Intersecting Identities of Female College Student Intramural Sports Officials: A Grounded Theory

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INTERSECTING IDENTITIES OF FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENT INTRAMURAL SPORTS OFFICIALS: A GROUNDED THEORY

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Educational Leadership

by
April Susanne Flint
December 2012

Dr. James Satterfield, Committee Chair
Dr. Robert Barcelona
Dr. Tony Cawthon
Dr. Cheryl Warner
ABSTRACT

Intramural activities are conducted on virtually every college campus throughout the United States, but there is a debate as to the role of intramurals in the overall development of the student (Rothwell & Theodore, 2006). Specifically for females, not every sport is offered for participation at youth or higher levels, but intramural sports is one arena where they have the chance to learn the sport rules and referee the game. This study aims to create a base of knowledge on the experiences of female college students who work on campus as intramural sports officials. The purpose of the study is to understand how working as an intramural sports official contributes to the developmental growth of female college students and discover new methods of support and direction for this population.

The researcher conducted a qualitative study utilizing constructivist grounded theory methodology to answer the primary research questions: what is the meaning of the relationship between identity development and sports officiating for female college student intramural sports officials in a higher education setting? To become more specific, the researcher explored two secondary research questions:

- How do female college student intramural sports officials filter societal messages on gender roles in sport?
- How does their personal view of women affect their identity development as a female college student intramural sports official?
Chickering’s (1979) identity development theory served as the theoretical framework to develop 21 initial interview questions. Eleven (11) female college student intramural sports officials served as the sample population (n=11); they were interviewed utilizing a semi-structured interview process. Additionally, on the current Director of Intramural sports who worked closely with the participants was interviewed. The researcher examined additional data sources such as observations of participants while officiating, documents from the pilot study, various definitions of student success based on information gathered from several Student Affairs websites, and information regarding intramural sports officiating on college campuses to triangulate data.

Data were analyzed utilizing Strauss and Corbin’s (1990; 1998) methods of microanalysis, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding procedures. Field notes and memos were maintained by the researcher providing support to data analysis and allowing the researcher to identify and express emerging ideas, categories, and themes. A diagram was formed by the researcher to provide information on specific skills developed by female college student intramural sports officials that led to the definitive answer to the primary research question: student success. The researcher also created a visual diagram of the interaction among the four emergent themes that explained the relationship between identity development and intramural sports officiating: external influences, internal perceptions, intersecting identities, and student success.

The researcher found that the intersections of identities became an integral part of explaining the experiences of female college student intramural sports officials. Even as younger officials were not as cognizant of how officiating fit into their identity, older,
more experienced female college student intramural sports officials were more reflective in their roles as females, intramural sports officials, college students and athletes. While participants noted that working as an intramural sports official made them better students, better leaders, and better communicators, support and relationships amongst each other was missing to some extent. Female college student intramural sports officials also tended to downplay how prominent a role gender truly played in their lives. Identity salience in reference to gender only fully occurred once in the intramural sports officiating environment and in reflection of questions from the researcher.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband, Eric Flint, and my children, Walker and Lexi Flint who provided me with the encouragement and motivation to see this to the end.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank my husband for all his love and support and acknowledge the sacrifices he has made over the past five years to help me see this work to fruition. I would like to thank my mother for giving me a love for education, for being one of the best educators I know, and both my parents for showing and telling me that hard work pays off and I can be anything I want to be and do anything I put my mind to. I would like to thank my parents-in-law for allowing us to invade your home, for caring for my children, and giving me piece of mind while I completed this work. And I thank all of my family and friends who provided me with endless words of encouragement and pride in all that I do.

I would like to acknowledge my dissertation chair and committee: Dr. Satterfield, Dr. Cawthon, Dr. Warner, and Dr. Barcelona. Each of you provided me with a unique perspective and guidance throughout this process and I thank you for your interest, support and service. Dr. Satterfield: I would like to especially thank you for not only your encouragement, but also for being my friend as well as mentor. I could not have asked for better. Dr. Cawthon: thank you for your wonderful editing along the way, but more importantly, for your encouraging notes along the way. Dr. Warner: thank you for helping me to step out of my biases by looking at other work that I never would have thought to look at. Finally, Dr. Barcelona: thank you for believing that this was a valuable population to look at in Campus Recreation and moreover, thank you for encouraging me to view the student success piece as an important facet of this study, as it became a larger piece than I could have imagined.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Intramural activities are conducted on virtually every college campus throughout the United States, but there is a debate as to the role of intramurals in the overall development of the student (Rothwell & Theodore, 2006). Peterson (1976) argued that “no matter which educational philosophy is held by the evaluator, intramurals tends to emerge as a program of ‘sport for all’”. The discussion of gender and sports is not a new topic, however, it is usually mentioned while in discussion about athletes or sport specific participation. A societal push toward greater gender equity, including implementation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, coupled with increasing popularity of aerobic exercise resulted in an influx of women into competitive athletics, including collegiate recreational sports (Blumenthal, 2009). While Title IX has been viewed as helping women participate in sport, the question remains if women would have advanced themselves without the aid of an amendment.

For today’s female sports officials, being the best means working the highest level of women’s games. As women continued to struggle to break in as officials at the highest levels of sport (McManus, 2011), female college student intramural sports officials stepped into a role that has been historically male-dominated at all levels of sport. Research findings have shown mixed results that women participating in sport can be viewed negatively and experience gender-role conflict because they are attempting to enact both feminine and masculine gender roles (Fallon & Jome, 2007). However, gender
stereotyping is a ubiquitous, invisible regulator of relationships and opportunities (Hardin & Greer, 2009).

**Statement of the Problem**

Although intramurals have become a formal part of university life, there are those who questioned the benefits that intramurals provided to students (Rothwell & Theodore, 2006). Participating in and officiating intramural sports gives many college students the opportunity to continue where they left off after participating in youth and/or high school athletics. Like their athlete counterparts, few sports officials who begin in recreational or intramural leagues made it to the professional level (Virginia Tech Rec Sports, 2009). Specifically for females, not every sport is offered for participation at youth or higher levels, but intramural sports is one arena where they have the chance to learn the sport rules and referee the game. However, participant, co-worker, family and friends’ reactions to their employment as a sports official may affect the experience of female student intramural sports officials. This study aims to create a base of knowledge on the experiences of female college students who work on campus as intramural sports officials. The purpose of the study is to understand how working as an intramural sports official contributes to the developmental growth of female college students and discover new methods of support and direction for this population.

Very little work has looked at extra-curricular activity from a perspective which is informed by a broader conceptualization; specifically extra-curricular activity as a site of gendered, raced and class practices which are intimately linked with the development of an employable self (Stevenson & Clegg, 2012). Outside of sport on college campuses,
Stevenson and Clegg (2012) found that, while the assertion that higher education is becoming increasingly ‘feminised’, women frequently undervalue their participation and more likely to dismiss the value of extra-curricular activity to their employability. With job satisfaction being a very popular topic in employee and organizational research (Bardett & McKinney, 2004), the unique characteristics of student employees present administrators with challenges in the training, retention and improvement of their program’s staff while it remains clear that happiness with one’s job leads to happiness elsewhere (Kellison & James, 2011).

The community of sport has been a powerful site for the construction of masculinity, male identities, and heterosexuality (Meân & Kassing, 2008). Recreational sports programs stressed the use of tools for student development, appreciation of differences, group development, self-discipline, conflict-resolution skills, and safety awareness through distinctive jobs such as intramural sports officials (Bryant, Anderson, & Dunn, 1994). Intramural sports program administrators must be aware of the interactions between personal characteristics, job characteristics and perceived work environment factors (Kellison & James, 2011, p. 43) for female college students.

While a large body of literature is available concerning the “college experience” and the promotion of leadership and responsibility, there has been little attention focused towards the specifics of the culture of different Student Affairs programs and how they affect the development of life skills. Erikson (1959) stated that identity formation arises from the selective repudiation and mutual assimilation of childhood identification, and it is dependent on the process by which a society (often through subsocieties) identifies the
young individual. In intramural sports officiating, the female college student’s society is her peers and institutional community.

Student success, a term usually defined as the achievement of a student’s own educational goals (American Federation of Teachers Higher Education, 2011) is a top priority of universities. Involvement, engagement, and integration quickly became a part of established theories and constructs long associated with student success (Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009). What students did during college generally matters more than what they learned and whether they persisted to graduation than who they are or even where they went to college (Wolf-Wendel et al, 2009). However, many studies continue to conceptualize success in college purely in terms of grades and graduation rates (Yazedjian, Toews, Sevin, & Purswell, 2008). Furthermore, a lack of common definitions and understandings of student success on a college campus led to unclear communication and ineffective practices (Wolf-Wendel et al, 2009).

Universities and institutions sought to understand and assess how the programs they run promoted student success and development. Student success was a primary desired outcome for all student affairs efforts, including campus recreation programs (Becker et al, 2009), and the distinct differences and overlapping concepts of involvement, engagement and integration added something unique and important to understanding student development and success (Wolf-Wendel et al, 2009). The need for research becomes more vital as evidence of student affairs’ contribution to student success and development has been increasingly required for campus accreditation purposes (Cooper & Faircloth, 2006; Becker et al, 2009). With disparity in definitions of
student success, it is perhaps most important for institutions to discover or understand differences among groups of students and how involvement, engagement, and integration occurs or does not occur for these students (Wolf-Wendel et al, 2009).

More students, particularly more female students, than ever were attending college (AFT Higher Education, 2011). Research has focused on many different aspects of development in female college students with one study on student engagement and performance indicating that special attention should be devoted to women because they had lower perceived health, felt less safe, and did not have good emotional management skills (Becker et al, 2009). However, more research is needed to better understand the relationship between students’ involvement in intramurals and their personal and educational development (Rothwell et al, 2006). College student intramural sports officials, and on-campus student employees in general, have gone largely unnoticed by the literature.

Social construction of identity occurs in different contexts on campus such as in how student organizations are created and which students are drawn to them, or in the social identity among those in leadership positions and those not, as well as issues of institutional fit within access and retention (Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009). While research suggested that work and work exploration were part of identity development, research about particular work experiences and identity development was lacking (Marcus, 2010). The university recreational sports department was one sector that is chiefly staffed by part-time student employees who are supervised by full-time administrators (Kellison & James, 2011). The emergence of interactions between personal characteristics, job
characteristics, and perceived work environment factors as well as job satisfaction predictors was particularly imperative to recreational sports administrators and practitioners (Kellison & James, 2011).

College recreational sports professionals can begin to document their impact on student development and assist the entire campus community in understanding the role college recreational sports departments played in the broader mission of the university (Fortman & Haines, 2011). There is significant value inherent in campus recreation opportunities geared to the general student population (Blumenthal, 2009). Along with retention of the general student body, recruiting and retaining student employees provides added value to the entire student experience. Lack of awareness and documentation of the benefits of a campus recreation program on college student development can inhibit growth or maintenance of present recreation programs (Rothwell et al, 2006). Officiating also provides another way to fulfill the university’s mission and goals. While officials not only learn the rules of a sport, they also develop leadership qualities that help them both on and off the field (Virginia Tech Rec Sports, 2009).

While many of the characteristics that make a good official also made a good leader (Virginia Tech Rec Sports, 2009), retaining and recruiting sports officials was a vital component in maintaining and increasing levels of participation in organized sport at all levels (Cuskelley, Hoye & Evans, 2010). Whether volunteering or being paid to officiate, sports officials were charged with demonstrating assertive leadership skills and striving for perfection in calling the game (Virginia tech Rec Sports, 2009). In 2002, research conducted by the Australian Sports Commission as well as anecdotal evidence
suggests that harassment and abuse of officials by players, coaches and spectators was an important factor in the declining numbers of sports officials. However, a study conducted the following year by the same organization indicated that other reasons, including lack of support from sport organizations, lack of clear career paths or other organizational, cultural and social issues, impacted recruiting and retaining sports officials (Cuskelly et al, 2010).

One of the side effects of student fee-based facilities and programs was that recreational sports programs were increasingly required to be financially self-sufficient, (Milton & Young, 1996), fostering an increased emphasis on entrepreneurship and fundraising (Jinske, 1992). Recreational sport, as a profession, has placed considerable emphasis in the last 15-20 years on the development of individuals who are specifically educated and prepared for professional careers in the recreational sport field, however, it remains difficult to find intramural sports program coordinators who have experience as a sports official in multiple sports (Milton, 2008).

Assumptions

This study is based on several assumptions. First, it is assumed that individuals had unique experiences in sport that led them to becoming an intramural sports official. Second, it is assumed female college student intramural sports officials face societal perceptions of women different from their own views as a result of their involvement in sport. Finally, it is assumed that by identifying emergent themes and images experienced by female college student intramural sports officials, student affairs professionals and
academicians alike may be better able to enhance the learning and development of female college students.

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to gain understanding and insight into the relationship between identity development and on-campus employment through the experiences of female college student intramural sports officials. More specifically, the objective of the study was to determine how working as a sports official in a college intramural sports program contributes to the developmental growth of female college students. Qualitative research was conducted through interviews with and observations of participants. This method allowed the researcher to utilize a more interpretive approach.

Since no published research exists examining the experiences of female college student intramural sports officials, a primary research question and two secondary questions were developed to discover the experiences of female college student intramural sports officials. The primary research question is:

- What is the meaning of the relationship between identity development and sports officiating for female college student intramural sports officials in a higher education setting?

The secondary research questions are:

- How do female college student intramural sports officials filter societal messages on gender roles in sport?

- How does their personal view of women affect their identity development as a female college student intramural sports official?
Erikson’s (1959) and Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) revised identity development theories served as a theoretical basis for development of the research questions and interview questions.

**Theoretical Basis**

Arthur Chickering’s theory of identity development (1979; Chickering & Reisser, 1993) is the theoretical basis for this study. Chickering’s initial theory came from evaluating the impact of innovative curricular practices on student development, and the intended audience was faculty (Evans, Forney & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). His goal was to provide ideas concerning the organization of educational programs to systematically enhance student development (Thomas & Chickering, 1984). While student affairs professionals were not his initial envisioned audience, Chickering (1984) learned about the field that would come to have the most impact on his later thinking and would do the most to implement his ideas into practice.

