete and coach relationship and their role in this effort. I then thoroughly explained that their participation is 100% voluntary, confidential, and anonymous. No one will be able to identify them by name nor will they know that they participated in the survey. Additionally, if at any point they decide they do not want to be involved, no questions will be asked, and their desire will be respected immediately. The athletes, whose parents have approved, will be asked to read and sign the assent form (Appendix A). After consent and assent from the parents and their student athletes has been signed, those who choose to participate will be able to go to SurveyMonkey and proceed to take the survey.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a survey provided through SurveyMonkey. SurveyMonkey is a survey platform that is owned and operated under Momentive Inc., which also owns and operates GetFeedback and Momentive (also survey collection platforms). SurveyMonkey was selected as the ideal platform because it not only is affordable, but it also allows for the user to design their online survey to their liking for their requirements and needs. This software also captures answers from participants from wherever they can access the internet. Additionally, SurveyMonkey will also capture all the data for this research so that it can then be analyzed.

The link to access the survey was provided by the leadership of each organization of the Divine 9's mentoring leadership to the parents of those who are willing to participate. Access to the survey will be gained through a code provided on a card. The code will be able to be accessed using any device with internet capability. At the end of the study, mentoring leadership will be given a short document that explains the findings, which will be written to high school level to ensure adequate comprehension when they present the information to their mentee. Additionally, I will offer to return and discuss the meaning of the findings and open for questions that the group or their parents may have. This will allow for questions and answers without isolating those who participated. Lastly, I ensured the mentors have my contact information in case any future questions arise on the topic of my research. Outside of the short document that explains the results, my return and contact information will be dependent of the desire of each individual mentoring program. No further follow-up would be necessary.

Due to its ease of accessibility, there were screening procedures within the survey put into place so that consent and assent can be captured while maintaining the ability for the participant to remain anonymous. The screening procedures will first be the consent form for the parents to sign. Next, if they consent, the next screening procedure will be the assent form for the participant. Lastly, the page will ask for basic information such as grade, gender, and sports team(s) that the participant is on. These things needed to be completed correctly before continuing on to the survey itself. This was necessary to ensure protection of the participant, their parents, their coaches, and the integrity of the study.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

GOALS

The scales of my research were on ethical leadership, abusive coaching behaviors, inclusion climates on the team, and bullying endorsements.

Ethical Leadership

A coach's ethical leadership was measured with six Likert-type scale items (e.g., *My head coach sets an example of how to do things the "right way" in terms of ethics*). Ethical leadership is defined as behavior that is moral—moral meaning honest, trustworthy, caring, principled, respectful to others, and open to input (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). The scale will range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The ethical leadership score will be an average across all six items with a range from 1 to 5.

Abusive Coaching Behavior

A coach's abusive behavior was measured using three Likert-type scale items (e.g., *My head coach puts me down in front of others*). Abusive coaching behavior is defined as acts that sustain a display of hostile verbal and nonverbal engagement (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). The scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The abusive coaching behavior score was an average across all three items with a range from 1 to 5.

Inclusion Climate on Team

The climate that the team has on inclusion was assessed using three Likert-type scale items (e.g., *My coach and teammates are accepting of differing viewpoints and cultures*). Inclusion climate on the team is defined as the environment that is intended to make the student-athlete feel welcomed or as a part of the team. The scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The inclusion climate on the team score was an average across all three items with a range between 1 and 6.

The GOALS survey, which was validated in 2010 by the NCAA, was used to collect data on the independent variables of the athlete's perception of their coach's ethical leadership as well as abusive behavior (Appendix B). The GOALS survey will also be used to collect data on the first dependent variable, the athlete's perception of the inclusion climate of their team. The GOALS survey uses Likert scales for all subscales (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). The GOALS survey is useful for measuring student-athlete's perceptions of team inclusion. This survey is a commonly used for college student-athletes to access various areas of their college experience to determine their overall

well-being. Using this model in a modified edition allowed for the assessment of student-athletes perceptions of team inclusion of their respective high school sports teams. The survey used by Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015) only needed to be modified on the removal of the items that addresses “willingness to cheat,” “ethical climate in school,” and “college choice satisfaction.” The other sections of the survey can easily transition to the high school community as it does not specify collegiate level focus and the sections directly address what this research is seeking to discover more about: ethical leadership, abusive coaching behavior, ethical climate in school, and inclusion climate on the team (Appendix C). The validities are identified by Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. with alphas in the range of .81 to .92. Alpha coefficients for inclusion climate on the team is .81. The alpha coefficients for both ethical leadership and abusive coaching behavior is .92.

Bullying Endorsement Scales

Student-athlete’s endorsements of bullying was assessed using four Likert-scale items (e.g., *A classmate is walking down the hall. You bump your shoulder into him as he passes so that his books fall out of his hands onto the floor*). Bullying endorsements is defined as the support of behavior that is intended to inflict harm or stress, occurs repeatedly over a period, and involves an inequity of strength or power (Steinfeldt et al., 2012). The scale ranged from 1 (never appropriate) to 5 (always appropriate). The bullying endorsement score was an average across all four items with a range between 1 and 5.

Student responses to four scenarios that describe possible bullying situations revolving around physical, cyber-, verbal, and social bullying will be used to measure endorsement of bullying. An example of a cyberbullying scenario states, “you take a

picture of a crying classmate while he is crying and forward it to other students” (Steinfeldt et al., 2012). The possible student responses are scored on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 meaning the behavior is never appropriate to 5 meaning always appropriate. The total scores across all scenarios was used. This model was structured by Steinfeldt et al. (2012), football coaches, psychologists, and school administrators based on Rest’s (1983, 1984) model of moral action. The alpha coefficients ranged from .67 to .72 (Kavussanu et al., 2002). The alpha for judgement is .67. The alpha for intent is .72. The alpha for behavior is .70. These scenarios used as an assessment tool to Steinfeldt et al. revealed that male influencers of all kinds have the potential to impress acceptable behaviors upon adolescent football players. The scenarios have been found as appropriate to assess bullying intent, judgement, and behavior. Therefore, these scenarios have been found to be appropriate and will be used in this study to assess student-athlete’s endorsements of bullying.

Data Analysis Plan

The data received were collected and organized for analysis. Using SPSS software version 27, a Cronbach’s alpha will be conducted on my own data to insure internal reliability. Ensuring internal reliability is important due to altering the GOALS survey to better suit high school athletes. Afterward reliability has been insured, a multiple regression analysis will be conducted. The means scores for the independent variables will be ethical coaching behaviors and abusive coaching behaviors. The mean scores for the dependent variables will be the student athlete’s perceptions of inclusion and their

perceptions of bullying endorsements. All variables are continuous. Potential covariant variables that will be additionally considered are school year, gender, and sport type.

Research Questions

RQ1: What is the relationship between high school athlete's perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors and their perceptions of team inclusion as measured by the GOALS survey?

H₀₁: There is no relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors and their perceptions of team inclusion as measured by the GOALS survey.

H₁₁: There is a relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors and their perceptions of team inclusion as measured by the GOALS survey.

RQ2: What is the relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors as measured by the GOALS survey and their endorsements of physical, verbal, cyber-, and social bullying as measured by bullying scenarios?

H₀₂: There is no relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors as measured by the GOALS survey and their endorsements of physical, verbal, cyber-, and social bullying as measured by bullying scenarios.

H₁₂: There is a relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors as measured by the GOALS survey and

their endorsements of physical, verbal, cyber-, and social bullying as measured by bullying scenarios.

Using a multiple regression analysis requires that four assumptions be made. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables needs to be linear, the errors between predicted and observed values are normally distributed, there is not a perfect relationship between variables, and that the relationship between variables do not present a clear pattern of distribution. These assumptions can be verified using scatterplots, histograms, correlation matrix, and the use of a scatterplot in comparison to the predicted values to ensure that there is not a cone shaped pattern.

Threats to Validity

External Validity

Parents have an influence over their children, especially if their parents are involved in coaching themselves. Parental influence can lead to two separate issues within this study. (1) Parents who have strong views on the coach-athlete relationship may have placed their opinions about how the relationship should be. This could lead the student-athlete to answer questions in a way that does not reflect the actual behavior of their coach or their actual feelings about it. The reason why this problem exists is because the surveys will be taken online and can be taken in the presence of their parents. This issue was rectified by asking the student-athletes to be as truthful as possible and reminding them that their answers will not be shared with anyone and that their identity will be masked. (2) Parents who are involved in high school sports in any capacity may lead to student-athletes feeling as if they are speaking about their parent or can lead to

issues arising for their parent. The concern of making their parent-coach look a certain way could deter them from truthfully speaking on items that they feel could bring discredit upon their parent. This issue was resolved by reassuring the student-athletes in the initial presentation that no one is seeking to speak on the image of any coach, nor do I have the authority to apply consequences to anyone. Additionally, I informed them that the purpose of the study is to help the high school sports world become better by improving the player-coach relationship.

Internal Validity

As this research included freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, the time spent over multiple seasons could result in a different understanding in the purpose of the coach's actions. Essentially, seniors having four seasons worth of experience in comparison to a freshmen's one season could result in a difference in understanding the method behind the madness and lead to different opinions about the coach's behavior. The difference in understanding is believed to be majorly associated with the maturation difference of the players. Any differences in the opinions of the coach will help to spread the opinions of the coach but this difference will be a positive. On a topic such as inclusion, all players on the team should feel included, not just the players that understand the "method behind the madness" of the coach's behaviors. With that, the student-athletes will be asked to be as honest as possible before taking the survey so that accurate assessments can be made.

Construct Validity

This study involved a survey that combines two surveys from two completely different studies. One survey was designed to collect valid information from college athletes on their academic and athletic experience with their school. This study was intended for two reasons: (1) to improve areas within athletics where student athletes were not strongly satisfied and (2) to improve their school in other areas so that they can continue to be appealing to future potential students. This study was primarily designed to address college students and there is a chance that the study will not be useful for high school athletes. Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015) modified the original GOALS survey for their research. Their research continued to focus on college student athletes, but their study only focused on the ethical and abusive coaching behaviors. Therefore, they removed certain questions that did not address the intended focus and was still able to yield reliable results. To mitigate any possible issues, I intend to do the same thing in this study. Not all questions in the original GOALS survey or the modified GOALS survey are useful in assessing a high school student athlete. Stienfeldt et al. (2012) focused their research on high school student athletes and their scenarios were specifically created for high school student athletes' assessment of bullying endorsement. Being created for the same population that this research is focusing on and being administered through similar avenues should result in valid results.

Ethical Procedures

This study involved the vulnerable population of high school student athletes who are under the age of 18 years old. This is a vulnerable population in the eyes of ethical

research due to the ability to manipulate minors for research purposes. To decrease the potential for any ethical issues, parent consent forms were required before student athletes are able ever involved in the research process. This ensured an authoritative adult is involved in the student athlete's decision to participate, which eliminated the chance of manipulation of a minor. As an additional form of insurance for protection of the minor, they received the opportunity to agree or disagree to their participation through the assent form that will be presented after consent has been gained.

Another potential ethical issue that revolved around this vulnerable population is the identification of the participants. Specifically, two topics stand out: repercussions from coaches and the safety of the student athlete in expressing their thoughts and experiences. To mitigate this potential ethical issue, the participants were masked and have no identifying information attached to their survey. The student athletes were not recruited through their school so their coaches did not have any involvement in their participation. This also helps this potential ethical issue as the goal would be to ensure that no coach treats any student athlete different based on their views and thoughts. An additional protective measure would be to ensure that other student athletes or peers could attempt to treat the participant differently for their participation or their views of their team. Safety for the student athlete in either area is ensured by having the survey private and completed in the privacy of their own home or chosen location.

In addition to the possible ethical concerns from participating in this study, there could also be an ethical concern of implications made if the participant decided to withdraw or not complete the study. This research study is 100% voluntary, and that

message was echoed within the consent and the assent forms. Participants also held the power to withdraw at any time before completing and submitting the survey. The only reason that they would not be able to withdraw after submission would be a direct effect of not being able to identify who completed the survey in ensuring anonymity.

Other possible ethical issues include treatment within their school environment, peer judgement from within their respective mentoring organization, parents who are coaches and their views on their child's thoughts. If there is no obstruction in recruitment, student athletes' participation will not be known by their school. This will mitigate the chances that there could be any issues within the student athletes respective school based on their views. This is an additional measure of anonymity throughout the study. Other members a part of the mentoring group will have a greater chance of knowing who participated but that will only be a result of the individual sharing that detail. To mitigate the possible judgement of their peers within the mentoring organization, the surveys were created to be completed anywhere, to include the privacy of their own home.

If there were any parents who are also coaches of their child, these parents knew that their child is participating because of their need to sign the consent form. In this manner, I had no way of preventing the knowledge of participation. However, the details that the student athlete shares within their survey will remain completely anonymous. Therefore, the only way a parent-coach would be aware of their child's opinions was through observing their child as they take the survey. This specific moment is a parental right, and this research has not authority or desire to prevent such an interaction. There

were no incentives provided for this study so there is no reason to believe that an existence of unfair rewards is provided for participation.

The control of the data for this research is extremely important in the protection of the participating student athlete for various reasons. The biggest and most important aspect is ensuring that their participation is kept anonymous. During the collection of data, there was an attempt to ensure that no information capture could easily lead to the identification of any one individual. Data will be kept within the Survey Monkey database under my profile account for record purposes, future studies, and comparisons for future captured research. No one else will have access to the raw data of this research provided by the participating student athlete.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between high school athlete's perceptions of their coach's behavior and their perceptions of team inclusion and their endorsements of bullying. The first quantitative research question seeks to find the relationship between high school athlete's perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors and their perceptions of team inclusion. The second quantitative research question seeks to find the relationship between high school athlete's perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors and their endorsements of physical, verbal, cyber-, and social bullying. The independent variables in these research questions are the coach's ethical and abusive behavior. The dependent variables are the student-athlete's perceptions of team inclusion and the student-athlete's endorsements of

physical, verbal, cyber-, and social bullying. Multiple regression analysis will be used as the design to reflect the interaction between several variables leading to an outcome.

The target population for this study were high school student athletes from the San Antonio, Texas, Bexar County community. The student athletes were male and female freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Statistically, there are roughly 26,700 high school student athletes within Bexar County. Due to circumstances around the COVID-19 pandemic, convenience sampling was used in this study. The population was sampled from student athletes within the Divine 9 fraternity and sorority mentoring programs. In case there is an increase in health concerns, the backup plan was to reach out to two local high schools. If that should become an issue, the plan was to utilize survey sharing through SurveyMonkey. A minimum of 68 participants is needed to detect any significance.

Recruitment of participants began with reaching out to the organizations within the Divine 9 and their mentoring organizations. The recruitment process began by attending their mentoring meetings and presenting the study to the mentors, mentees, and their parents. To maintain anonymity, no participants were identified or asked to complete a survey during this time. Data were collected through a survey provided through SurveyMonkey.

The GOALS scale and Bullying Endorsement scale are the two proven instruments for this study. The scales measured ethical leadership, abusive coaching behaviors, inclusion climates on the team, and bullying endorsements. A multiple regression analysis will be conducted through SPSS software, version 27. Threats to

validity include parental influence, the time spent over multiple seasons resulting in a different understanding behind the coach's actions, and the unforeseen challenges with the collaboration of two separate surveys into one. This study involves the vulnerable population of high school student athletes who are under the age of 18 years old, which brings a potential threat if not handled properly. Protection of the participant's identity is another potential threat to procedure. As addressed within this chapter, specific actions were taken to ensure the protection of all participants and record accurate data to yield a confident conclusion.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This quantitative analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between high school athlete's perceptions of their coach's behavior and their perceptions of team inclusion and their endorsements of bullying. In this study, I used a modified version of the GOALS survey which was created by the NCAA (NCAA GOALS Study, 2015) to measure coach's ethical behavior, coach's abusive behavior, and athlete's perception of inclusion. I used multiple scenarios acquired from the bullying study conducted by Steinfeldt et al. (2012) to measure bullying endorsements. The use of a multiple regression analysis was an appropriate analysis for the use of this study. The decision to use a multiple regression analysis was evident as this study examines the relationship among two predictor variables (ethical coaching behavior and abusive coaching behavior) against two dependent variables (student athletes' perception of inclusion and bullying endorsements) reflecting the views of the student athlete. There were two research questions and their accompanying hypotheses that steered this study:

RQ1: What is the relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors and their perceptions of team inclusion as measured by the GOALS survey?