Chickering (1979) proposed seven vectors of development that contribute to the formation of identity. In his revised theory, Chickering and Reisser (1993) modified the vectors slightly in wording: (a) developing competence, (b) managing emotions, (c) moving through autonomy toward interdependence, (d) developing mature interpersonal relationships, (e) establishing identity, (f) developing purpose, and (g) developing integrity. They described these vectors as “major highways for journeying toward individuation” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 39). The vectors can interact with each other, are not necessarily sequential, but, they do build on each other, and students often
reexamine issues associated with vectors they had previously worked through (Evans et al, 1998).

The context of environment must also be considered when discussing Chickering’s vectors of identity development. He argued that educational environments exert powerful influences on student development and proposed seven key factors explaining how institutions of higher education affect student development: (a) institutional objectives, (b) institutional size, (c) student-faculty relationships, (d) curriculum, (e) teaching, (f) friendships and student communities, and (g) student development programs and services (Evans et al, 2009). Chickering and Reisser (1993) later introduced three principles that emphasize the key factors: (a) integration of work and learning, (b) recognition and respect for individual differences, and (c) acknowledgment of the cyclical nature of learning and development.

Limitations

The limitations on this study include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) data are not generalizable due to the qualitative nature of this study; (b) the site institution’s strong athletic traditions indicates a unique campus culture that may be uncommon at other institutions; (c) the researcher previously worked at the site institution as a direct supervisor of most of the participants of this study which may cause confusion for participants regarding the researcher’s role; (d) the researcher has inherent bias branching from her own experiences as an intramural, high school and collegiate sports official, the researcher may run out of time when conducting this researcher and not reach data
saturation; and (e) being a novice qualitative researcher, the researcher may make methodological mistakes.

**Definition of Terms**

- **Campus Recreation** – A department or program within a higher education institution that uses diverse facilities and programs to promote the physical, emotional, and social growth of people by encouraging the development of lifelong skills and positive attitudes through recreational activities (Mittelstaedt, Robertson, Russell, Byl, Temple & Ogilvie, 2005)

- **Constructivist Grounded Theory** – A qualitative research methodology developed by Charmaz (2000) that provides a ‘discovered’ reality that comes from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural contexts.

- **Grounded Theory** – A qualitative research methodology initially developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) which utilizes constant-comparative processes and theoretical sampling. This study employed a revised version of grounded theory by Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) which employs highly detailed and organized coding.

- **Intramural Sports** – Recreational sports programs organized within a specific geographic area which for this study is on a college or university campus (NIRSA, 2002).

- **Intramural Sports Official** – A sports official, or referee, who officiates intramural sport contests (NIRSA, 2002).
• *Sports Official (or Referee)* – Any person who acts in sports contests as an umpire, referee, judge or sports contest official (Oregonlaws.org, retrieved September 12, 2012).

**CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Chapter One introduced the study to the reader. Background information on gender equity in sport and society’s traditional views of women was provided. The lack of attention by higher education on student success through the eyes of on-campus employees and through participation in intramural sports was presented as the problem which suggested the need for this study. The purpose of the study, to gain understanding and insight into the relationship between identity development and on-campus employment through the experiences of female college student intramural sports officials, was noted. The need to understand the unique student subcultures of female college student intramural sports officials and on-campus student employees added significance to the study. Chickering’s (1979) theory of identity development was introduced as the theoretical framework of this study. Finally, definitions of important terms found in this study were listed.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Intramurals have been a part of college life in this country since the earliest days of American higher education, but have often been viewed by some as an unnecessary frill (Rothwell et al, 2006). Although research in recreational sports has attended to the concept of personal values and the role values play in resulting behaviors in college students, consideration is limited on values and behaviors learned by those students who participate or work in recreational sports on a college or university campus. The mission of recreational sports was to provide a broad program of sports and fitness activities for all genders and ability levels in order to enhance academic productivity and personal effectiveness, including the encouragement of development of students as individuals and team members, leaders and followers, and as competitors and collaborators (Bryant et al, 1994). As individuals proceed through daily experiences, they were categorized as a member of a given group based on appearance, behaviors, and social networks (Moreland-Bishop, 2009). Very early on in one’s life, identity is developed and the categories that one is tied to indicated how that individual is like and unlike other individuals (Moreland-Bishop, 2009). While a large body of literature is available concerning the “college experience” and the promotion of leadership and responsibility, there has been little attention focused towards the specifics of the culture of different programs and how they affect the development of identity.

AFT reported that college student success was a major issue today in government and policy circles (AFT Higher Education, 2011). The most critical issue facing higher
education was how to provide access to instruction and services that will enable many more students fulfill their postsecondary aspirations (Schroeder, 2011). In the face of dwindling public resources, the policy debate has increasingly shifted from “access” to “success” issues, such as retention and evidence of learning outcomes – in other words, what happens to students after they enter college (AFT Higher Education, 2011). The American Federation of Teachers (2011) defined student success very broadly – simply, the achievement of the student’s own educational goals. It also takes the work of many stakeholders to produce a successful educational experience (AFT Higher Education, 2011).

The need became apparent for linking recreational sports programs with the beneficial outcomes of involvement in these programs (Artinger et al, 2006). There were significant differences between recreational sports programs, physical education departments and intercollegiate athletic programs (Bryant et al, 1994). Recreational sports programs made a concerted effort to recognize and meet needs of diverse populations, whereas physical education programs emphasized skill acquisition for the purpose of learning to teach, and intercollegiate athletics limited participation to only the most highly skilled competitors and promoted specialization in a sport (Bryant et al, 1994). While the gender of sport in the past was clearly and conspicuously masculine (Pfister, 2010), the mission of recreational sports was to provide a broad program of sports and fitness activities for both men and women of all ability levels (Bryant et al, 1994). Given that most institutions aim to prepare future leaders, it is important to understand the impact that both in- and out-of-class experiences have on leadership skill
development of students (Hall, Forrester, & Borsz, 2008). Recreational sports programs charged their staff with the duty of encouraging the development of students as individuals and team members, as leaders and followers, and as competitors and collaborators in order to enhance their academic productivity, personal effectiveness and commitment to their quality of life (Bryant et al, 1994). Recreational sports directly served the entire campus community with active students, on average, being happier and healthier while pursuing their academic program (Bryant et al, 1994). An omission in the student leadership literature has been an examination of the wide variety of leadership roles found in a college recreational sports program (Hall et al, 2008).

An individual’s self-identity is developed through social interactions beginning with family and further developed through interactions throughout one’s life (Baron & Byrne, 1997). It is the ego’s function to integrate the psychosexual and psychosocial aspects on a given level of development, and, at the same time, to integrate the relation of newly added identity elements with those already in existence (Erikson 1959).

College students are constantly discovering who they are in relation to academics, social status, and gender. Due to the scarcity of scholarly research pertaining to female sports officials, the following review focuses on the history of women in sport, athletic identity, and Chickering’s student development theory on identity development during college. Women’s attempts to participate in any field designated as “male” have always been highly contentious (Hattery, Smith, & Staurowsky, 2007). At both levels, student and faculty, women faced discrimination in admission and funding in higher education,
particularly in fields that are male-dominated, highly masculinized, and highly sex-segregated (Padavic & Reskin, 2002; Tabs, 2004; Hattery et al, 2007).

**Women in Sport**

Until the 1850s, higher education for women was relatively rare, as was encouragement of the physical activity and competition associated with organized sports (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2005). Although increasing numbers of women gained access to higher education following the Civil War, encouragement was slow coming in organized sports. Physical education was included in the curriculum of newly founded women’s colleges to offset questions that male scholars and administrators raised about the physical capacity of women to do intellectual work (Rudolph, 1962, 1990; Solomon, 1985). Women’s sports originated in the nineteenth century through the initiative and oversight of faculty primarily in physical education (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2005). Until the initial proposals for Title IX in the late 1960s, women’s sports remained neglected by the institutions sponsoring them and unrecognized in national discussions of organized sport outside of the organizations of women’s physical educators (Hardy & Berryman, 1982). Although the requirements of Title IX were actually far ranging – opportunities to participate, quality of experience, freedom from discrimination – most of the scientific research on the implementation of Title IX in intercollegiate athletics has focused on two key areas: (a) athletic participation studies and (b) coaching studies (Hattery et al, 2007).

Before the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, studies of school systems and policies, as well as testimony before Congressional committees on
women's rights and education, repeatedly revealed the conservatism of the educational establishment and the pervasiveness of its belief in the inferiority of women (, 1990). However, reflecting the growing women’s movement and with Title IX on the horizon, women students sought high-caliber competition to provide championship opportunities (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2005). With the demise of the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, women’s athletics at the institutional level continued to be folded into the dominant men’s programs (Lovett & Lowry, 1995).

The “phrase” Title IX has taken on cultural force as a narrative about the increased institutionalization and incorporation of women’s sports into the expanding global sports/media complex (Fischesser, 2008). Most often, women athletes and women’s athletic programs seemed to be the prime beneficiaries of Title IX; however, there is another group of people closely associated with women’s athletics that have been affected by Title IX legislation – the officials of women’s athletic contests (Casey, 1992). Title IX provided increased opportunities to officiate women’s competitions, primarily because it increased number of participants and number of competitions in girls’ and women’s sports (Casey, 1992). However, the changes since the enactment of Title IX have done little to enable women to officiate men’s contests at higher levels.

Sports officiating was usually a second job pursued by sports advocates, many of whom were formerly athletes and want to stay involved with sports and give something back to the athletic world (Prus, 1984; Furst, 1991; Titlebaum, Haberlin & Titlebaum, 2009). Women’s increased participation in sport did suggest that provision and access improved, however, the nature of inclusion and participation continued to be problematic.
(Meân & Kassing, 2008). It was considered newsworthy when a female official officiated a male contest, but it was considered common practice for a male to officiate a female competition (Casey, 1992).

Sport has been an area of society that has traditionally oppressed women by limiting their opportunity to participate (Carty, 2005). Mariah Nelson (1994) aptly reinforces this assertion: “We learned . . . that batting, catching, throwing, and jumping are not neutral, human activities, but somehow more naturally a male domain. Insidiously, our culture’s reverence for men’s professional sports and its silence about women’s athletic accomplishments shaped, defined, and limited how we felt about ourselves as women and men.” (Carty, 2005, p. 132) While women sports officials were more noticeable on the court or field these days, they received significantly less compensation for officiating women’s games than male officials receive for officiating men’s games (Casey, 1992). Hardin and Greer (2009) asked if perceptions of sports progressed in ways that mirror participation. If negative perceptions of women in male dominated roles in sport continue, female student intramural sports officials were at the front of the line to receive the brunt of that negativity from their peers.

Competitive sports convey strong messages about masculinity and femininity, and they have traditionally been viewed as a domain where men were encouraged to pursue a masculine gender role identity (Lantz & Schroeder, 1999). Girls who are not discouraged from engaging in masculine activities may be likely to have parents who do not abide by strict gender roles (Van Volkom, 2003). As a result we have, over time, seen a concomitant decrease in the segregation of the sexes and the increasing entry of women
into more spheres of public life (Liston, 2006). However, the importance of the role of masculinity and femininity in sports is not more prominent than in the role of sports official (Casey, 1992). While the sports officials’ uniform is meant to be gender neutral and every official on the crew wears the same outfit, female officials still combat the idea that officiating should remain a male dominated field.

**Athletic Identity**

Athletic identity can be defined as the extent to which a person identifies with the athlete role (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993). While all athletes know that at some point in their lives their athletic career will end, it is often uncertain when that end will come (Moreland-Bishop, 2009). With the idea in mind that their high school senior season may be the end of their athletic career, future female college students begin to search for a role in which they can maintain their athletic identity. While sport provided many opportunities for the student-athlete to learn about themselves, the commitment dominated their life, not allowing for participation in other activities (Petitpas, Champagne, Chartrand, Danish & Murphy, 1997). This strong identification as an athlete may lead to emotional difficulties upon athletic career retirement as other social identities have not had the opportunity to develop (Moreland-Bishop, 2009).

Athletes begin to base their self-worth on their athletic performance early in life (Moreland-Bishop, 2009). Perceiving oneself as an adult coincided with making progress toward resolution of one’s identity (Nelson & Barry, 2005). Research on identity development has begun to focus on identity related to athletes, specifically females (Houle, Brewer, & Kluck, 2010). Due to the lack of professional opportunities in sport,
females may place less of an emphasis on athletic identity and spend more time developing vocational goals for opportunities outside of athletics (Harrison & Lawrence, 2004). However, research focusing on the experiences of female college students who may still view themselves as athletes, but not play intercollegiate sports, is largely absent.

The psychosocial development of college students has been a central focus for researchers of college student development and student affairs practitioners for several decades (Foubert, Nixon, Sisson, & Barnes, 2005). When an individual has two social identities, such as athlete and student, the identities may be conflicting stereotypes and thus they are in constant competition (Yopyk & Prentice, 2005). Berzonsky and Kuk (2002) found that the more self-exploration the students engaged in, the better prepared they were. Students were able to operate in a mature, autonomous, and self-directed manner without continually needing to look for reassurance and emotional support (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2002). Studies confirm the importance of studying many different areas in which college students develop, and the factors that lead to such development (Foubert et al, 2005).

During the first years in college, students are often still focusing on their high school achievements (Arnett, 2004). Developmental theory suggests that late childhood through early adulthood is a critical period for identity development (Houle et al., 2010). The importance of those high school factors may be more a part of identity development than the student, or student affairs professional, realizes. Former competitive female high school athletes may receive different societal messages than former competitive high school male athletes as they transition into college life. While facing such imminent adult
tasks as getting a job and becoming a citizen, the individual is required to synthesize childhood identifications in such a way that he can establish both a reciprocal relationship with his society and maintain a feeling of continuity within himself (Marcia, 1966).

Emerging adulthood is a stage of identity exploration, instability, and self-focus (Arnett, 2004) and can be identified as the “bridge between adolescence and adulthood” (Arnett, 1998, p. 17). Emerging adulthood is considered the age of identity exploration particularly through love, work, and worldviews or ideology (Arnett, 2000). Female college students who participate in intramural sports or work as intramural student sports officials may still identify themselves as athletes even though they no longer play sports in a traditional competitive athletic setting. Individuals do not just achieve their identities, but they also make commitments and then must engage in continued exploration to maintain their commitments (Stringer & Kerpelman, 2010).

Being an athlete is an important part of the individual’s identity into early adulthood (Houle et al., 2010). Changes in the athletic portion of identity may occur during this time period when most major identity development is considered to occur (Houle et al., 2010). The only outlet they have to continue their identity as an athlete during the college years is through recreational and intramural sports as a participant, sports official or possibly both.

Research has suggested that identity commitments were important to an individual’s well-being and emotional adjustment (Stringer & Kerpelman, 2010). In emerging adulthood, work became a way for undergraduates to explore career options and skills they are good at (Marcus, 2010). By being able to work in sports, female
college students are able to possibly hold on to the identity of athlete (Prus, 1984). While some may still identify as an athlete, intramural student sports officials are identified as student employees within the division of student affairs (Bryant et al, 1994). They were most likely former high school athletes who are passionate for the game and encourage participation by others, and were often former athletes who want to stay involved with sports (Prus, 1984; Furst, 1991).

**Identity Development**

In more recent years, college students are frequently asked how their out-of-classroom activities enhance their academic experience and development. Identity is a process that unites personality and connects the individual to the social world (Erikson, 1968; Foubert et al, 2005). The tasks involved in discovering abilities, goals, and effectiveness are part of creating a sense of identity that allows the student to enter adult life (Torres et al, 2009). Astin (1993) asserted that student involvement has the potential to enhance most aspects of the undergraduate student’s cognitive and affective development (Hall, Forrester & Borsz, 2008).

Researchers and student affairs professionals alike continually aim to identify what factors during college aid in identity development for college and university students. Working on campus could become a developmentally powerful experience for more students if student affairs professionals who supervise students in their employ intentionally created some of the same conditions featuring high-impact activities such as common intellectual experiences (Kuh, 2009). Due to rising educational costs and long-term benefits of higher education, college student employment rates have been increasing
steadily for the last four decades (Riggert, Boyle, Petrosko, Ash & Rude-Parkins, 2006). Colleges and universities can no longer assume that the majority of students will be able to give their full-time attention to academic endeavors and the relationship between student employment and student success must be better understood (Riggert et al, 2006).

Student success is not only determined by academic performance but also by involvement in activities that enhance the overall college experience. Involvement by both participants and student staff in college recreational sports correlated highly with academic success and positive health behaviors over time (Forrester, Arterberry & Barcelona, 2006; Fortman & Haines, 2011). However, the unique characteristics of student employees present administrators with challenges in the training, retention, and improvement of their program’s staff (Kellison & James, 2011). Full-time administrators employed in university recreational sports are largely career-oriented, and many have academic and professional backgrounds in sport or recreation management while students work in campus recreation for other reasons (Kellison & James, 2011).

Identity exploration in the area of work is theorized to be salient in emerging adulthood, and according to Vondracek’s extensions of Erikson’s theory, self-realization may be achieved through integration of career choice into one’s identity (Stringer et al, 2010). Research has focused on off-campus employment and student achievement. While there are differences of opinion regarding the impact of employment on college students’ academic performance, little attention has been given to on-campus employment and exploration of identity during the college years. Even more specifically, no research has
been done on female student employees working in a student affairs program such as intramural sports in a role traditionally assumed to be for men.

**Theoretical Framework**

The concept of role has long been used in sociology to explain self/society relationship (Sarbin, 1954; Bruening, Borland, & Burton, 2008). Traditionally, roles have been viewed as the behavioral expectations associated with and emerging from identifiable positions in social structures (Callero, 1985). Identities are often shaped by existing social arrangements and power structures (Bruening et al, 2008). People occupying roles and other socialization agents such as family members, coaches, teachers and other significant others, as well as environment, have been found to be crucial aspects in initial sport exposure, specific sport exposure, and continued involvement (Coakley, 2007; Bruening et al, 2005).

Chickering’s theory of identity development focuses primarily on the formation of identity in the traditional college aged student. Researchers (De Larrosa, 2000) examining the applicability of Chickering’s theory to women have found that women’s development differs from men’s, particularly regarding the importance of interpersonal relationships in fostering other aspects of development (Evans et al, 1998). The theory defines development as proceeding along the seven vectors of developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Reisser, 1995; Foubert et al., 2005). The vectors are seen as stages of development, and a student may be in multiple vectors
at once. By transitioning through several stages at the same time, an individual increases the opportunity for intellectual growth and personal development. A central idea in Chickering’s work is that the college or university is uniquely suited to promote the development of human potential (Garfield & David, 1986).

Because psychosocial development is multidimensional and complex, its assessment is not easy (Miller & Winston, 1990; Evans et al, 1998). Identity is a process that unites personality and connects the individual to the social world (Erikson, 1968). The tasks involved in discovering abilities, goals, and effectiveness are part of creating a sense of identity that allows the student to enter adult life (Torres et al, 2009). Development is continually occurring in many different areas, and assessment can provide only a limited evaluation of a particular aspect of that development at a specific point in time (Evans et al, 1998). Astin (1993) asserted that student involvement has the potential to enhance most aspects of the undergraduate student’s cognitive and affective development (Hall et al, 2008).

Researchers (De Larrosa, 2000) have investigated the validity of Chickering’s theory, including its applicability to various student populations, factors related to psychosocial development, and the relationship of psychosocial development to cognitive development (Evans et al, 1998). The term “identity” expresses such a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others (Erikson, 1959). Developmental theory suggests that late childhood through early adulthood is a critical period for identity development (Houle, Brewer & Kluck, 2010).
The adolescent process, however, is conclusively complete only when the individual has subordinated his childhood identification to a new kind of identification, achieved in absorbing sociability and in competitive apprenticeship with and among his age-mates (Erikson, 1959). While facing such imminent adult tasks as getting a job and becoming a citizen, the individual is required to synthesize childhood identifications in such a way that he can establish both a reciprocal relationship with his society and maintain a feeling of continuity within himself (Marcia, 1966).

Individuals do not just achieve their identities, but they also make commitments and must engage in continued exploration to maintain their commitments (Stringer et al., 2010). Being an athlete is an important part of the individual’s identity into early adulthood (Houle et al., 2010). Athlete identity is especially important to those college students whose dreams of competing as an intercollegiate athlete were not founded (Houle et al., 2010). Commitment to identify as an athlete may cause female college students confusion in those first years away at school to achieve inclusion (Meân, 2008). Identity formation neither begins nor ends with adolescence: it is a lifelong development largely unconscious to the individual and to his society (Erikson, 1959). However, changes in the athletic portion of identity may occur during this time period when most major identity development was considered to occur (Houle et al., 2010). The only outlet they have to continue their identity as an athlete during the college years is through recreational and intramural sports as a participant, sports official or possibly both.
CHAPTER SUMMARY

Intramural sports programs have grown into a prominent collegiate recreation program that are ever-present in colleges and universities (Stewart, 1992). Evidence suggests that identity development occurs throughout one’s life, but that identity exploration sets the foundation for commitments made during emerging adulthood and the years that follow (Stringer et al, 2010). With the college years being some of the most formative for youth, research has centered on identity formation enriching the college student experience. However, limited studies have been done on how on-campus employment enhances the development of students and none have focused solely on females in non-traditional roles. Student affairs professionals focus on engaging the student, but few truly know how to do it effectively.

While women in sports have become a popular subject with the enactment of Title IX, research continues to focus on identity development of female athletes as participants in competitive intercollegiate athletic contests. Traditional gender roles and views, as well as gender differences, play a large part in identity formation. Certain social changes have accompanied the increasing popularity of women in sports and some of the ambiguous and contradictory messages on masculinity and femininity in regards to athletes and gender begin to affect identity development in female athletes (Carty, 2005).

Societal messages regarding masculinity and femininity in sports and how they are filtered are largely dependent on the individual and their environment. The effects of gender diversity in sports (and in particular women’s collegiate sports) have received considerable scholarly attention (Choi and Sagas, 2007). However few studies have
examined how gender diversity practically impacts potential variables at the group level and have only sought to understand the categorical and relational effects of gender (Cunningham, 2007). Female college students already receive differing messages from family, peers, academicians, mentors, media etc., in respect to expectations of them in social, professional and academic settings. As intramural student sports officials, the same entities are involved but in an environment where the female student may be more comfortable due to her own athletic identity.

Every female college student varies dramatically in what means the most to her when it comes to identity development during college. There is a need to examine female college students in non-traditional roles on campus to determine if there are other factors that aid in identity development of a college student than those associated with previous studies. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore female student intramural sports officials’ perceptions and understanding of their identity development as a female, student and sports official.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to build baseline knowledge on the experiences and identity development of female college student intramural sports officials. Using semi-structured interviews, female college student intramural sports officials will be asked to provide their backgrounds, detailed descriptions of their experiences as sports officials, perceptions of how they are viewed and how they view other female sports officials. Using a qualitative method, the study seeks to understand the relationship between working as an intramural sports officials and identity development through the experiences of female college students.

The research methodology utilized in this study was grounded theory, specifically constructivist grounded theory. Although a phenomenology emphasizes the meaning of an experience for a number of individuals, the intent of a grounded theory study is to move beyond description and to generate or discover a theory, an abstract analytical schema of a process (Creswell, 2007). In researching the experiences of female college student intramural sports officials, the researcher must use a more interpretive approach and learn about individual views, beliefs and experiences to see the social construction of reality.

The lack of existing theory relating to the complexity of identity development in the population of sports officials as a whole led to grounded theory as the methodology of choice. Grounded theory is a methodology that seeks to construct theory about issues of importance in peoples’ lives (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). However, the researcher
was not comfortable with the more traditional approaches to grounded theory described by Glaser & Strauss (1967) and Strauss & Corbin (1990) for a number of reasons (McGeorge, 2011). Firstly, the researcher had ‘insider’ knowledge and experience of concepts of interest and did not feel able to achieve the distancing (or ‘bracketing’) required by traditional grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; McGeorge, 2011). Secondly, it seemed important to select an approach that would make use of the researcher’s ‘inside’ experience throughout the research (McGeorge, 2011).

Creswell (2007) discussed Charmaz’s advocation for a social constructivist perspective that includes emphasizing diverse local worlds, multiple realities, and the complexities of particular worlds, views, and actions. Categories are developed and coded throughout the research that do not minimize the role of the researcher and allows the researcher to bring questions to the data and advance personal values, experiences, and priorities (Creswell, 2007). The researcher therefore selected a constructivist grounded theory approach which emphasizes the co-construction of meaning between the participants and the researcher (Charmaz, 2006; McGeorge, 2011).

To ensure a strong research design, researchers must choose a research paradigm that is congruent with their beliefs about the nature of reality (Mills et al, 2006). The decision to use a constructivist grounded theory approach arose from the lack of literature on the research topic, the researcher’s own experiences as a female sports official and a general lack of understanding about the experiences of female intramural sports officials. Researchers are part of the research endeavor rather than objective observers, and their values must be acknowledged by themselves and by their readers as an inevitable part of
the outcome (Appleton, 1997; de Laine, 1997; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Mills et al., 2006; Stratton, 1997).

A constructivist grounded theory approach allows for individual feelings, experiences and views to be exposed, categorized and interpreted. Utilizing this approach also enabled discovery to be the central purpose of the research (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Constructivism is a research paradigm that denies the existence of an objective reality, “asserting that realities are social constructions of the mind, and that there exist as many such constructions as there are individuals (although clearly many constructions will be shared)” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 43 as cited in Mills et al., 2006). It is assumed that female intramural sports officials’ experiences are unique, even amongst their own gender. Discovery was needed before any other assumptions or understanding of the experiences can be accomplished. Strauss and Corbin (1990) also discussed grounded theory as uncovering not only conditions, but also determining how the actors respond to changing conditions. Therefore, this study does allow for evolving perceptions and emerging themes due to the actions and feelings of the participants.

Constructivist grounded theory is appropriate for the study of female intramural sports officials. There is a lack of literature and understanding regarding the experiences of female sports officials. Charmaz (2000) has contended that a constructivist approach to grounded theory is both possible and desirable and provides a ‘discovered’ reality that comes from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural contexts. Engaging in any form of grounded theory study, however, requires the researcher to address a set of common characteristics: theoretical sensitivity, theoretical sampling,
treatment of the literature, constant comparative methods, coding, the meaning of verification, identifying the core category, memoing and diagramming, and the measure of rigor (McCann & Clark, 2003). This approach allowed the researcher to immerse herself in the data in a way that embedded the narrative of the participants in the final research outcome (Mills et al, 2006).

With an emphasis on keeping the researcher close to the participants through keeping their words intact in the process of analysis, Charmaz has striven to maintain the participants’ presence throughout (Mills et al, 2006).

Grounded theory is a research methodology that has an enormous appeal for a range of disciplines due to its explanatory power. This power illuminates common issues for people in a way that allows them to identify with theory and use it in their own lives. Researchers, who first identify their ontological and epistemological position, are able to choose a point on the methodological spiral of grounded theory where they feel theoretically comfortable, which, in turn, will enable them to live out their beliefs in the process of inquiry (Mills et al, 2006, p 8).

**Participant Information and Selection**

The population in this study included female college student intramural sports officials. The participants were recruited from current intramural sports officials. From this population, a sample of 11 female college student intramural sports officials was selected. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, specifically convenience sampling. Samples in grounded theory are generally selected purposively because it is believed that they can contribute to the topic under investigation (Payne, 2007).

Participants fit the following criteria: (a) have officiated more than one intramural sport, (b) have been employed as an intramural sports officials for at least one academic
semester, and (c) were currently employed as an intramural sports official. Participants were current students of various academic classifications. The participants were not selected by academic standing or proposed major at the university.