H_01 : There is no relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors and their perceptions of team inclusion as measured by the GOALS survey.

*H*₁1: There is a relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors and their perceptions of team inclusion as measured by the GOALS survey.

RQ2: What is the relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors as measured by the GOALS survey and their endorsements of physical, verbal, cyber-, and social bullying as measured by bullying scenarios?

*H*₀2: There is no relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors as measured by the GOALS survey and their endorsements of physical, verbal, cyber-, and social bullying as measured by bullying scenarios.

*H*₁2: There is a relationship between high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors as measured by the GOALS survey and their endorsements of physical, verbal, cyber-, and social bullying as measured by bullying scenarios.

In Chapter 4, I present the data collection process, sample characteristics, descriptive statistics for study variables, reliability, assumption testing, and analyses and results. The chapter is concluded with a summary of the research findings.

Data Collection

The approval to begin conducting research was given by the Institutional Review Board (IRB approval 05-16-22-0737915) on May 15, 2022. The target population was high school student athletes from a county in Texas. The student athletes were both male

and female freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The intent was to collect samples from each mentoring program within the Divine Nine. However, I was only able to collect from the Guide Right program within Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Incorporated. Not all organizations were fully up and running so soon after COVID-19. The length of time to complete the survey was approximately 20 minutes for each participant to complete. To ensure that attrition did not have a role in results, only completed surveys were counted and analyzed. This resulted in a total of 20 incomplete surveys being removed. A total of 89 survey responses were collected. After cleaning data and removing 20 incomplete surveys, the remaining 69 were analyzed in SPSS 28 and included student athletes of all ages between ninth and 12th grade as well as all genders. Based on prior analysis using G* Power software version 3.1.9.6, 68 participants were needed for statistical significance which means that the sample size of 69 was large enough to identify statistically significant relationships within the multiple regression analysis.

Demographics

There were 69 high school student athletes from a specific county within the state of Texas that anonymously volunteered for this study. High school student athletes of all gender identities who played their sport for at least one season were the target population. Descriptive demographic statistics included the following to ensure complete anonymity: age, gender, and class year.

As shown in Table 1, 36 participants were student athletes 17 years of age or younger which comprised 52.2% of the overall sample. Student athletes 18 years of age

or older included 33 participants which comprised 47.8% of the overall sample. Table 1 also shows that this study was comprised of 45 boys (65.2%), 23 girls (33.3%), and 1 participant who identified as nonbinary, not identifying as either or identifying as both, (1.4%). Lastly, Table 1 shows that this study included seven Freshman (10.1%), 9 Sophomores (13%), 15 Juniors (21.7%), and 38 Seniors (55.1%).

Table 1

Target Sample

	<i>n</i>	%
Age: 17 y/o and younger	36	52.2%
Age: 18 y/o and up	33	47.8%
Gender: Boy	45	65.2%
Gender: Girl	23	33.3%
Gender: Nonbinary (neither or both)	1	1.4%
Class: Freshman	7	10.1%
Class: Sophomore	9	13.0%
Class: Junior	15	21.7%
Class: Senior	38	55.1%

Results

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

The two independent variables used in testing the hypothesis in the study were ethical leadership and abusive coaching behavior. These variables were derived from a

modified version of the NCAA GOALS survey (NCAA GOALS Study, 2015). The GOALS survey was first modified by Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015), who decided to remove aspects revolving around finances, time commitments, health and well-being, and their college social experiences. My study focused on high school student athletes as opposed to collegiate student athletes. There were nine questions from the modified version by Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. that were applicable for my research. The responses to all questions remained unchanged from the Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. research study, from which they were derived from. A Likert-type scale from 1-5 was used for the six questions on ethical leadership and three questions of abusive coaching behavior. The six questions on ethical leadership scale ranged from 1-5 with 1 being “*Strongly Disagree*” and 5 being “*Strongly Agree*.” The three questions measuring abusive coaching behavior ranged from 1-5 with 1 being “*Strongly Disagree*” and 5 being “*Strongly Agree*.” High scores for ethical leadership indicate more ethical coaches and high scores on abusive coaching behaviors indicate more abusive coaches. As shown in Table 2, the sample mean score for ethical leadership was 4.10 (SD = .94), and for abusive coaching behaviors the sample mean score was 2.17 (SD = 1.19).

The two dependent variables used in testing the hypothesis in the study were team inclusion, which was derived from the modified version of the NCAA GOALS survey, and endorsement of bullying scenarios from the Steinfeldt et al. (2012) study. The responses to all questions remained unchanged as they were from the research study that they were derived from. My study’s version utilized a Likert-type scale for all survey questions. The three questions on the perception of team inclusion scale ranged from 1-6

with 1 being “*Strongly Disagree*” and 6 being “*Strongly Agree*.” The four questions measuring the endorsement of bullying ranged from 1-5 with 1 being “*Never Appropriate*” and 5 being “*Always Appropriate*.” High scores for the perception of team inclusion indicate a student athlete perceiving strong inclusiveness with the team and high scores on the endorsement of bullying indicate a student athlete highly accepting or promoting bullying. As shown in Table 2, the sample mean for team inclusion was 4.76 (SD = 1.22). The sample mean for bullying scenarios was 1.26 (SD = .56).

The data were analyzed by reviewing the minimum and maximum scores. Two outliers were discovered in each scale of means. However, after conducting further analyses without the outliers, there were no changes in the results of the analyses, so the outliers remained in the data and analyses.

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of all variables for range, minimums, maximums, mean scale scores, standard deviations, and variances for predictor variables (ethical leadership (EL) and abusive coaching behaviors (ACB)) and dependent variable (team inclusion (TI) and bullying scenarios (BS)) of high school student athletes.

Table 2*Descriptive Statistics of All Variables*

	<i>n</i>	Range	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>R</i>
EL	69	4.00	1.00	5.00	4.0966	.93515	.875
ACB	69	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.1691	1.18628	1.407
TI	69	5.00	1.00	6.00	4.7633	1.22488	1.500
BS	69	2.75	1.00	3.75	1.2572	.55732	.311
Valid <i>n</i>	69						

Reliability

This study required the modification of a survey that had been previously modified from the original. Both the original version and the modified version of the GOALS survey focused on collegiate athletes. Since this study revolved around high school student athletes, some questions were not applicable. As a result, there was a need to further modify the survey for the purposes of this research. In turn, before I was able to assess my data, I conducted a Cronbach's alpha to insure internal reliability of my survey questions. All four variables used in the study were within the acceptable reliability range, as they all are higher than the required .700 (UCLA Advanced Research Computing Statistical Methods and Data Analytics, n.d.). Table 3 displays the Cronbach's Alphas for ethical leadership, abusive coaching behaviors, team inclusion, and bullying scenarios, as well as the number of questions each variable obtained within the survey.

Table 3*Cronbach's Alpha Measurements*

	Cronbach's <i>a</i>	Cronbach's <i>a</i> based on standardized items	<i>n</i>
Ethical Leadership	.869	.877	6
Abusive Coaching Behaviors	.890	.890	3
Team Inclusion	.850	.850	3
Bullying Scenarios	.785	.828	4

Assumption Testing

This study used a multiple linear regression model which requires the use of six assumptions to be made: linearity, multicollinearity, independence, homoskedasticity, multivariate normality, and there are no influential cases biasing the model.

Linear Relationship

The assessment of linearity was conducted through SPSS scatterplots for each independent variables and its relationship to each dependent variable. Figures 2 through 5 depict these relationships. The scatterplot and correlation between ethical leadership and team inclusion revealed a strong linear relationship ($r = .686$). On the contrary, there was no linear relationship revealed between abusive coaching and team inclusion ($r = -.010$). See Table 4. There were moderate linear relationships between both ethical leadership and abusive coaching behaviors with bullying scenarios ($r = -.414$ and $r = .287$ respectively). See Table 5.