A grounded theory may include 20-25 participants (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorenson, 2006), however, Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) made no mention of a recommended number of participants in grounded theory methodology. Charmaz (2000) further asserted that qualitative researchers should see through the armament of methodological techniques and the reliance of mechanical procedures. Thus, the researcher felt justified with her selection of 11 participants, specifically because the population was limited to begin with.

Prior to participating in the study, participants were given informed consent forms. The participants were recruited from current intramural sports officials through email and in person. Each participant was asked to fill out a participant information sheet and then assigned a number. Participants remained anonymous and were only identifiable by their assigned participant number. Participant information forms were kept under lock-and-key at the researcher’s home office to ensure confidentiality. Transcriptions were kept in electronic format on the researcher’s home computer and separate flash drives kept at the researcher’s home office.

Data Collection and Analysis

Prior to participating in the study, participants were given an informed consent form to ready and take with them. Due to the nature of the working relationship between the researcher and the study population, an email was sent to all potential participants
from the researcher requesting their participation. Participants were also asked to recommend other potential participants.

Each participant filled out a participant profile sheet and was assigned a number (See Appendix B- Participant Information Form). From that moment, the participant was only identifiable by their participant number. No personally identifying information was taken either on the participant information form or recorded to allow for complete anonymity. To ensure confidentiality, the researcher kept participant information forms locked in her home office.

Interviews with participants were the primary means of data collection. Eleven participants were interviewed using a semi-structured, open-ended interview procedure. Interviews were conducted in person, one-on-one, were audio-recorded, and designed to be approximately thirty minutes in length. The use of semi-structured interviews was crucial as it allowed the researcher to ‘guide’ the interview, rather than dictate, and explore responses in an authentic manner (Smith & Eatough, 2007).

The researcher created a list of interview questions used during the semi-structured interviews (See Appendix C- Interview Questions). Interview questions were formed using Chickering’s (1979;1993) theory of identity development as a theoretical basis and were developed to explore gaps in the existing literature on student identity and success. The movement of an individual along the seven vectors often determines the potential for intellectual growth and human development (Garfield & David, 1986). Interview questions were reviewed and approved by the researcher’s dissertation chair who has extensive experience with qualitative study development. The general theme of
continuous identity development, identity intersection and relationships is apparent in the interview questions.

**Data Saturation**

Saturation is an important concept in grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). Data saturation is largely determined by the researcher, however, the researcher worked closely with her dissertation committee chair to ensure and verify saturation. In order to produce saturation, multiple interviews were needed to produce a more realistic view of the experiences and identity development related to intramural sports officiating (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). A video clip with follow-up questions was emailed to each participant, along with initial interview transcriptions, in order to clarify existing data. With nine of eleven participants responding to the follow-up questions, the researcher purposely chose to re-interview three participants in order to explore emergent theory and strengthen saturation. This allowed for more focus on specific elements of emerging theory and to generate deeper, richer data in an effort to reach saturation.

**Data Triangulation**

Creswell (2007) discussed the need to include additional sources of data in order to test emergent theory and offer context and description to the study. The researcher used several sources in data triangulation: (a) an interview with one Student Affairs staff member in Intramural Sports who has a direct role in supervising, training and advising intramural sports officials, (b) observations of the participants while they officiate their respective sports and in intramural sports officials meetings, (c) transcripts, field notes
and observations from pilot study that included five of the participants, (d) Web pages of Intramural Sports programs regarding intramural sports officiating, and (e) Web pages of the Division of Student Affairs regarding the definition of Student Success at the research site. See Table 1 for a complete listing of sources used during data triangulation.
Table 1. Sources of Data Triangulation

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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Specific Document or Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview with Student Affairs staff member in Intramural Sports</td>
<td>Transcript of interview with current Intramural Sports Director who also served as previous Graduate Assistant of Intramural Sports at research site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observations of participants while officiating intramural sports and attendance in intramural sports officials meetings</td>
<td>Typed reflection of observations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documents from interviews during pilot study</td>
<td>Typed interview transcripts, field notes and observations from pilot study that included five of the current study’s participants</td>
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<td>Information regarding Student Success definitions</td>
<td>Definitions of participants from interview transcripts</td>
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<td>Research site’s Division of Student Affairs Website</td>
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<td>Research site’s Institutional Website</td>
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<td>The University of Georgia’s Division of Student Affairs Website</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Virginia Tech’s Division of Student Affairs Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information regarding intramural sports officiating on college campuses</td>
<td>Research site’s Intramural Sports Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgia Southern University’s Intramural program Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgia Tech’s Intramural program Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virginia Tech’s Intramural program Website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher also used peer review as another source of data triangulation (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The researcher utilized the Campus Recreation Associate Director of Programs at the research site as a peer reviewer throughout this study. The Campus Recreation Associate Director of Programs is not only a Student Affairs
professional, but also previously was employed at the Director of Intramural Sports at the research site. Specifically, the researcher and Associate Director spoke by phone regularly during the data analysis process to ensure proper coding of data as well as discuss emerging themes. The Associate Director challenged the researcher in expression of emergent theory and added additional thoughts and context to the data and the study. This process enabled the researcher to decrease bias by providing a different perspective.

Additional data sources were selected using theoretical sampling. Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) discussed theoretical sampling as being designed to further develop emergent theory by using events, incidents and other forms of data as practical examples showcasing emergent theory. This triangulation of data by utilizing varying data sources allowed the researcher to develop further context and justification for emergent themes (Creswell, 2007).

To help counteract possible limitations resulting from theoretical sensitivity, interviews were transcribed by a hired transcriptionist then coded paragraph-by-paragraph and line-by-line by the researcher. Theoretical sensitivity refers to the researcher’s knowledge of the subject under investigation and thus the researcher’s ability to glean subtleties from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). By having the interviews transcribed and then coding the data by hand, the researcher became more familiar with the data and increased her theoretical sensitivity.

**Field Notes**

The researcher produced and maintained field notes for each interview. Field notes were typed and organized in a master document by the researcher. The master
document was then used to highlight statements, words, and/or ideas found in each of the interviews. Observations included participants’ responses to questions as well as emotional reactions during the course of the interview. Charmaz (2006) conversed on the use of the constant comparative method in which themes are being developed from qualitative data. Field notes were continually compared with transcriptions, observations and memos throughout the study in order to link emerging themes, ideas, and/or categories. Field notes, along with initial coding, served as a source of emergent themes that developed throughout the data analysis process. The researcher stored and managed field notes in the NVivo⁹™ (QSR International, n.d.) software program.

Grounded theory is a category-centered approach to social research in which the goal is to inductively generate theoretical generalizations about human processes that hold across individual participants (Riessman, 2009). Data analysis using constructivist grounded theory is allowed to be more unrestricted and creative. By using a constant comparative method, the researcher was able to break the emergent themes into simple terms or ideas. Along with Charmaz’s (2006) constant comparative method, Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) discussed four specific types of qualitative data analysis: (a) microanalysis, (b) open coding, (c) axial coding, and (d) selective coding.

The three main data analysis components are open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Together, these processes break down data into simple concepts, reassemble data into categories and integrate data enabling theory to emerge. Open coding was the first step in analyzing the data allowing simple concepts to emerge. As Strauss and Corbin (1998) discussed, these concepts are noted by the researcher and
placed in related categories, defined as ‘more abstract explanatory terms’. These
categories lead the researcher into axial coding.

While axial coding follows open coding, the two types of coding are not always
completed in order. Axial coding may happen simultaneously as open coding, however, it
is a separate analysis. Strauss and Corbin (1998) stated that axial coding is designed to
reassemble data that were fractured during the open coding process. The difference
comes in the relationship between the categories instead of the makeup of the categories
(Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998).

Selective coding then allows the researcher to integrate data and refine categories
(Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). The task of the researcher is to extract and name a
central theme to which all categories can be related through the use of explanatory
relationship statements (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). This process of integration
allows theory to emerge and develop (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). The theory is then
validated through comparison of raw data and participants’ recognition of and reaction to
the final product (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998).

The final element of coding, microanalysis, is simply a combination of open and
axial coding and is most appropriate at the beginning of a study to build initial categories
(Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). Microanalysis consists of three elements: (a) analysis of
the data collected from subjects and other data sources, (b) the interpretations of the data
by the researcher, and (c) self-conscious awareness on behalf of the researcher to analyze
the interplay between observation and interpretation (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 1998). The
researcher does not need to read every piece of data but should scan the data to look for
new intriguing data or data that have not been fully developed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 1998).

**Memoing**

Memoing should be used in open, axial and selective coding and is utilized to help the researcher understand her own analytic process. Memos are “…a storehouse of ideas” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998), and asks the researcher to examine her own way of thinking by clarifying thoughts and observing her own personal bias. In this study, memoing was used after field notes for each interview were typed and after each interview was transcribed. Memoing also continued throughout the coding process.

The researcher used memoing as a journal of emerging ideas, categories and themes. Memoing allowed the researcher to see the data from a different perspective, reflect upon and make connections between emerging data. This process also allowed the researcher to better understand her own thought processes. Memos began during the first reading of each transcript with observations, questions needing to be asked, and notes on implications and themes being written in the margins. Memos were also added to and organized by category in a master document stored in the NVivo9™ (QSR International, n.d.) software program. Memos contributed to the audit trail in this study.

During the coding process and to limit mistakes by the researcher, NVivo9™ qualitative research software (QSR International, n.d.). NVivo9™ software allows users to import files into a project more easily and consistently code and organize information, search for data within the project and build models (Lichtman, 2006). The use of NVivo9™ decreased the chance of lost information and increased the overall quality of
the data and study.

**Role of the Researcher**

Creswell (2007) explained that the role of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions, and biases at the outset of the study. While Maxwell (1996) warned the researcher could endanger research design components because of the researchers’ close relationship to the study, Charmaz (2004) stated that “to learn participants’ meanings, we need to be reflexive about our own”. Qualitative research is inherently biased (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Creswell, 2007; Lichtman, 2006, Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). Because of the unique role of the researcher in a qualitative study, it is imperative for the researcher to acknowledge any bias before conducting a study.

The researcher in this study has worked as a student affairs professional for nine years. Specifically, the researcher has worked as the intramural sports director at this setting for four of those nine years and was a direct supervisor of the study participants. The researcher has worked in campus recreation and has experience in intramural sports, facility management, sport club administration, fitness instruction, and summer youth day camps. The researcher has also represented the department within the Division of Student Affairs on the division’s assessment committee, leadership team, and one of the divisional goal teams. The researcher is noticeably committed to student development and believes that student employment provides invaluable life skills to college students.

The researcher began officiating sports as an undergraduate student within an intramural sports program in a university setting. The researcher also was an athlete
throughout high school and into college through participation in intramural sports. Up until two years ago, the researcher was an active high school and women’s college basketball official. The researcher maintains current relationships with many female high school and college basketball officials and intramural sports professionals. Conversations with these females as well as her own personal experiences as a female sports official and student affairs professional were the motivation for this study.

As a result of the professional role, personal experiences and established relationships with the participants, the researcher was able to create a deeper level of rapport with the participants. This gives the study a greater level of trustworthiness. Also, to limit bias associated with the researcher’s experiences and relationships, the researcher included peer debriefing in the data collection and analysis process. The researcher had a peer review the data collection and data analysis processes to ensure accurate representation of the data and results. The researcher’s dissertation committee chair was also involved in reviewing data analysis and results.

Limitations

The challenges faced by using the constructivist grounded theory method largely revolved around the researcher’s own personal experiences as a female sports official and as the former intramural sports director and direct supervisor of the study participants. The study was also limited in that findings are not generalizable. While what happens in a setting may be more telling than what people say about it (Charmaz, 2004), the ability to set aside one’s own ideas and notions so that analytic, substantive theory can emerge will be the ultimate test for the researcher to create a study that is worthwhile to the academic
community (Creswell, 2007).

The distinctive characteristics of qualitative research also limited this study. The study was conducted at one institution and in one intramural program formerly led by a female sports official and was not representative of similar programs at other colleges and universities. The sample population may also not be representative of ethnicity and background in comparison to similar populations in other college and university intramural programs. The researcher-respondent relationships also could affect the validity of the research. The researcher, as an intramural professional, had already established friendly and/or professional relationships with the respondents through direct supervision. Due to these relationships, and potentially in the role of mentor, the researcher may have been seen as both supervisor and researcher, which potentially could have influenced participants’ data.

The researcher’s experience as a student affairs practitioner, female sports official, intramural sports direct and supervisor was a form of bias in the research. The researcher’s experiences as a female sports official may have allowed her theoretical sensitivity, or awareness of the subtleties of data, to be overdeveloped. The researcher is also a novice researcher with little experience in qualitative research. To ensure she had a thorough understanding of the research process and the grounded theory procedures, the researcher took action to minimize novice mistakes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998).
CHAPTER SUMMARY

The frames we give our research problems shape what we can look for and what we see—as well as what we do not look for or see (Charmaz, 2004). Grounded theory is the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Interviewers need to go deeper into the phenomena to gain much more than current public relations rhetoric (Charmaz, 2004). This chapter explained and justified the need to use a qualitative approach and grounded theory design to study the experiences of female college student intramural sports officials. The sample population was defined as well as data collection and analysis elements were identified. Last, the researcher discussed the limitations of the study.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter offers an in-dep examination of data analysis and introduces the emerging grounded theory. Data were analyzed using open coding, axial coding, selective coding and microanalysis developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) as well as constant comparative methods utilized by Charmaz (2006). The researcher used field notes, memoing, theoretical sampling, data triangulation, member checking, and peer review procedures to ensure data saturation, produce a deeper description of data and increase validity of the study. The resulting theory answers the primary research question: What is the meaning between identity development and sports officiating for female college student intramural sports officials in a higher education setting?