Table 4

Correlation Matrix for Multiple Regression of Ethical Leadership and Abusive Coaching Behavior on Team Inclusion

		Team Inclusion	Ethical Leadership	Abusive Coaching Behavior
<i>n</i> = 69				
Pearson	Team Inclusion	1.000	.686	-.010
Correlation				
	Ethical Leadership	.686	1.000	-.147
	Abusive Coaching Behavior	-.010	-.147	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Team Inclusion	.	<.001	.467

Table 5

Correlation Matrix for Multiple Regression of Ethical Leadership and Abusive Coaching Behavior on Bullying Scenarios

		Bullying Scenarios	Ethical Leadership	Abusive Coaching Behavior
<i>n</i> = 69				
Pearson	Bullying Scenarios	1.000	-.414	.287
Correlation				
	Ethical Leadership	-.414	1.000	-.147
	Abusive Coaching Behavior	.287	-.147	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Bullying Scenarios	.	<.001	.008

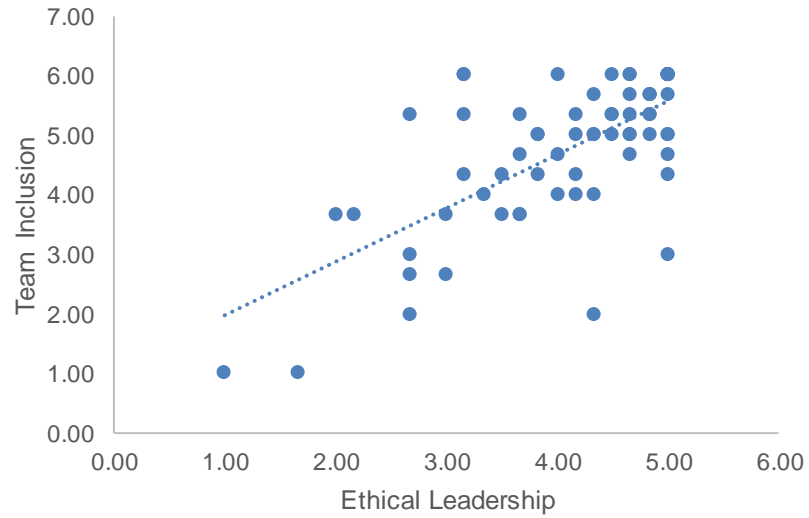
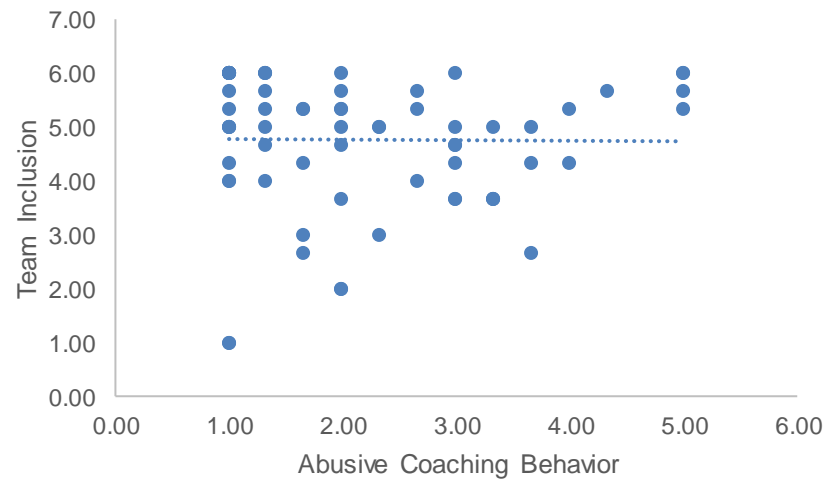
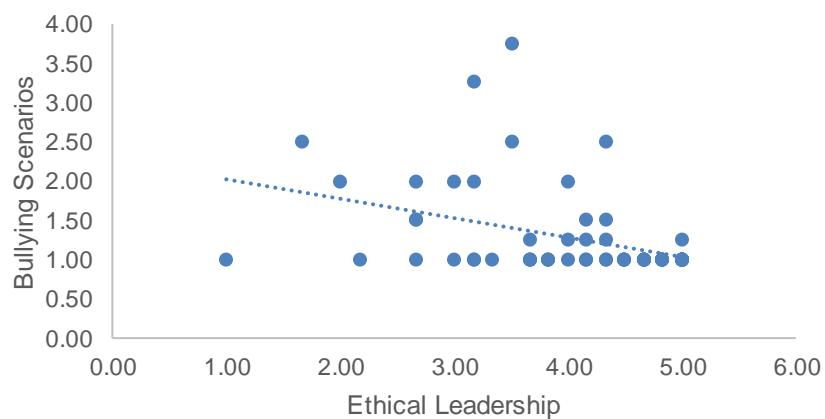
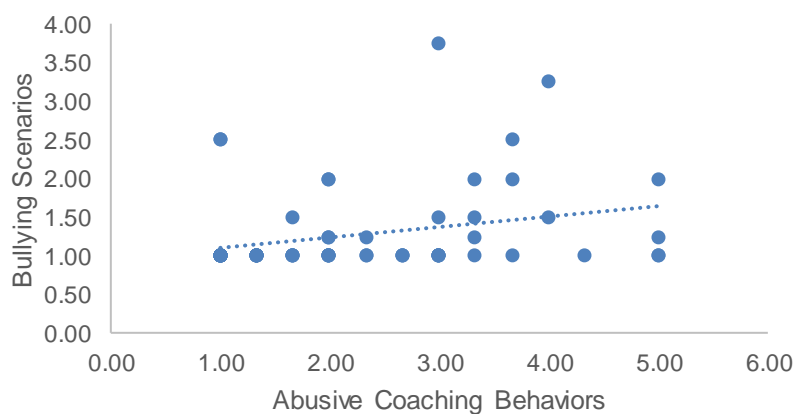
Figure 2*Scatterplot of the Linear Relationship Between EL and TI***Figure 3***Scatterplot of the Linear Relationship Between ACB and TI*

Figure 4

Scatterplot of the Linear Relationship Between EL and BS

**Figure 5**

Scatterplot of the Linear Relationship Between ACB and BS



Multicollinearity

I needed to ensure that there was no presence of multicollinearity. This is necessary because of the assumption that there is a very low correlation between the predictor variables. The correlation is analyzed within SPSS through the variance inflation factor (VIF), which begins at 1 with no upper limit. VIF values of 5 or more can

indicate potential existence of multicollinearity but the value of 10 is often used as a deciding threshold (Williams et al, 2013). As shown in Table 6, the VIF values for both dependent variables are 1.022 meaning there is no multicollinearity between my predictor variables.

Table 6

Coefficients of Independent Variables

	Unstandardized		Standardized			Collinearity	
	Coefficients		Coefficients			Statistics	
	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>	Tolerance	<i>VIF</i>
Dependent Variable: Team Inclusion							
(Constant)	.800	.559		1.431	.157		
EL	.917	.118	.700	7.798	<.001	.978	1.022
ACB	.095	.093	.092	1.030	.307	.978	1.022
Dependent Variable: Bullying Scenarios							
(Constant)	1.949	.311		6.275	<.001		
EL	-.226	.065	-.380	-3.467	<.001	.978	1.022
ACB	.109	.052	.232	2.112	.039	.978	1.022

Independence of Errors

Independence of observations were assessed when using a multiple linear regression analysis to ensure that autocorrelation was not exhibited within dependent variables or the study outcomes. Independence was computed using SPSS to perform a

Durbin-Watson test. The Durbin-Watson values range from 0-4 and 2.0 indicating that there is no autocorrelation (Williams et al, 2013). Values above this threshold (2-4) signify negative autocorrelation and values below (0-2) signify a positive autocorrelation. Table 7 depicts the Durbin-Watson tests for this study. The Durbin-Watson for Model 1 is 1.862 which is .138 below the desired value of 2. For Model 2 the Durbin-Watson is 2.138 which is .138 above the desired value of 2. Not only are both dependent variables equally opposite of 2 but they are both extremely close. These results indicate little to no autocorrelation and no violation of independence

Table 7

Model Summary for Residual Independence

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.693 ^a	.480	.464	.89694	1.862
a. Predictors: (Constant), ACB, EL					
b. Dependent Variable: TI					
2	.473 ^a	.224	.200	.49838	2.138
a. Predictors: (Constant), ACB, EL					
b. Dependent Variable: BS					

Homoscedasticity

To ensure that the results of the regression model are reliable, a homoscedasticity assumption was assessed through SPSS. The assessment to ensure there was no presence of homoscedasticity was conducted by viewing the scatterplots of standardized residuals versus standardized predicted values (Williams et al, 2013). In this scatterplot, the points needed to display that there was no pattern in existence. If a pattern exists in a fan-shape dispersion, heteroscedasticity exists, and the assumption is violated. Figure 6 and Figure

7 are the results of the homoscedasticity test for this research and no such patterns exists.