Participant Demographics

Eleven female college student intramural sports officials comprised the sample population of this study. Participants fit the following criteria: (a) had officiated at least one intramural sport, (b) had been employed as an intramural sports officials for at least one academic semester, and (c) were currently employed as an intramural sports official. Participants in this study represented a range of academic classes. See a summary of participant demographics in Table 2 on the following page and more detailed information in Table 3 on page 51.
Table 2. Summary of Participant Demographics

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Participants</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic Group</strong></td>
<td>White/Caucasian – 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black/African American – 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate or Graduate &amp; Academic Class (Self-Reported)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Undergraduate - 10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freshman - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sophomore - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Graduate - 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizenship</strong></td>
<td>U.S Citizen – 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International Student – 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age Range</strong></td>
<td>16 – 19 yrs - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 – 22 yrs - 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23 – 25 yrs - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25+ yrs - 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of time working as intramural sports official (# of semesters)</strong></td>
<td>1 - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 or more- 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Officiated intramural sports (1 sport, 2 sports, or 3 or more sports)</strong></td>
<td>1 sport - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 sports - 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 or more - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of competitive sports participation</strong></td>
<td>High School - 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School &amp; College - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prior officiating experience</strong></td>
<td>None – 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youth (18 and under) level - 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ten participants self-identified as white/Caucasian while one participant self-identifying as black/African-American. All participants self-identified as United States citizens. Participants were asked to designate where they were in age range: (a) 16-19 years, (b) 20-22 years, (c) 23-25 years, or (d) 25 years or above. Eight participants stated
they were 20-22 years old, two participants stated they were 16-19 years old, and one participant stated she was 23-25 years old.

Ten participants were undergraduate students and one participant was a graduate student. Of the ten undergraduate participants, three participants were seniors, four participants were juniors, two participants were sophomores, and one participant was a freshman. All participants had previously played competitive sports at a junior varsity, varsity or competitive club level in high school. Two participants had additionally played a sport at the collegiate level.

Six participants had officiated intramural sports three or more academic semesters, three participants had officiated two academic semesters and two had officiated one academic semester. Participants officiated sports including flag football, volleyball, indoor and outdoor soccer, basketball, and softball. Four participants had officiated three or more different sports, five participants had officiated two different sports, and two participants had officiated one sport. Three participants had officiated at youth sport levels prior to officiating intramural sports.

In addition to the sample population of female college student intramural sports officials, the researcher interviewed the current Intramural Sports Director who was also the previous Intramural Sports Graduate Assistant. This staff member was selected due to working closely with the female college student intramural sports officials involved as participants in the study during the academic semester. This staff member also was once a student intramural sports official and trains current students to officiate.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Number</th>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>U.S. Citizen or International Student</th>
<th>Played competitive sports</th>
<th># of semesters as Intramural sports official (1, 2, 3 or more)</th>
<th>Self-Reported Academic Class</th>
<th>If yes, at what level? (High School, College or Other)</th>
<th>In what intramural sports have you officiated?</th>
<th>Refereed outside of Intramural sports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 or more</td>
<td>Age range (16-19, 20-22, 23-25, 25 and above)</td>
<td>Soccer (indoor and outdoor), volleyball</td>
<td>None outside of intramurals</td>
<td>Recreational and Club soccer Under-14 since 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td></td>
<td>20-22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age range (16-19, 20-22, 23-25, 25 and above)</td>
<td>Soccer (indoor and outdoor), indoor volleyball, softball</td>
<td></td>
<td>Club Soccer 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td></td>
<td>20-22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age range (16-19, 20-22, 23-25, 25 and above)</td>
<td>Basketball, Softball</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td></td>
<td>16-19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 or more</td>
<td>Age range (16-19, 20-22, 23-25, 25 and above)</td>
<td>Flag Football, Basketball, Softball</td>
<td></td>
<td>None outside of intramurals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>High School and College</td>
<td></td>
<td>20-22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 or more</td>
<td>Age range (16-19, 20-22, 23-25, 25 and above)</td>
<td>Softball, Indoor Soccer, Basketball</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td></td>
<td>20-22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>ID Verification</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>School Level</td>
<td>Sports Offered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 or more</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>Flag Football and Volleyball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 or more</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Soccer (indoor and outdoor), indoor volleyball, softball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 or more</td>
<td>1yr</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Basketball, Flag Football</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Outdoor 7v7 soccer, Flag Football</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interview Information**

The researcher interviewed eleven female college student intramural sports officials at the research site using a semi-structure procedure. Interviews were designed to last approximately 30 minutes. Interviews ranged in duration from approximately 11 minutes to approximately 30 minutes. The mean duration of the interviews was 18
minutes. The researcher asked the following questions to all participants during initial interviews:

- What do you think when you see female referees on TV?
- From your perspective, how is your experience as a female official different than that of male officials?
- Why did you want to become an official with intramural sports?
- Why do you think men are or are not better officials than women?
- Have you had an experience in intramural refereeing in which the fact that you were female played a role? Please describe.
- How has you being a female intramural sports official affected your ability to successfully create relationships on campus, in class, or at work?
- Do you feel that intramural players prejudge you because you are female? Please describe.
- What are the disadvantages of being a female in the field of intramural sports officiating?
- What are the advantages of being a female in the field of intramural sports officiating?
- Do your parents, friends, and/or family members support you officiating intramural sports?
- What kind of support do you feel you receive from your female co-workers? from other female students, female participants, and/or other important females in your life?
• If you were asked to explain your current self-identity, what words would you use?

• Where does sport officiating fit into your self-identity?

• How do you define the term athlete? Do you perceive yourself to be an athlete?

• What do you really want to do as a career? How does sports officiating fit into that goal?

• When communicating with male participants do you feel like they listen to you? What about with male co-workers?

• How do you feel when you put on the stripes to officiate?

• Do you think you have to try harder or be more strict than your male counterparts?

• How do you define Student Success?

• How has being an intramural sports official helped or hurt your ability to maintain your femininity or be successful as a woman? to be academically successful? to be, by your definition, successful?

• Do your faculty members know you work and officiate for intramural sports? What are their thoughts?

Interviews were conducted in an office within the campus recreation center. All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. Interviews were transcribed once all the interviews were completed two by the researcher and nine by a transcriptionist. The researcher used the qualitative research software program, NVivo™ (QSR International, n.d.), to store and manage interview data.
Data Analysis

Data analysis in constructivist grounded theory is intentionally meant to be comparative and intuitive. Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) also noted that analysis in grounded theory is not a rigidly structured process. Part of the data analysis occurred during immersion in the data and coding. The researcher immersed herself in the data through transcription of two of the interviews and at least two readings of each transcript to better understand the participant’s experiences. On the third reading, the researcher began highlighting phrases or segments of text that seemed meaningful and appeared to describe a certain concept or emerging theme.

During the data analysis phase of the study, the researcher utilized four specific types of data analysis: (a) microanalysis, (b) open coding, (c) axial coding, and (d) selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). The four processes together allowed the researcher to disseminate ideas and compare similarities to generate common themes. The creation of themes then led to further distribution of data into sub-categories enabling the researcher to integrate the data and create theory. This interaction of microanalysis, open coding, axial coding and selective coding characterizes the constant-comparative nature of grounded theory methodology.

Microanalysis

The researcher conducted microanalysis during open and axial coding at the beginning of data analysis. Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) discussed the importance of microanalysis at the beginning of a study to build initial concepts which lead into categories later in the analysis process. Microanalysis contains three elements: (a)
analysis of the data collected from subjects and other data sources, (b) the interpretations of the data by the researcher, and (c) self-conscious awareness on behalf of the researcher to analyze the interplay between observation and interpretation (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998).

Microanalysis is most appropriate at the beginning of a study to build initial concepts, and later, categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). The researcher coded data line-by-line using Nvivo9™ (QSR International, n.d.). This initial phase of coding created 625 free nodes. *Free nodes* were created by writing phrases representative of the meaning of participants’ statements. They also represented freestanding topics from each participant interview. The researcher continually refined the *free nodes* and grouped concepts together when similarities were obvious. This process allowed the researcher to constantly compare and reframe raw data to see the similarities and differences in participant responses. See Table 4 for an example of the microanalysis process.
Table 4. Example of the Microanalysis Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excerpt from Participant 4’s interview:</th>
<th>Initial coding from this excerpt:</th>
<th>Final coding from this excerpt:</th>
<th>Rationale through microanalysis:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “I’d probably say the stereotype is there, like ‘What is she doing out there?’ But I feel like after they know you, I feel like the stereotype kind of goes away because I even get some people asking, ‘Are you officiating my game? Please say you’re officiating my game’ versus people that know me, I feel like the stereotype can be broken. Initially, yes, but I feel like there’s a way to overcome it in a way, if you feel like you can.” | • “Negative stereotype of females as officials” (free node)  
• “Disappearance of stereotypes” (free node)  
• “Persistence” (free node) | • “Negative stereotype of females as sports officials” (free node)  
• “Disappearance of stereotypes” (free node)  
• “Determination” | • Negative stereotype of females as sports officials became a category as it was mentioned repeatedly in all data sources  
• “Disappearance of stereotypes” was not a unique node, however, it was only articulated in two participant interviews. That said, this node eventually became a concept within a subcategory as multiple data sources illustrated the effort to decrease stereotypes of females  
• “Determination” became a concept as it was a common topic in subsequent data sources. This concept also came to include the idea of overcoming stereotypes through persistence |
Open coding

Open coding allowed the researcher to make comparisons between the codes extracted from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). As data was coded line-by-line and paragraph-by-paragraph, raw data was disseminated into topics of interest. Subsequent coding of data grouped data together to form initial concepts or emerging themes. See Table 5 for examples of initial concepts. Through continuous comparison of data, new concepts were created and analyzed for common meaning. These concepts were then combined to create categories.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Personal views of female officials</strong></th>
<th>“I definitely take notice of them because they stand apart from men-when you see a crew on the court or on the field, you think, ‘oh, they have a girl!’ And then, I don’t know, I think I tend to watch them more to see how they act on the court or on the field just to-I take more interest in watching them than I do a guy because it’s not as often you see it.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Yeah. Well, if they’re doing men’s sports, it’s kind of shocking to see them out there. In women’s sports, I don’t really think much of it, but I don’t know. I have the same stereotypical view of everybody that women are kind of inferior in the sports world, so I guess I kind of see them that way-not as good as men.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Good for her. I think, ‘Good for her.’ I watch her closely—even before I started officiating—just to kind of see her demeanor, whether or not she was assertive, the type of person she was, I guess.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Level of support from other female college student intramural sports officials** | “I mean, I think it’s kind of an understanding—talking to female refs just out there, and they’re like, ‘Yeah, it’s basically the same thing.’ You get hit on. You get cussed out sometimes. They just know you have to behave a certain way otherwise you’re not going to get respected at all."
I think girls tend to go towards each other if they’re both working out there at the same time. I know soccer, when we did it, you would only have one girl a shift, so you’re one girl out of 6 people out there, but I feel like once you establish a friendship, they were much more willing to once you establish a friendship, more trust was put in.

“They’re all nice. They’re very supportive just because we knew—we had that mutual understanding that people will look down on us because we are girls.” |
| **Perceptions of male college student intramural sports officials** | “I feel like you have to be more assertive on things, and—just from working with other males, and now supervising other males, they definitely seem more nonchalant when they show up for work, and I feel like females normally come out there—I feel like you have to prove-like you come out there with the attitude, ‘I want to prove I’m a good official,’ so I don’t know if as many guys come out there like that.”

“I don’t necessarily think they make better officials, but I think naturally, men are just more—their voices are louder, for one thing—they’re naturally more assertive, but not all men are, so I wouldn’t automatically say they make better officials.”

“Cause I think they kind of rest on their laurels a little bit. I think that they maybe come into training, or they come into work, maybe with already a confidence of sport knowledge that they’ve watched it with their dad growing up—they’re kind of like, ‘Well, I’ve seen the rules for this long, I probably will make a good official, and I probably won’t make that many mistakes. I don’t have that much to learn.’” |
Axial Coding

While open coding separates the data out, axial coding brings it back together by examining the connections between categories and subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). During axial coding, the researcher examined initial codes and emerging categories, and then recoded and regrouped data into categories and subcategories. This process allowed the researcher to analyze data in several forms and to determine similarities, context, and most importantly, meaning. Table 6 provides a snapshot of recoding and regrouping through axial coding.
Table 6. Axial Coding: Recoding and Regrouping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes w/ categories</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External Influences</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Roles</td>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexism</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty and Staff</td>
<td>6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Jock School”</td>
<td>7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td>8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Perceptions</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>Filtering</td>
<td>14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goal-setting</td>
<td>16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal-orientation</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>17.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Focus</td>
<td>18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>Determination</td>
<td>19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>20.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>21.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>22.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(None)</td>
<td>23.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Men are viewed as more credible
2. Society is still stuck in gender roles
3. Personal views of women in officiating are sometimes negative
4. Blatant negative or sexist remarks to female officials in regards to gender
5. Sports officiating hinders relationship development between females
6. Most peers have no clue what female college student intramural sports officials do
7. Difficulty relating to some students
8. Positive parental and friend support
9. Faculty are oblivious to what students do outside the classroom
10. Athletic environment encourages participation for all
11. Encourages expression and diversity
12. Recognition on campus as strong female
13. Confidence level determines success as athlete, female, college student, and intramural sports official
14. Filtering of negative societal views becomes necessary to build self-esteem as a female intramural sports official
15. Awareness of self in relation to others
16. Goal setting and achievement aids you in everything
17. Positive relationship to academic focus
18. Female intramural sports officials have more focus on knowing the rules and getting the calls right.
19. Females have more to prove
20. Pride in self and others
21. Someone who doesn’t reflect has difficulty reading a situation
22. Future career plans seem to be in very social fields
23. Personal views of females in sports officiating hinder relationships
24. Support for each other is awkward and rarely verbalized
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersecting Identities</th>
<th>25. Obvious overlap exists in definitions of athlete, sports official and self-identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>26. Gender was not part of definition of self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27. Most participants didn’t see an overlap in identities until asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Student</td>
<td>28. Internal perceptions were sometimes more important than external influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intramural Sports Official</td>
<td>29. Constant battle with identity development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30. Academic class and/or # of semesters officiating may determine perception of self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31. Different personalities exist on and off the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32. Creation of a stronger person in general</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Success</th>
<th>33. Setting your own standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>34. Setting goals and achieving them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferrable Skills</td>
<td>35. Be active outside of the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications</td>
<td>36. Time management was one of the toughest things to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>37. Working on-campus creates a schedule and discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>38. Sports officiating makes you a better student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>39. Intramural sports officiating has a direct impact on improving communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40. Sports officiating makes you more effective in working with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41. Working in intramural sports opens your eyes to diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42. Working on-campus help you gain a passion for your future career</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher began to see theory emerging during open and axial coding and purposively selected three participants to re-interview to further develop and explain emergent theory. Follow-up interviews enabled the researcher to validate her initial and ongoing conceptualization of the data. Theory is validated through comparison to raw
data and participant’s recognition and reaction to theory development (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998).