Therefore, this assumption homoscedasticity was met and not violated.

Figure 6

Scatterplot of TI Standardized Residual Values and Standardized Predicted Values

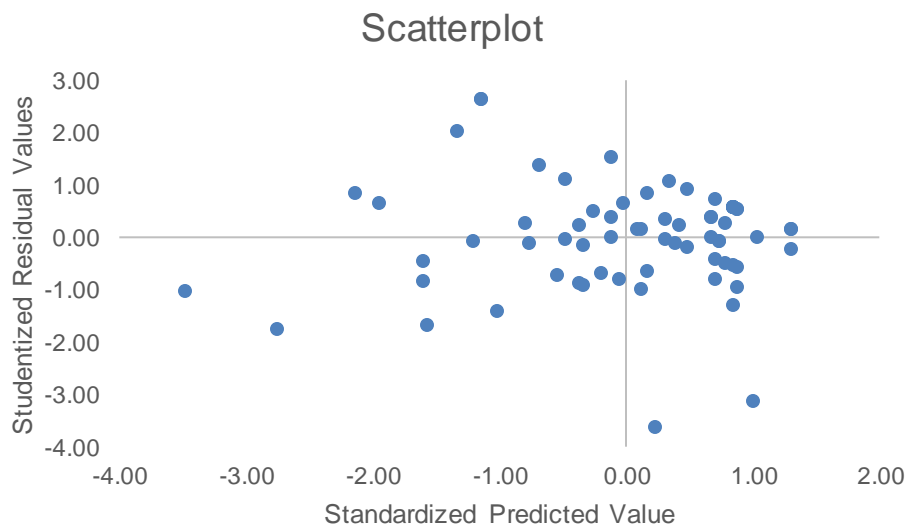
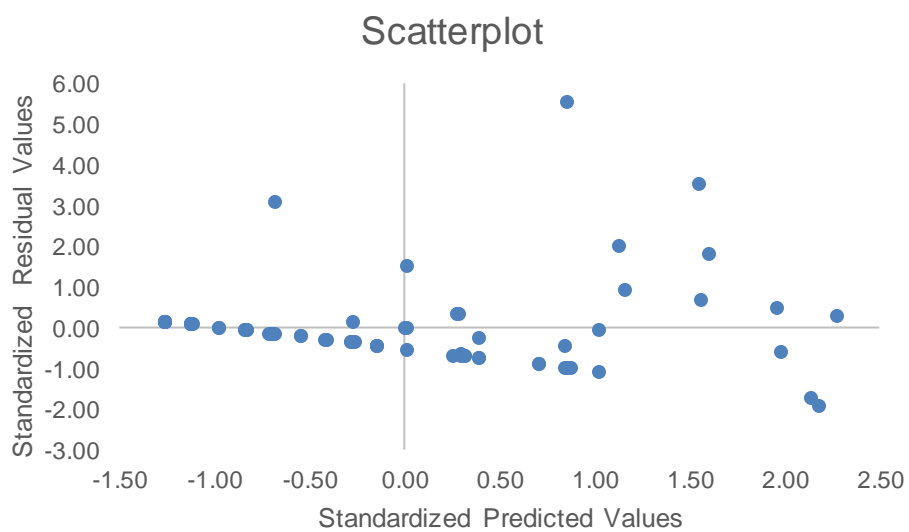


Figure 7

Scatterplot of BS Standardized Residual Values and Standardized Predicted Values



Multivariate Normality

The assumption was that there was multivariate normality which assumed the normal distribution of residuals in the study. Multivariate normality was assessed using SPSS to create a quantile-quantile (Q-Q) plot. For this assumption to be met, the normal distribution of the Q-Q plot needed to roughly form a straight diagonal line (Williams et al, 2013). Figure 8, Figure 9, Figure 10, and Figure 11 all reflected the rough image of a straight diagonal line within their Q-Q plots. These Q-Q plots provided evidence that the assumption of multivariate normality is met and not violated.

Figure 8

Q-Q Plot Assessing Normality of Ethical Leadership

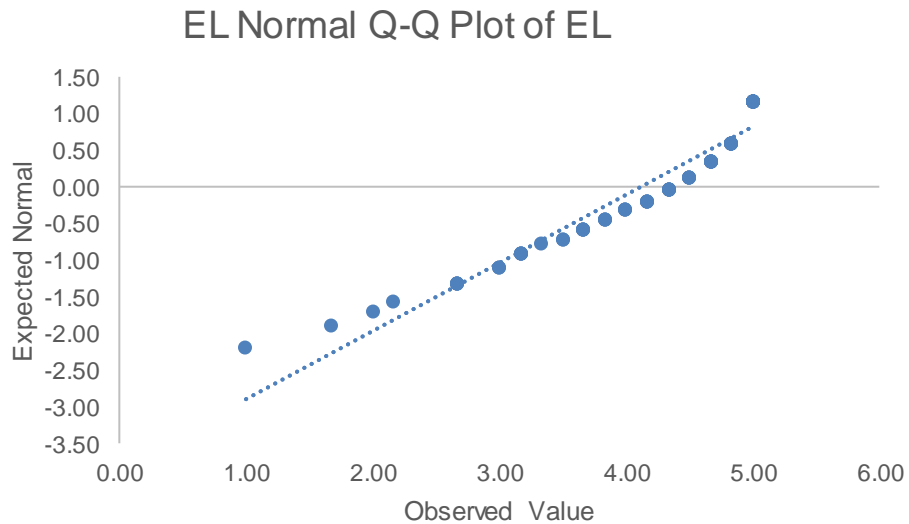
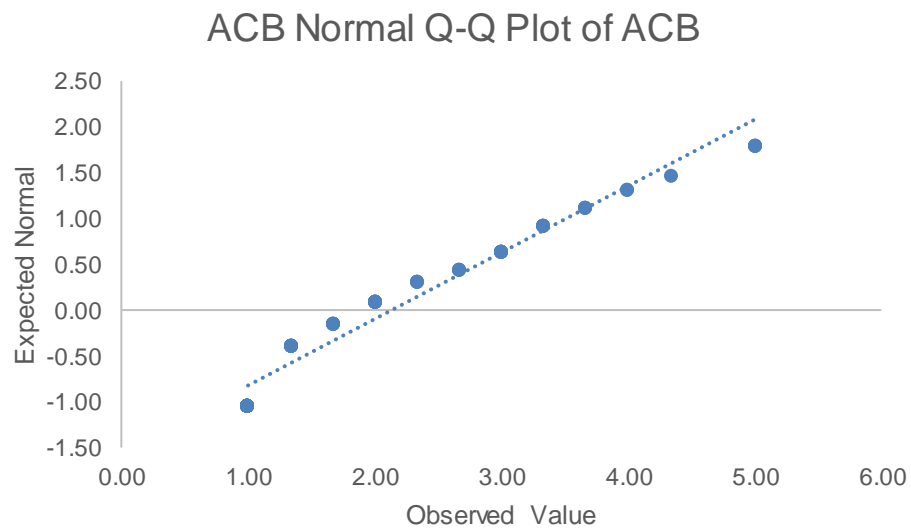


Figure 9

Q-Q Plot Assessing Normality of Abusive Coaching Behavior

**Figure 10**

Q-Q Plot Assessing Normality of Team Inclusion

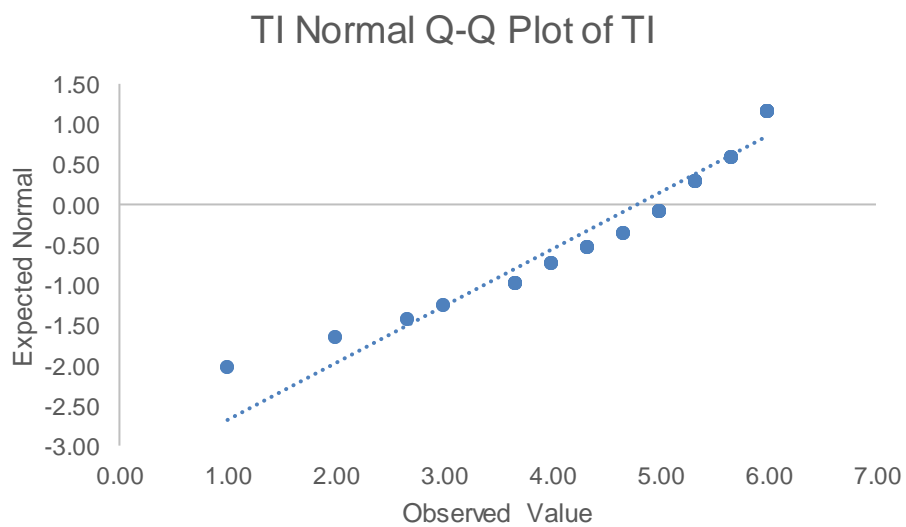
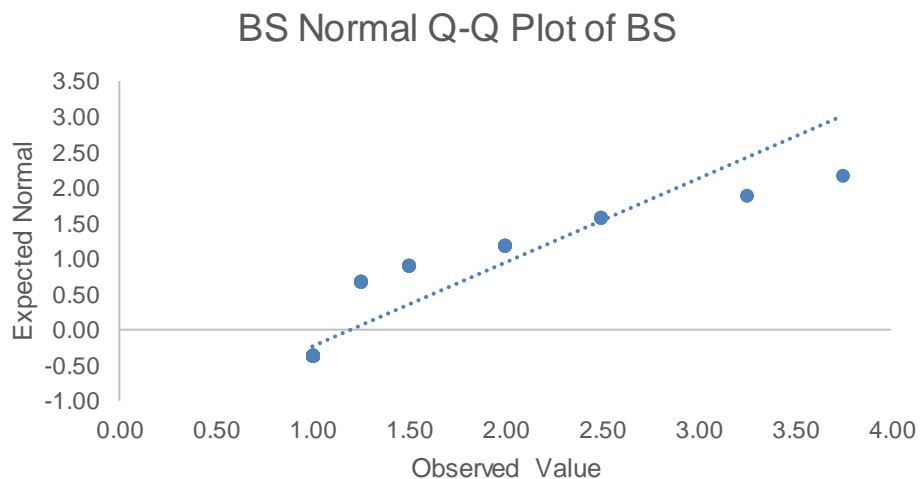


Figure 11*Q-Q Plot Assessing Normality of Bullying Scenario****No Influential Biasing***

The last assumption is that there are not any individual outliers which would influence the analysis in any direction. This assumption is verified through Cook's Distance which was reflected in a value of 1 or greater which would have indicated the existence of undue influences (Williams et al, 2013). The data presented within Tables 8 and Table 9 suggest that individual cases were not present to influence the data. Therefore, there are no influential cases of biasing within my model.

Table 8*Residual Statistics*

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Cook's Distance	.000	.162	.016	.033	69

a. Dependent Variable: Team Inclusion

Table 9*Residual Statistics*

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Cook's Distance	.000	.308	.020	.055	69

a. Dependent Variable: Bullying Scenarios

With focus on the two research questions, two multiple regression analyses were conducted. The first examined the dependent variable of team inclusion and the predictor variables of ethical leadership and abusive coaching behaviors. The second examined the dependent variable of bullying endorsements through bullying scenarios and the predictor variables of ethical leadership and abusive coaching behaviors. Results for both analyses follow.

Team Inclusion

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the dependent variable of high school student athletes feeling of team inclusion against the predictor variables of their coach's ethical leadership and possible abusive coaching behaviors. As shown in Tables 10 and 11, the overall regression analysis was significant for high school student athletes' feelings of team inclusion, $F(2, 68) = 30.408, p < .001, R = .693$, The $R^2 = .480$, which reveals that 48.0% of high school student athletes' feeling of team inclusion can be explained by their coach's ethical leadership and their abusive coaching behaviors. The Partial correlations are displayed in Table 12 and the data reflects that a coach's ethical leadership has a strong positive relationship with student athlete's perception of team inclusion. Ethical leadership was a significant predictor of athlete's perceptions of team

inclusion, partial $r = .692$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .917$. Abusive coaching was not a significant predictor value of team inclusion.

Table 10

Model Summary for Multiple Regression of Ethical Leadership and Abusive Coaching Behavior on Team Inclusion

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.693 ^a	.480	.464	.89694

a. Predictors: (Constant), ACB, EL

b. Dependent Variable: TI

Table 11

ANOVA Statistics for Multiple Regression of Ethical Leadership and Abusive Coaching Behavior on Team Inclusion

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	48.926	2	24.463	30.408	<.001 ^b
	Residual	53.097	66	.804		
	Total	102.023	68			

a. Dependent Variable: TI

b. Predictors: (Constant), ACB, EL

Table 12

Coefficients for Multiple Regression of Ethical Leadership and Abusive Coaching Behavior on Team Inclusion

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.	Correlations		
		β	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Part-ial	Part
1	(Constant)	.800	.559		1.431	.157			
	EL	.917	.118	.700	7.798	<.001	.686	.692	.692
	ACB	.095	.093	.092	1.030	.307	-.010	.126	.091

a. Dependent Variable: TI

Bullying Endorsements

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the independent variables of their coach's ethical leadership and abusive coaching behaviors against the dependent variable of high school student athletes' endorsements of bullying. Based on the results in Table 13 and 14, the overall regression analysis was significant for high school student athletes' endorsements of bullying, $F(2, 68) = 9.518, p < .001, R = .473$. The $R^2 = .224$, which reveals that 22.4% of high school student athletes' endorsements towards bullying can be attributed to their coach's ethical leadership and their abusive coaching behaviors. Partial correlations are displayed within Table 15. Ethical leadership was a significant negative predictor of athlete's bullying endorsements, partial $r = -.392, p < .001, \beta = -.226$. Abusive coaching behavior was a significant positive predictor of athlete's endorsements towards bullying, partial $r = .252, p < .039, \beta = .109$.

Table 13

Summary for Multiple Regression of Ethical Leadership and Abusive Coaching Behavior on Bullying Scenarios

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.473 ^a	.224	.200	.49838

a. Predictors: (Constant), ACB, EL

b. Dependent Variable: BS

Table 14

ANOVA Statistics for Multiple Regression of Ethical Leadership and Abusive Coaching Behavior on Bullying Scenarios

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.728	2	2.364	9.518	<.001 ^b
	Residual	16.393	66	.248		
	Total	21.121	68			

a. Dependent Variable: BS

b. Predictors: (Constant), ACB, EL

Table 15

Coefficients for Multiple Regression of Ethical Leadership and Abusive Coaching Behavior on Bullying Scenarios

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Correlations			
		β	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Partial
1	(Constant)	1.949	.311		6.275	<.001			
	EL	-.226	.065	-.380	-3.467	<.001	-.414	-.392	-.376
	ACB	.109	.052	.232	2.112	.039	.287	.252	.229

a. Dependent Variable: BS

Conclusion

In conclusion, high school students' perceptions of their coach's ethical leadership and abusive coaching behavior was significantly related to their feelings of team inclusion. However, examination of the partial correlations revealed that only ethical leadership was related to team inclusion when controlling for abusive coaching behavior. For research question one, the null hypothesis is rejected. Results indicated that student athlete's whose perceptions of their coach's ethical leadership were positive, were more likely to feel included with the team.

High school student athlete's endorsements towards bullying were significantly predicted by their perceptions of both ethical leadership and abusive coaching behavior. Data from the partial correlations reflected that there was a negative relationship between a coach's ethical leadership and bullying endorsements. Therefore, when the coach's ethical leadership is low, a student athlete's endorsement towards bullying would be expected to be high. Partial correlations also revealed that there is a positive relationship between a coach's abusive coaching behavior and their student athlete's endorsements towards bullying. Therefore, when a coach engages in abusive coaching behavior, a student athlete has a high probability of endorsing bullying behavior. For research question two, the null hypothesis is rejected. Results indicated that student athletes are more likely to endorse bullying when the coach's ethical leadership is not perceived to be very strong, and the coach exhibits abusive behaviors.