Two of the three participants were selected because their initial interviews were thorough, their expression of experiences was very descriptive, and they were at opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of number of semesters and experience as intramural sports officials. The third participant was selected to give her the opportunity to expand on concepts that were being seen in the data but not complete from her interview. Specifically, the three participants were a sophomore, junior and graduate student, and respectively had three or more semesters, two semesters and three or more semesters experience as an intramural sports official. For specific demographic information on participants who were re-interviewed, please see Table 7 on the following page.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Number</th>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>U.S. Citizen or International Student</th>
<th>Played competitive sports</th>
<th># of semesters as an Intramural sports official (1, 2, 3 or more)</th>
<th>Refereed outside of Intramural sports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>White/ Caucasian</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Club Soccer 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Soccer (indoor and outdoor), indoor volleyball, softball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>White/ Caucasian</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 or more</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Softball, Indoor Soccer, Basketball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>White/ Caucasian</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 or more</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>23-25</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Flag Football and Volleyball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The researcher asked the following questions of Participants 2 and 9 during follow-up interviews:

- Why do you think there is not more discussion or verbal camaraderie between the female intramural sports officials either on the court/field or off?
- How has sports officiating helped or hurt your self-esteem?
- How do you internally overcome the societal stereotypes of females as sports officials while you are working?
- How often do you think about your gender playing a role in all you do as a student and at work?

In addition to the four questions above, Participant 6 was asked two additional questions:

- You mentioned in your interview that after the first couple of officials’ trainings for flag football, you almost didn’t come back. Why did you decide to return and try out officiating?
- How has being an on-campus student employee enabled you to become a better future faculty member?

Follow-up questions were created to explore connections between categories to further explain phenomena. Table 8 provides rationale for the formation of follow-up questions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Related Category</th>
<th>Underlying Question and Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think there is not more discussion or verbal camaraderie between female college student intramural sports officials either on the court/field or off?</td>
<td>• Relationships • Gender</td>
<td>Do there exist competition amongst female intramural sports officials? Intended to discover whether the innate environment of competition in sports makes it difficult for females to make valuable connections with other females.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How has sports officiating helped or hurt your self-esteem?</td>
<td>• Gender Roles • Self-esteem • Attitude</td>
<td>Participants feel good about themselves as women and officials? Designed to explore the idea the impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you internally overcome the societal stereotypes of females as sports officials while you are working?</td>
<td>• Gender Roles • Self-esteem • Goal orientation • Attitude</td>
<td>How does filtering societal messages really work? Designed to the unique experience of female college student intramural sports officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you think about gender playing a role in all you do as a student and at work?</td>
<td>• Gender Roles • Self-esteem • Attitude • Gender</td>
<td>Does the almost constant reminder that you are a female while officiating keep gender on your mind in regards to your success or attitude? Intended to discover the impact of gender on identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You mentioned in your interview that after the first couple of officials’ trainings for flag football, you almost didn’t come back. Why did you decide to return and try out officiating?*</td>
<td>• Relationships • Time/Location • Self-esteem • Athlete Identity</td>
<td>How did relationship with self or others impact persistence? Designed to further explore a concept of ineptness that only one participant verbalized but that was implied by others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How has being an on-campus student employee enabled you to become a better future faculty member?*</td>
<td>• Relationships • Campus Culture • Transferrable Skills</td>
<td>How do you view the relationship between faculty and students and the skills learned through work? Intended to explore the individual’s unique experience and interaction between maturity and career.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Denotes questions only asked to Participant 6 in follow-up interview
Selective Coding

To integrate the data and refine categories, the researcher used selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). Selective coding elaborates on the meanings of each category and the relationships between categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). Integration is the process of building theory and consists of the articulation of a central theme (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). The researcher designed a diagram to explain and summarize the theory which will be discussed and illustrated under Intersecting Identities (beginning on page 112).

Member Checking

The researcher conducted member checks to ensure that the researcher’s evaluation and analysis of the data was accurate and agreed with that of the participants. Member checks were carried out in two phases in this study. During the first phase, the researcher emailed participants a copy of their individual interview transcripts and a one-minute video clip. The video clip was a basketball officials’ training video created by the Georgia High School Association. Participants were asked to review the first minute only due to the presence of both female and male officials refereeing men’s and women’s games. After viewing the first minute of the video clip, participants were asked to answer the following questions:

- What were your thoughts on the officials during the first minute of the video clip?
- Did you notice the gender of the officials and players?
• Does watching this video change any of your answers to the interview questions? If so, which one(s) and how would your answer(s) change?

• How much do you think the campus culture has affected your experience as a female college student and as an intramural sports official?

See Table 9 for rationale on development of follow-up questions during phase one of member checking.

Table 9. Rationale for Development of Phase One follow-up questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rationale for development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What were your thoughts on the officials during the first minute of the video clip?</td>
<td>Designed to enhance answers given during initial interviews about whether or not they noticed the gender of officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you notice the gender of the officials and players?</td>
<td>The first minute of the video clip included females officiating only girls and males officiating both boys and girls. Intended to strengthen initial interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does watching this video change any of your answers to the interview questions? If so, which one(s) and how would your answer(s) change?</td>
<td>Designed to clarify and extract important ideas out of initial data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much do you think the campus culture has affected your experience as a female college student and as an intramural sports official?</td>
<td>Intended to increase data and support for an emerging theme and subcategory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were also asked to check their interview transcript for accuracy and invited to offer changes or additional comments (See Appendix C – Member Check: Phase One). During the second phase of member-checking, the researcher emailed participants a copy of themes, categories and subcategories, a copy of the diagram which
conceptualized the emergent theory with a brief summary of the diagram, and an invitation to critique the theory (See Appendix D – Member Check: Phase Two).

Nine participants responded to the first phase of member-checking. While those nine participants stood by their original answers, Participant 2 was the only one who offered changes and/or corrections to her initial interview transcription. Specifically, she added an answer that she was unable to give during the physical interview in regards to “relationships on campus”. She noted that the question related to another answer she gave on her negative views of male fraternity members and “being a female intramural sports official has negatively affected my ability/desire to create relationships on campus with fraternity members”.

Audit Trail

As previously mentioned, to complement data analysis, the researcher maintained field notes and memos throughout the study. This created an audit trail of emergent theory. The audit trail also increased the validity of this study by showing an account of the researcher’s observations and thought processes. By establishing an audit trail, the researcher was able to enhance raw data gathered from participants. As a result, the emergent theory includes elements of the audit trail throughout the final narrative. See Table 10 on the following page for examples of the audit trail utilized in this study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audit Trail</th>
<th>Interpretation and Expression of Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>From Field Notes</strong></td>
<td>• From Field Notes and Interviews, the researcher noticed indicators of general expectations of females in sport and other indicators of sexism that led to the category of “Gender Roles”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• From the view of participants, males don’t care how they are perceived or if they know the rules while females come out to prove they can do the job as good or better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Guys don’t expect females to have sports knowledge-females are the underdogs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From Interview Transcripts</strong></td>
<td>• The researcher noted the following in her memoing: “Study participants love it when they can surprise people with their knowledge, and, in essence, change people’s perceptions of females.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Cause I kind of think they rest or their laurels a little bit. I think that they maybe come into training, or they come into work, maybe with already a confidence of sport knowledge that they’ve watched it with their dad growing up—it’s just very much an identity thing as far as gender that males watch sports with their dads growing up, so I think they rest on their laurels that they’ve always seen sports on TV—mostly male-dominated sports on TV—and they’re kind of like, ‘Well, I’ve seen the rules for this long, I probably will make a good official, and I probably won’t make that many mistakes. I don’t have that much to learn.’”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “I think you have to prove yourself more at the beginning because a lot of times, you’re working with male officials, and the participants—their first instinct is to want to go talk to them if they have a question or trust them on a call, so you have to make sure you’re on point from the start so you can show them that you know what you’re doing and you can make the right calls…”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

The following section explains the portions of the grounded theory which answer the research question: What is the meaning of the relationship between identity development and sports officiating for female college student intramural sports officials in a higher education setting? This study explored the identity development of female college students through the experiences of intramural sports officiating in relation to work. The model includes four primary themes that emerged from the data: external influences, internal perceptions, intersecting identities, and student success. The next section explains the themes and the model that brings them together. Categories and subcategories comprise each of the themes. External influences include gender roles, relationships, and campus culture. The categories of self-esteem, goal orientation, attitude, and gender fall under internal perceptions. Intersecting identities includes athlete, female, college student, and intramural sports official. While student success became all-encompassing with categories of definition, transferrable skills, and future implications established to further clarify the connection of student success to the other three themes.

External Influences

The theme external influences emerged from the various external impact society’s views of traditional gender roles had on the participants’ experiences as intramural sports officials, their perceptions of self, and ways in which they respond to these social influences. The theme spans 3 categories: gender roles, relationships, and campus culture.
Participants were very descriptive on their experiences of negative and positive societal views, which elicited much interaction and interrelation between the three categories. Female college student intramural sports officials process external influences continually throughout the creation of self-identity. Figure 1 presents a visual breakdown of concepts within external influences.

*Figure 1. External Influences: Subcategorical Breakdown.*
Gender Roles

Gender roles denote the idea and impact of society’s traditional views of women, not only in sport, but in general. Specifically, two subcategories emerged from gender roles: general expectations and sexism. Concepts within each subcategory are discussed further in the narrative.

**General Expectations.** The researcher found an increased emphasis on society’s traditional views of women within the world of intramural sports officiating. *General expectations* of female college student intramural sports officials were submissiveness and lack of knowledge in sports. These distinctive traits in relation to others became a common theme through specific examples. Participants noted examples of frequent discrimination from intramural participants based solely on gender, and most possibly, because of their own views of women in sport, if not in life. The idea that men were viewed as more credible from the onset led participants to articulate that, while there have been advances, society is still stuck in traditional gender roles. Participant 1, a senior and veteran intramural sports official, noted:

“I don’t know that they’re better officials. I think they’re viewed with more credibility because of the gender roles in our society. I don’t feel like gender roles are completely gone, and like how I said, you take notice when a woman is out there officiating because it’s not expected. I think we’re still a little – women don’t reign over what’s going on, so I think that’s one reason why men are seen as better.”

Participant 4, a junior and veteran intramural sports official, noted the same frustrations with being seen as not knowing the same as the men:
Participant 4 also compared societal views in officiating to stereotypes of women in general. She stated, “People’s stereotypes. People would view – if you – a construction worker as a male – just the stereotype of a nurse is a female…” Negative expectations of females as sports officials resonated throughout the data as participants expressed feelings of dealing with negativity from day one officiating and continuing through every shift. Participant 6 noted:

“Oh yeah. The second you walk out there, you’re already – they’re already – first of all, if you walk out there as an official, they’re already against you anyway, but as a female, they just perceive you to not have the knowledge base because flag football – or the majority of professional sports you see on TV are male-dominated, so there’s already that perception you don’t know as much.”

Coupled with negative perceptions of women in society, participants offered information that they held similar views of women in society. Participant 8, a junior and veteran intramural sports official, stated this clearly when asked if she were thinking about gender stereotypes, “because its kind of what you’ve also been taught your whole life, ‘You’re only going to go this far, but a man will go this far.’” Participant 2, a sophomore and veteran intramural sports official, went on to say:

“I have the same stereotypical view as everybody that women are kind of inferior in the sports world, so I guess I kind of see them that way – not as good as men.”

Even with experience and supervising other officials, participants still view women negatively. Participant 1 went on further to say:
“When you’re making a schedule and you, ‘Oh, that’s a girl,’ you’re like, ‘Oh, maybe we won’t put her on the fraternity men’s A game,’ but you would put a guy there without even thinking about it.”

The current Director of Intramural Sports, a male, made statements in regards to how females may think the job of intramural sports officiating is a risk and implied it could be because of their own views of how gender is perceived:

“I would say right of the bat, in my opinion, when you think of – you know the type of person that would apply for this sort of job, I think the majority of people consider that a male sort of role, so I think from their perspective, probably, coming in, it’s a little bit more of a risk for them – especially if it’s something they’ve never done before.”

He went on to explain further, “The female would feel a little bit intimidated – maybe a little less likely to be assertive. Maybe if they are assertive, having issues of how they come off to people as a woman.”

A few participants discussed the impact of gender roles motivating them go out to prove women could do the job of intramural sports officiating just as well as men and change other’s perceptions of women. While only two participants explicitly expressed that they felt they could change stereotypes, the idea of persistence presented itself multiple times across all participants. All of the participants felt they were good at the jobs because they worked hard at it and that the idea of getting noticed as a female when officiating could be an advantage and disadvantage. Participant 5 stated:

“I guess you come in – guys don’t expect girls to know all about sports, so you come in, and you automatically feel like the underdog, I don’t know. That’s just the automatic feeling that you have to prove yourself in some way”

Participant 4 noted:

“I’d probably say the stereotype is there, like, ‘What is she doing out there?’ But I feel like after they know you, I feel like that stereotype kind of goes away because
I even get some people asking, ‘Are you officiating my game? Please say you’re officiating my game’ versus people that know me, I feel like the stereotype can be broken. Initially, yes, but I feel like there’s a way to overcome it in a way, if you feel like you can, you do.”