Summary

This quantitative study was conducted to investigate the ~~existence of a statistically significant~~ relationship between high school athlete's perceptions of their coach's behavior (ethical leadership and abusive coaching behavior) and their perceptions of team inclusion and their endorsements of bullying using a modified version of the GOALS survey (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015) and bullying scenarios previously used in another research (Steinfeldt et al., 2012). Results led to rejecting both of the null hypotheses that there was no relationship between student perceptions of their coach's ethical leadership and abusive coaching behavior and team inclusion or endorsements of bullying.

In Chapter 5, the results are interpreted, limitations are presented, and recommendations for future studies on high school student athletes are discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In this study, I investigated the relationship between the high school student athlete's perceptions of their coach's behavior and their perceptions of team inclusion. Additionally, I assessed the relationship between the high school student athlete's perceptions of their coach's behavior and the student athlete's perceived endorsements of bullying. Researchers have concluded that coach's fill one of the most important roles in a student-athlete's life (Ettetal et al., 2018; Steinfeldt et al., 2011; Steinfeldt et al., 2012; & Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). The previous literature has primarily focused on college athletes; therefore, this study was designed to expand on current research by placing full focus on the high school student athlete and their perceptions of coach's behavior.

Key Findings

Ethical Leadership, Abusive Coaching Behavior, and Inclusion

The first research question asked whether there was a relationship between a high school student athlete's feeling of being included in their team and the ethical leadership style of the coach as well as the abusive behaviors that the coach may display. Students whose coaches used more ethical leadership felt more team inclusion.

Ethical Leadership, Abusive Coaching Behavior, and Bullying Behavior

The second research question asked whether there was a relationship between a high school student athlete's endorsement of bullying and the ethical leadership style of the coach as well as the abusive behaviors that the coach may display. The data analysis

reflects that there was a significant relationship between the student athlete's endorsements of bullying and ethical leadership of the coach as well as the coach's abusive behaviors, individually. Students who endorsed bullying perceived their coaches as demonstrating abusive behavior and exemplifying low ethical leadership.

In this chapter, I will summarize the findings of Chapter 4 and provide interpretations, limitations of my study, implications for social change, and suggestions for future studies.

Interpretations of the Findings

The results from this study supports the findings of previous studies. Previous research has discovered that a coaches' characteristics can influence college athletes (Ettekal et al., 2018; Steinfeldt et al., 2011; Steinfeldt et al., 2012; & Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). Ettekal et al. (2018) found through the views of athletic directors that character education through sport can be instilled through athletic administrations and organizations offering sports-based character education by improving the character of influencers at the top of organizations. Steinfeldt et al. (2011) suggested that coaches played a major role in the process of players learning masculinity norms. Steinfeldt et al. (2012) results revealed that the moral atmosphere and adherence to the norms of male role models significantly predicted bullying in high school athletes. Steinfeldt et al. (2012) also identified that the views of bullying by the most influential male in the student athletes life had a strong relationship to determining if a player engaged in bullying. Additionally, Lehman (2017) mentions that bullying often occurs within the school environment. Joaquim (2014) claims that bullying can cause stress, a threatened

ego, and low sense of personal control. Many researchers have looked at bullying through several avenues. My findings add to the current body of research as it is the only one that focuses purely on high school student athletes and their coaches. The findings of my research provide better understanding of how high school coaches influence the behaviors and the emotions of their student athlete.

Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015) conducted a collegiate study and found that the ethical and abusive behaviors of the coach were correlated with student-athletes college choice satisfaction, their perception of inclusion of the team, and their willingness to cheat. My research supports the findings of this study because it reveals that high school student athletes feel included when the behaviors of their coach are ethical. Additional findings that support this study is that high school student athletes are more likely to engage in bullying when their coach's behavior is less ethical and when they are abusive in their coaching behaviors. My findings that ethical coaching influences students feeling of team inclusion and acceptance of bullying supports the findings of Kegelaers et al. (2019), who identified that the practice of unethical coaching behaviors can create stress and adversity on the athlete. My research did not seek the validity of how student athletes responded to unethical behavior in terms of athletic success, but it does address how this type of behavior directly influences the level of inclusion the athlete feels.

In summary, the original views hypothesized were found to be true. Team inclusion and the endorsement of bullying by student athletes can be influenced by the coach's ethical leadership and abusive coaching behavior.

Theoretical Interpretation

SCT served as the theoretical framework. Bandura's SCT specifically addresses our interpretations of our environment and how it then leads to our behavior, which makes this theory appropriate for my research (Bandura, 1986). As mentioned in chapter 2, influencing factors are identified through SCT of moral thought and action (Johnson et al., 2018). Through SCT, learners learn through models that they are exposed to. Two examples further validating Bandura's SCT are Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al. (2015) and Johnson et al. (2018) who conducted similarly focused studies and yielded successful data because of using SCT as the theoretical work. Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al.'s research revealed that student athletes felt better about their college choice and more included with their team when their coach was ethical in their leadership style. Johnson et al. (2018) study indicated that high school coaches who were more aggressive enforced punishments such as reduced playing time or physical conditioning. Results of my research concur with previous research which used SCT as the bases for their work, as coach's behaviors were found to influence high school student athletes.

This aspect of Bandura's SCT also supports the findings that a coach's abusive behaviors can influence student athletes willingness to engage in bullying activities. My findings echo the theorized expectation of Bandura's explanation of how we learn through models which more specifically addresses our behavior being molded by our environment and how we understand it.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations which influenced this study. Influencers had effects on participation rates as well possible effects on the data collected. These influences include the pandemic virus of COVID-19, the survey only being accessible via web access, participation rates from all desired organizations in terms of their accessibility to their mentees, and possible confusion of the survey leading to incomplete data and the ultimate removal of those surveys.

COVID-19 unexpectedly halted many activities world-wide. Specifically, within the educational community, anything that could be conducted through the use of computers was managed that way. Activities of large gatherings were stopped which left sports teams only interactions with one another being through video and voice calls. My research was conducted during the recovery phase from COVID-19. Even though the community was ready to start life again, most organizations and programs needed to rebuild slowly to what once was due to the possibility of reigniting the spread of the virus and forcing us all back into isolation.

COVID-19 was beginning to be controlled or at least well managed at the start of my research and sports activities had begun to regain normal seasons for a couple of years by then as well. There is the possibility that the experience of the virus resulted in some athletes not returning to their sport or even relationships between them and their coach's becoming diluted which would cause misleading results. COVID-19 created a multiple phased domino effect of events and the root cause for many limitations that could not be completely accounted for.

Another limitation which falls within the domino effect is the participation of all the greek organizations mentoring programs. Most programs had yet to start back up while others were not quite up to speed on where they were before the pandemic. As a result, communication with and the ability to connect with many of the organizations was challenging. Of those that were up and running, their numbers were not as they were beforehand, and their meetings were distant from one another on the calendar to minimize excessive gatherings that would encourage large numbers gathering in one place. This issue placed a limitation on my study because it reduced the level of access to potential participants who met my criteria. Even though all members in these programs are in high school, not all members of the mentoring program were student athletes, nor had they all played their sport for at least a full season to gain reasonable access and experience with their coach. As a result, this limitation caused the length of gathering data to be increased significantly.

In the attempt to maintain anonymity of participation as well as minimize unnecessary gatherings, this survey was only accessible through the internet. The survey provided its own set of limitations that after seeing multiple similar partial surveys, I believe were a result of confusion. The survey only allowed for one device to respond to one survey based on IP address. Therefore, if the student athlete (1) opened the wrong survey by mistake, (2) opened the survey and then realized their parent needed to fill out consent (for those 17 years of age and younger), or (3) opened the survey to look at how many questions or the type of questions that were on the survey with the intent of returning at another time to complete, they were not able to regain access to the survey.