Participant 6 went on to say:

“Absolutely—in both good ways and bad ways. I think positively, sometimes I think you—as a female—maybe a male’s perception will be that you won’t be very good, but you have the ability to—right away in the game—kind of show how authoritative you are, so I tend to think that you might hold more authority over them rather than a male sometimes. So I think that you are beneficial in that way. Now that’s dependent on how your carry yourself. If you’re out there and you’re very stoic and quiet, then you’re not going to have as much credibility to your male athletes, but as a female—a confident female—you have the ability to gain that respect—even more so, I think, than a male. I guess positively, you already have their perceptions against you from the start—especially in a male-dominated sport. Maybe not so much with volleyball, but in a male-dominated sport, they’re already going to have a perception that you don’t know as much as they know. So it’s up to you to prove to them right away that you do; whereas, I don’t think a male official necessarily has to prove that right off the bat.”

These statements by participants put a positive spin on otherwise negative ideas and showed how female college student intramural sports officials begin to navigate through external influences toward establishing identity.

**Sexism.** The researcher noted some of the most negative experiences described by participants included blatant sexist remarks or comments directed to distinguish them within the sole identity of female. In memoing, the researcher noticed that participants felt as though males wanted to make sure they continued to be seen as a female and not necessarily an authority figure as an official. Participants seemed to cope with these experiences with a very matter of fact attitude and did not express difficulty in dealing with the negativity. This level of maturity and acceptance remained present throughout the interviews regardless of academic class, age, or length of experience in intramural
sports officiating. Participants gave the impression that it was expected for them to deal with sexism with no emotion.

When asked if she had an experience in officiating in which her gender played a role, Participant 1 said, “Oh, I had a guy tell me I should get off the field because I was a girl.” When prompted, she went on to say how she felt about the comment, “Pissed off…I wanted to punch him in the face, but you can’t do that.” Participant 2 “had a whole team just attack me. People coming from every direction because of a call they didn’t agree with.” Participant 10 stated, “I had a few calls, and then I know the guy’s looking at me funny, and then one time a guy called me a ‘dumb bitch’. I didn’t think he’d say that to a boy.” Participant 7 expressed a similar experience, “Yeah, I’ve gotten called ‘bitch’ a couple of times.” Participants went on further to explain other occurrences of sexism through sexual innuendos made by intramural participants while they were refereeing.

Participant 4 noted,

“One that I really – sticks out to me – sexual comments. Just flirting in a way that you wouldn’t flirt with a male. Sexual comments, I guess, would be the best way – sexual innuendo kind of things. They’re a lot more touchy, if that makes sense, during a captain’s meeting – yes, you shake hands, but then they’ll put their hand on your back, but they won’t put their hand on anybody else’s back. I don’t know. I’ve had that happen to me and that’s bothered me some. They do it to anybody else, but they’ll come and touch you and say, ‘Thanks, good job,’ and everybody else they’re shaking their hand.”

Participant 5 offered:

“You’ll just get comments here and there on the way you look. I mean, it just depends, but – sometimes I’ll get asked if I’m officiating this next game, and there was one instance where one of the guys was like, ‘Oh good, you’d distract me.’ Just stuff like that. And the other females that I’ve talked to get the same thing, so – “

Participant 7 went on further:
“A lot of times when I was reffing softball when I would be on third base, I’d have a lot of problems with the guys just trying to talk to me the entire time instead of just letting me pay attention, they would be like, ‘Oh, don’t worry girl, I’ll protect you if the ball comes your way’, and I’m like, ‘Yeah, cause I can’t move?’ I don’t know what they’re trying to think.”

While general expectations of females and sexism played an everyday role in the experiences of female college student intramural sports officials, the navigation of societal views had a positive, although clear-cut, spin by participants focusing on confidence and abilities to “roll with the punches”. When asked if comments from male intramural participants turned her off to sports officiating, Participant 10, a junior and first semester intramural sports official, stated, “I mean, it could, but I have thick skin.”

Participant 7 also noted enjoyment in proving herself:

“I think – I mean, you can surprise people – they don’t expect you to be good, so it’s just like when you come out and you know more than them, it’s an enjoyable fact for me when I can tell them the rules and they don’t know what they’re talking about, so —“

Participant 6 perhaps said it best:

“I just think it’s important to note that while females do experience struggles, and there’s always going to be those comments that are made by men—either in a positive light or a negative light—I think people need to understand that this is a really great job for most people, and that it is not for the faint of heart by any means. If you’re easily offended by things, or if you hear a male make a comment about you being a female official or you don’t know things, and you really take that in, it’ll beat you down, and it’ll take you out of the environment for sure. So, you have to have that thick skin and that confidence in order to do it and that will to make your female counterpart proud, to do something for your own gender.”

Participant 9 described her ability to take it all in stride due to her personality:

“I’d say I’m pretty independent and definitely athletic—not so much confident, but maybe headstrong, I can roll with punches. I’m pretty laid back in that if something bad happens, I’m like, ‘Well, can’t change that. Moving on.’ ”
Summary of Gender Roles

The idea of gender expectations and sexism was seen throughout the data. The category of gender roles explained factors that came from external scrutiny of women in traditional roles and influenced participants’ navigation through identity development. Moreover, the researcher found that the female college student intramural sports officials’ navigation through these subcategories effected relationships on many levels both negatively and positively. Participants’ descriptions and reactions proved the presence of negative stereotypes of women often influenced their decisions and reactions but not necessarily in a destructive way.

Relationships

The researcher found gender roles to be directly and indirectly related with relationships created and maintained while being involved with intramural sports officiating. Participants described how intramural sports officiating effected or was affected by various relationships in their lives. These impacts reflected their initial interest and experiences in sports officiating, different interactions with the campus community, and their experiences in academics. The influence of relationships on female college student intramural sports officials created another avenue of navigation through and around external influences.

Peer. The researcher found several types, both positive and negative, of peer relationships female college student intramural sports officials developed through academics, social interaction, and/or work. While some participants noted improvement
in relationships or newfound ability to not judge others as quickly, others noted difficulty relating to intramural sports participants due to interactions while officiating. Very often, academic class and/or age, as well as length of time officiating, played a factor in reaction from participants to certain situations. Participants also described the frustration of feeling like other college students, including their friends, truly do not know what they do at work. Participant 1 noted,

“Well, I – yeah, I remember the first time I ever had to give someone a card as an official, and I saw the kid in class the next day, and he saw me, and it was kind of like, ‘Oh, you’re in class with me. I have to see you on a regular basis.’ And I had never noticed that he was in my class before until after I had given him a card, and from that point on, it was kind of like – when he saw me out here, he acted a lot differently. I feel like you don’t realize you’re in class with these people, and like these are your peers because it’s not, it’s not like that when you’re officiating. You have to convey respect for someone, and I think that definitely – just as a student, it made me aware that these people are different on the field than they are in class, so –“

Participant 2, in her response to the first member check, elaborated further in the opposite direction of Participant 1, speaking of a specific group of students that officiating affected her perception of:

“The question in the interview about how being a female intramural sports official affected your ability to successfully create relationships on campus......I think this takes me back to what I was saying about the fraternity guys. Intramural sports can bring out the worst in some people. Most of the time, the people it brings the worst out in are fraternity members. This has forever changed my opinion and view on these guys. Not to say I had a ton of respect for them before officiating, but the level of respect I have for them now has dropped tremendously. With that said, being a female intramural sports official has negatively affected my ability/desire to create relationships on campus with fraternity members.”

Participant 4 explained the phenomena of officiating your peers further:

“It’s crazy how many people I actually recognize as, ‘You play for that team. I know you, and I see you every week at the same time,’ and people that I would
never even know just because you pass them at the same time, you pass them in Fike; they’re the ones working out too, so you see them in the gym, and then you see them in class, and you recognize – and then they’ll ask you a question about intramurals, like ‘Do you think,’ ‘Who won last night’s game?’ in their division, and it just brings out a lot more conversations, and I feel like I’m a part of something versus not have a crowd, per se, to be in."

Those other participants who were considered veteran intramural sports officials also articulated similar observations in becoming part of a group. Participant 6 noted:

“I always had better relationships with men than I did with women just as far as I was always really athletic, and I would rather play with a ball than a Barbie, so I always felt kind of in the middle of “Do I go do a sorority and hang out with girls all the time, or is there another route that I can take,” and so whenever I came to Clemson, I developed a family within intramurals, so I didn’t feel like I needed to be a part of a sorority or any other type of group, I felt like I had a group here.”

While the part of being a group was important to participants, the researcher found that it was obvious relationships were not as strong between female college student intramural sports officials as they would like to believe. One participant even mentioned that the inherent competitiveness of sport seemed to hinder not only the development of relationships between females, but also males. Even as one participant described female college student intramural sports officials as “tending to congregate and stick together”, other participants expressed an unspoken, nonphysical bond with their female counterparts out on the field. In memoing, the researcher also observed that participants discussed getting more verbal support from male co-workers than from female co-workers, and they didn’t seem to think it was a big deal that relationships weren’t being established with other female intramural sports officials. Participant 3 described, “From the guys, ‘Good job on this call,’ or Good job, the females wouldn’t say that.” Participant 2 noted:
“We never sit there and discuss it, but I think we all are coming from the same position. I think that we start kind of at a different level than maybe men do, so we have to – instead of having respect when we step out there, we have to actually gain it.”

Participant 3 described it this way,

“All of the more experienced females, I look towards them for guidance, that they know what they’re doing, but some of them that are on the same level as me, I guess I’m like, “Maybe they don’t know as much.” Maybe that’s contradicting, but I look at them as—some guys look at me like maybe other females don’t know as much or they haven’t played the game before, so…

Expressions of regret in not establishing closer relationship from an obvious potential support group showed up as well, but the researcher noted, only by one, older, more veteran participant. When asked if she felt like she received support from her female co-workers. Participant 6 expressed:

“Some, but I really think that there could be a lot more. Right now, I think—I mean, I have good working relationships with my female counterparts, but I really think that sometimes we need to design messages towards each other. There’s times when I see a female official coming out in super-short shorts, she’s got her jewelry on, and she just—I think that that visual perception doesn’t help her at all, and for the same reason I don’t think a male should go out there with giant discs in his ears or something like that—I just think that sometimes, you need to look the part first before you can embody the part, and I find myself not helping somebody or not saying something. Sometimes, you see a female official trying to communicate with a male athlete, and I feel that maybe they’re struggling with that, and I wish that I—there are times I should have reached out more often, and I don’t see female officials interacting with each other near as much as I think that they should.”

The researcher delved further into this topic through follow-up interviews to get a clearer understanding of why female college student intramural sports officials avoid establishing a support group amongst each other when navigating external influences that everyone is facing. Participant 2 explained:
“To me, discussing our support for each other is kind of an awkward thing to talk about. I'm not really sure how that would come up in conversation or how to bring that up in conversation. I think its best just to leave it at an unspoken bond.”

Furthemerore, Participant 6 discussed the lack of relationships amongst female college student intramural sports officials this way:

“I have always wondered why this is, and been hard on myself for not creating a better camaraderie between us. When I’m on the field, I need to take on a neutral identity. I don’t like admitting this, but you need to become “less female”. So if we were to just associate with one another, we would suddenly become a girl’s group and further distance ourselves from the male group in which we are trying to fit in with, or prove ourselves to.”

The researcher noted that participants assumed that a relationship was automatically there with other female college student intramural sports officials even though tangible statements confirming that idea were not present in the data.

However, concrete examples of support from friends were presented in the data. Participants expressed full support from their friends in and outside of intramural sports. While the researcher initially noted that some comments from friends seemed negative, participants explained their friends teased them “all in good fun”. Participant 11, a freshman and first semester intramural sports official, said:

“My friends like laughed at me at first, cause my best friend plays basketball here, for Clemson’s team, so she was like, ‘Oh my god, I have gotta come watch this,’ she was, like, freaking out, so they came to like two of my games and made fun of me and stuff, but just as jokingly, it was funny.”

Participant 10, another first semester intramural sports official, went on further:

“Well, they just didn’t expect it – I know a few of them play intramural sports, and they just didn’t think that I was going to be the referee, and they’re like, ‘Oh, we’re going to take a picture of you in your stripes,’ and I was like, ‘I don’t care.’ And some of them would work out and run around the track that’s upstairs, and
they would laugh at me and stuff, and I didn’t care. They just thought it was funny that I was refereeing. Just because it’s something they would never expect me to do. All my friends, we were athletic in high school, but they just – I don’t know how to explain it. They just thought it was really different.”

This response definitely resonated throughout the interviews with less experienced officials, as the older, more experienced officials expressed support from friends as more of a “go get ‘em” approach. Participant 4, a veteran intramural sports official, described one friend who asks about her job and provides support:

“She asks about it the most. ‘You had to deal with that? You actually told them’ – she can’t believe the conflicts that go on. I’ll come home explaining a conflict that happened, ‘You threw somebody out of the game?’ She just can’t believe that I was able – not that I was able, but it actually happened and I was there.”

Participant 6 noted another specific supportive friend:

“My friend Salianna—she always likes to come out and see me officiate because, you know, I think I—maybe I change personalities when I get out on the field—that I’m more authoritative, and I kind of mean business when I get out there, and she just sees me on the weekends, and we just have fun and crack up and all that kind of stuff, so she likes to get out there and see me kind of bossing guys around is what she says, so.”

Most participants also described responses from friends, as well as peers in general, as lacking in understanding of what they do as an intramural sports officials.

Participant 1 noted:

“Yeah, most of my friends don’t work here. In nursing, girls like – it’s completely different. They’re mostly participants. I think they – most of them know. Most of them – I see them out here. I see classmates, so most of them know I work here, but I don’t – I feel like when you tell someone you work for intramurals, they’re like, ‘Oh.’ They don’t think of people working at intramurals.”