Because of this, while analyzing results I noticed that there were 20 surveys which either had no answers marked or only had the first question checked with a “no.” No incomplete survey had more than one question answered. Each survey was designed for its appropriate participant. For example, if a student athlete under the age of 18 years of age opened the 18 years of age or older survey and answered the first question as “no” to being 18 years of age or older, the survey was programmed to cease further questions and thank the participant. After which, this individual would not be able to regain access to the current survey of being 17 years of age or younger on that same device. As a result of being incomplete, these surveys were removed from the data.

Convenience sampling was selected for this study and the sample size of high school student athletes within one county of the state of Texas is relatively small ($n = 69$). As a result of this small sample size, the results cannot be generalized to all high school student athletes in the state of Texas or other states within the United States of America. There also cannot be a generalization to specific high school sports or to grade levels of high school. The generalization of the results from this study should not extend beyond the county in the state of Texas in which the high school student athletes from all grades and sports teams made up the sample size.

Recommendations for Future Study

This research revolved around a large gap in current research. Previous research studies that are similar to this solely focused on student athletes at the collegiate level. Because of their focus, the high school level is believed to currently be uncharted territory. My research included all high school student athletes without any separation of

gender, class year, or specific sports teams within a county of the state of Texas.

Recommendations for future studies could be to conduct similar research which is more focused on gender, sport, year group, or other locations (county, city, etc.). I believe multiple future studies would be extremely useful in comparing student athletes from different regions of the country or different subgroups. Examining the same focused group from different regions of the country could be beneficial if one region is found to be more efficient than another. Comparing subgroups could be useful for specific needs for social change that does not benefit others. Identifying this could allow for improvement across the country or throughout the entirety of a subgroup with a more in-depth explanation of what may be factors in improving the high school student athletes experience.

Implications for Social Change

In a general sense, social change from this research could lead to numerous improvements within the high school sports world. Social changes that affect school organizations and their rules, coaches and how they are vetted for their coaching position, as well as for the topic of this research which are the high school student athletes. The GOALS survey was administered for the first time in the collegiate world in 2006. Since, it has been adjusted and administered again in 2010, 2015, and then 2019. This rate of administering a survey allows for the voice of every survey to capture the views of an entirely new cohort of student athletes with the intent of improving the student athlete college experience. I believe that the social changes can be more impactful at the high

school level where student athletes are more able to form their core within how the world of their respectful sports organization function.

With better insight of the potential results of coach's behavior towards high school student athletes, it can lead to the improvement of policies and guidelines to better protect them. In a broad sense, the treatment endured during these times could possibly result into or later become connected to future issues or instabilities. Adjustments such as a direct line of communication for student athletes to voice their concerns without the fear of being ridiculed for it. Even if a student athlete does not have an issue, having a safe avenue to utilize can provide that extra layer of comfort and protection within themselves which can improve the organization.

Coaches can make modifications to their techniques with more of an understanding of their influence. It is an easy assumption to believe that coach's care about their players and want to help them improve. However, their ways of accomplishing their goal could potentially cause them to be blinded at how their behaviors are being received. Information from this study could play a huge role within the 360 feedback. The social culture within the coaching community would benefit greatly by having this research to continue raising the quality and standards of all coach's and their abilities.

The social implications for student athletes have the greatest potential as they can have changes that can affect their time within high school as well as their future at the collegiate level. Reducing issues and improving the high school student athlete experience could lead to more of a focus on developing skills and aptitude for their sport

as opposed to spending time on the vast social interactions that surrounds their sport. This small adjustment could lead to improvements both in their sport and the classroom as the confidence in their abilities would raise, the focus on goals will increase, and their sense of knowing where they belong could be better defined. Defining yourself is hard enough but it helps when you can define what you're aiming for in life. When this is known by the student athlete, they can begin to develop the blueprint for how they want to build themselves.

Additional social implications are those revolved around other students in the school, the school's culture, and bullying. The culture of a school is made up by the character of the personnel of the school and more importantly, the characteristics of the student body. The student body is a reflection to the world of the caliber of teachings received in a specific institution of learning. Better understandings of how bullying behavior is created will help a school to mold a better culture within their institution. Just as high school coaches have a strong influence on their players, other role models within the school can begin to embrace the same behavior towards helping those in school refrain from bullying behavior as well.

Athletes are seen as leaders both on and off the field. This is also where social implications can be made towards other students in the school who are non-athletes. Viewing how student athletes handle themselves in situations where bullying was prevented can also lead to the social implication that other students begin to carry themselves in similar ways. Trends move fast in the high school community and preventing bullying or bullying behavior could easily be seen as the "cool" thing not to

do. This implication could lead to all students feeling safer and more comfortable by coming to more predictable school where safety for their well-being is reduced to be less of a concern. A school winning a state championship in any sport can influence the moral of the team, the student body, the school's faculty, and the environment that surrounds the school. Knowing that student athletes have this level of influence can help to mold all those same areas in other ways outside of winning and the social implications of my research are limitless.

The questions from this survey were modified from their original use for collegiate student athletes. The numerous administrations of the GOALS survey reveals that there is room for growth and improvement at their level. With the focus of these same areas at the high school level, there could be a reduced level of the problems at the next level. With having a better understanding of what to expect and how their environment should be, student athletes will be able to better assess colleges that fit their mindset and personality. The high school student athlete would be able to identify what they are looking for in a collegiate program and make better choices in their college selection. Better aligning these very important principles early on could reduce student athletes transferring desires, finding themselves losing the love for their game, or even leaving school due to not knowing a life without doing what they love.

Conclusion

This study was conducted as a quantitative analysis which explored a possible significant relationship between high school student athletes feeling of inclusion and high school student athlete endorsements of bullying in comparison to their coach's abusive

behaviors and ethical leadership. This research started with the belief that there was a significant relationship between players feeling of inclusion with their team and their endorsements towards bullying to their coach's ethical leadership and their potential abusive coaching behaviors. This prior belief was based on the numerous previous studies which highlighted the role and importance of a coach to their players as well as personal experience over many years and throughout multiple levels of sports play. The findings from this study validates that there is a significant positive and negative correlations between the dependent variables with the independent variables.

With this research as foundation, I would like to see future study's focus on high school student athlete's as well. The sports world adjusts often to improve the sports within it. An example is the recent allowance of collegiate student athletes to receive Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) deals. NIL deals are contracts between companies who contractually sponsor athletes. This was previously only allowed at the professional level and strictly prohibited for college athlete's but was modified to allow college athlete's to also be included now. This is an example of how times must and do change. Protocols at the collegiate level that were typically ignored at the high school level can become more of a reality sooner rather than later. This is why it is imperative to master the high school sports world with what is currently accessible because the expansion of responsibility and challenges are inevitable.

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Appendix A: Assent Form for Research

ASSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

Hello, my name is Laronce Franklin, and I am doing a research project to learn about the relationship between high school athlete's perceptions of their coach's behavior and their perceptions of team inclusion and their endorsements of bullying. I am inviting you to join my project. I am inviting all high school student-athletes within all grades who are involved in team sports to be in the study. I am going to read this form with you. I want you to learn about the project before you decide if you want to be in it.

WHO I AM:

I am a student at Walden University. I am working on my doctoral degree. You may already know the researcher as a mentor within the Kappa League, but this study is separate from that role.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

This study involves the following steps:

- Online survey (20 minutes)

Here are some sample questions:

- *My coach and teammates are accepting of differing viewpoints and cultures.*
- *My head coach sets an example of how to do things the "right way" in terms of ethics.*

IT'S YOUR CHOICE:

You don't have to be in this project if you don't want to. Everyone involved will respect your decision to join or not. You will be treated the same at your respective mentorship program whether or not you join the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can

still change your mind later. You may stop at any time. I am looking for 68 volunteers for this study.

Being in this project might make you tired or stressed, just like filling out a survey before seeing a doctor. But I am hoping this project might help others by improving the student-athlete development and by helping to improve the coach-player relationship.

Payment:

No payment will be given for participation.

Privacy:

I am required to protect your privacy. That means no one else will know your name or what answers you gave. The only time I must tell someone is if I learn about something that could hurt you or someone else.

ASKING QUESTIONS:

You can ask me any questions you want now. If you think of a question later, you or your parents can reach me by phone.

If you want to volunteer, please complete the survey.