Participant 7 reflected on some friends trying to get her to do things from them because they don’t understand her role, “Sometimes the friends try to – want to get away with stuff just because they think since I’m part of intramurals, I can just get them…”
Participant 8 went on further to explain others being clueless about intramural sports officiating, but not necessarily negative:

“I mean, my family and friends are supportive and stuff. They’re just like—even if they don’t do it, and they don’t officiate, or even if they didn’t play sports, they just know that’s me, so they’re perfectly ok with it. People who I don’t know, I don’t know. I guess they—I don’t know. I’ve had people who are like—they don’t know anything about sports. They’ll be like, “Oh, that’s so cool, you officiate. You know all the stuff. You’re really good.” They have no idea. They don’t know what they’re talking about. They don’t know what’s good or what’s bad, really. But I mean, just positive things, and then there’s negative things, I guess, but I don’t—“

**Family.** Participants expressed relationships with family members, most specifically parents, as one of the most positive external influences for female college student intramural sports officials. With two participants, parents, particularly their mothers, were the ones who encouraged them to try out intramural sports officiating. The researcher noted that, interestingly, the mothers of these participants had never done anything like sports officiating nor had they ever been really involved in sports as an athlete. Participant 1 talked about her mother’s involvement in her interest in intramural sports officiating, “My mom’s actually the one that got me to officiate in high school. She’s like, ‘I think you’d be really good at this. Here’s all these dates, I heard someone talking about it, so…’” When asked if her mom had ever officiated before, Participant 1 responded, “No! My mom was not into sports at all. She loves watching all of her kids do sports and she’s super supportive of it. She’s not athletic. She’s not into sports.” While involved mothers were not former athletes or had any interest in sports officiating, one participant noted her father’s role as a college baseball official as encouragement to try it out for herself:
“Well my Dad – he was my coach in high school, and he officiates college athletics on the side, so…He has his baseball officiating gear, and ever since I was small, we would play with it and stuff like that.”

Support and encouragement from family reverberated throughout the interviews and became a positive piece of participants’ abilities to filter through other societal messages. Participants continuously affirmed that, while family members may have been surprised at their enjoyment or success on the court or field, they remained positively committed to their high level of support. Participant 6 stated:

“They love it. They were surprised at first that I did flag football. I think they assumed—because I told them that it was both volleyball that season and flag football, and I think—well, I assumed I’d probably be doing more volleyball, but—and I think they assumed it, so when I told them that my supervisors or whoever wanted me to stay with flag football and not go in to do volleyball as much, I should say, I think they were surprised because they just didn’t expect—and then when I went to the state tournament, they were shocked that I went. They were like, “Now, wait a second. Are these good teams? Are these big guys out there playing?” I’m like “Yeah. It’s not tackle,” but they were just shocked that I was doing it.”

Participant 2 expressed feelings of pride and support coming from her family:

“Oh absolutely. They absolutely do because they know I love it. They tell me they’re proud of me for doing something I love, and then also being a student and proud because I’m a student and I have a job at the same time. Yeah, they just love that I’m doing what I love, and I’m kind of good at it, so—I’m trying to be modest here, but—“

Participant 3 goes on to describe her father wanting her to be open to new ideas through sports officiating:

“They think—like at first, when I told them, they was like, “Oh, this should be a good job for you. You love the game of basketball. It should be fun.” And my Dad was saying, “Now you know how it feels when the ref make a call that you don’t agree with. You know how they feel in their shoes.” But they support me.”
Faculty and Staff. While the researcher observed multiple levels of support from family members and friends, from participants perceptions, faculty seemed to not have any knowledge what students did outside of the classroom nor did they encourage or question students about non-academic activities. The researcher noted that even as lower classmen did not expect to have strong relationships with faculty they felt faculty members should be aware of students’ activities outside of class. This idea coincides with research findings including student-faculty interaction as one of five benchmarks of effective educational practicies (Wolf-Wendel et al, 2009).

When asked about needs of faculty knowing about students outside activities, Participant 11, an freshman undeclared major, stated, “Yeah, I think so, they would get a better understanding of when they assign so much work why I can’t get it done.” Participant 2, a sophomore engineering major, noted, “I don’t think so because I don’t think they care. I’ve never thought about it. I feel like if I told them, they’d just be like, ‘Oh cool,’ and that’d be it.” Upper classmen had stronger relationships with faculty members however; there still was a sense of frustration from participants and the lack of understanding in relationships presented itself again. Participant 1 described a conversation and expressed visible frustration in class with a professor:

“They don’t really talk about it. It’s kind of weird because they try and schedule things, and the people I know, there’s only like a quarter of my class that works—like 10 of us out of 40 something because my teacher was like, “Oh, well we can do it this afternoon from 1-5,” I was like, “Well I work at night. That knocks me out of my job if we do it then.” They were like, “Oh, I didn’t realize that you guys work.” I have things going on outside of the homework that you give me, so, I don’t think they realize that.”
One participant, when asked if faculty initiated conversations regarding nonacademic activities, noted that graduate assistant teachers seemed to have more insight into participants’ lives than faculty members:

“No. The grad teachers that I’ve had, they probably know—I had two teachers that were grad students, and I reffed one of her games, and she knows, and another one will be like, “What are you doing over Spring Break? What are you doing outside of class?” And my ROTC instructors, they know what I do outside the academics, but as far as all the others, no.”

Participants articulated the value faculty members caring about or just having some knowledge about their activities outside of the classroom. Participant 4 described one experience with a faculty member who knew she worked outside of being a college student:

“I think they hold it very highly that I’m actually working and doing something while I’m in school. I know I’ve had to talk to one teacher about moving a test and stuff, and I’m just trying to explain to her, “Hey, I’m outside working. I’m doing this. I work in the office,” and she’s much more—she was susceptible to moving my test, so I got that in one conversation with her about why I was unprepared and everything. She knew I was trying to study too, so she knew I was doing the best I could with what I had, and so she respected that I was still trying to balance that.”

Participant 5 went on to explain her experiences with her teachers in the education department:

“I think so. I’m only a sophomore, so I haven’t quite gotten the opportunity to start building relationships with all of my professors, but the ones I have, I think—like one that knows us well enough to know what we do outside of class. This professor is not super involved in sports, so I don’t know if she knows what it includes, but I would say that my professors don’t discourage working outside of class by any means. I’m sure they would say that it helps you balance, and it’s a necessity for a lot of students.”

Participant 8 observed the need for better faculty support to increase students’ chances of being successful:
“Yeah. I like to have close relationships with teachers or coworkers or bosses and stuff. I don’t know—I came from—in high school and stuff, everybody knew everybody, but it wasn’t an obnoxious thing or anything like that. We just enjoyed—we knew everything about each other type thing—were close. I don’t know, I guess you just feel more support that way. I know it’s more difficult in college to have that because there’s so many more kids, but I guess just having that support system is an added way to be more successful.”

While not delved into too deeply due to the researcher’s inherent bias’, the presence of staff’s relationship with participants did exhibit itself through the interview with the current Director of Intramural Sports and one follow-up interview. The current Director of Intramural Sports expressed his feelings on having a former female Director of Intramural Sports, who is also a sports official, supervising the participants:

“I think that probably helps them—having someone to relate to—especially someone in that director’s role that is active as an official, that sort of thing—whether you want to count that as a role model or someone, like I said, someone to relate to. I think there are probably certain conversations and things like that that can be had that would be much different from a female director than there would be from a male. Yeah, I could see that. I don’t think it necessarily hurts them without a female director, but I think it could only help.”

He went on to explain his ideas on the importance of establishing relationships with female college student intramural sports officials and if working for a female changed those perceptions:

“I feel like—a little bit of my philosophy, if you want to call it that, is to make sure that you have females around. I think it’s easy—especially when you look at applicant pools, people that are coming out for—whether it’s officials or supervisors, it seems to be more male-dominated, but I think it’s definitely important to keep the females around to make sure that they’re getting what they need—that sort of thing—to make sure they’re happy with their job and everything, so I know that—and the grad assistant search, in my mind, one of the first things I thought that would kind of counter myself as a male, would be having a female grad assistant to—whether that’s to better reach out to our female employees or to just offer a different point of view than my own. I think that it was pretty obvious in my two years as a grad assistant here with a female director that there is a difference in just overall perspective at times, so I think that only
Participant 6, in her follow-up interview, also described how her perceptions of a female Director of Intramural Sports were a major factor to push forward and continue officiating:

“...I felt intimidated both by the fact that I was outnumbered as one of the few females there, and because I realized how little I knew about football rules. To be honest, a major factor in why I came back is because our director was a female and I felt like if she could do it, I could do it. And, again, because I didn’t want to give up for the above two reasons.”

The researcher noted that this presence of strong relationships with or perceptions of female staff members provided an obvious connection to identity development. By providing a strong female role model, the researcher gave participants another connection to strength through sport. In peer review, the researcher observed that participants may not have been comfortable mentioning this to a male researcher, or to a researcher that had no connection to them. This concept also strengthens the finding that participants’ personal views of women as sports officials encourages them to move quickly past negative stereotypes of women.

**Summary of Relationships**

The concept of external influences affecting relationships is not new, however, it is different for every subculture. In the world of intramural sports officiating, a phenomena exists of refereeing your peers, other college students similar to you in age, class, and social status. Not only does this unique environment affect how female college student intramural sports officials establish relationships within family and the campus...
community, but the inherent competitive nature of sport affects how they view self-identity in relation to others. Female college student intramural sports officials rely more on positive support from family and staff members to enable them to move past negative perceptions of others. Perceptions of participants that faculty does not care what they do outside of the classroom inhibits relationship development that could lead to further academic success while relationships with staff members may be able to combat that idea.

Campus Culture

The final category under external influences is campus culture. Unlike gender roles and relationships, campus culture did not strongly influence identity development. However, participants demonstrated how certain aspects of campus culture affected interest in intramural sports officiating and openness to non-academic ventures. The next section discusses these facets of the institutional environment and links them to the overall grounded theory explaining the relationships between identity development and intramural sports officiating.

“Jock School”. The research site’s reputation as a “jock school” provides an athletic environment that encourages participation for all through athletic endeavors. Specifically, participants acknowledged the research site’s athletic culture as an aspect of campus culture that created a path for involvement in intramural sports officiating. Participant 5 noted the athletic culture as surpassing even her gender:

“In my tour as a prospective student, the student guide called Clemson a "jock school." I think that is mostly true; Clemson's campus full of very athletic
students - there is always lots of activity around Fike, the lake, and Bowman field. I think the fact that a lot of students are involved in intramurals encouraged me to also become involved, even as a female. It is harder to get an all girls team together for intramural sports than it is to play co-rec though.”

Participant 1 explained the environment and it’s effect on her experience, “I believe that knowing how much the participants love intramurals influenced me to be the best official I could because I want people to enjoy what they play.”

Opportunity. Campus culture also provided an avenue of opportunity for female college student intramural sports officials. Opportunity included not only growth as a person, as an official, and as a student but also opportunity for recognition outside of academics and create new relationships. Participant 6 noted the ability to represent and be proud of her university:

“A college campus opens so many windows of opportunity to show initiative even beyond the walls of Clemson. Intramurals gave me that opportunity to represent Clemson's program at other schools and also I felt like I was representing all women in a position typically dominated by men. I got a chance to show my strengths and excel, and it is because of officiating I was able to do that.”

Participant 3 described the opportunities gained due to campus culture:

“With Clemson having such a large population, I don't get to know everyone on campus, but while officiating, I met lots of new people and gained new friends. The campus culture hasn't really affected my experience as a female student. As an intramural sports official, I see more familiar faces. On campus I see lots of guys and those same guys play intramural sports.”

Participant 2 focused on the opportunity for growth indirectly related to campus culture:

“I'm not so sure campus culture has affected me as a female college student or a female intramural official. I think being an intramural employee is what has affected me the most. It has allowed me to have an enormous amount of personal growth over the past two years.”
**Diversity.** With opportunity, the campus culture provided another conduit for participants to experience diversity. Participants discussed how the research site’s campus culture affected their experiences with others who are different in both positive and negative ways. Participant 6 noted:

“The campus culture encourages mixed gendered company, and I think that has greatly affected my experience as a intramural sports official. Although there are always hurdles to overcome being a female, I always feel empowered on a college campus to express equality and break down gendered barriers.” Participant 1 described the link between diversity, sports officiating and campus culture:

“When you come out here, you work with all different personalities. You work all different—with people that care, people that don’t care, and I would say that’s made a huge difference in school.”

**Summary of Campus Culture**

The researcher noted through memoing that working for intramurals tends to give female college student intramural sports officials an identity through work that is not necessarily negative. Participants views of campus culture were encouraging and aided them in moving through negative perceptions quickly. Because the campus culture encourages participation amongst mixed company, negative comments from intramural sports participants seemed to be associated more with traditional views of women in sport not the campus culture.
**Summary of External Influences**

External influences explained the effect social construction has on gender roles, relationships, time and location, and campus culture within the environment of intramural sports officiating and higher education. With men being viewed as more credible in the sports officiating realm, participants described an increased pressure to prove themselves as just as good if not better than their male counterparts. While the athletic environment of intramural sports and the institution encourages participation from all, participants seem to have difficulty relating to some students. Negative or sexist remarks directed toward female college student intramural sports officials from intramural participants hinder the ability for study participants to establish relationships with their peers on the court or field. Female college student intramural sports officials are receiving great support from family and friends, but intramural participants and faculty remain oblivious to what female college student intramural sports officials do on the court or field and outside of the classroom. Participants noted that the time spent officiating has affected the way they perceive others and possibly how they are perceived as females.

**INTERNAL PERCEPTIONS**

The theme Internal Perceptions involved individual characteristics or internal dialogues that provided meaning to the relationship between identity development and intramural sports officiating. There were four categories within this theme: self-esteem,
goal orientation, attitude, and gender. The interaction between these categories became central to participants’ self-identity and views of external influences. This relationship is noted and important to the entire approach to the development of the grounded theory for this study. Figure 2 presents a visual diagram of the concepts within internal perceptions.

*Figure 2. Internal Perceptions: Subcategorical Breakdown.*

**Self-Esteem**

Participants each provided ways in which self-esteem affected their experiences as female college student intramural sports officials. Many of the participants noted an
increased positive image of themselves through development of skills they didn’t perceive that they had previously. The fluidity of self-esteem became apparent through initial discussion with participants and follow-up interviews. Three subcategories emerged: confidence, filtering, and awareness.

**Confidence.** The researcher found that confidence levels hindered or helped participants navigate identity development perhaps more than any other factor. The significance of level of confidence resonated throughout determinations of success in every identity participants personified. In memoing, the researcher noted that intramural sports officiating gave most of the participants courage to speak up and stand up for themselves that they may not have gained elsewhere. Participant 1 explained the factors she thought most affected her ability to succeed as an intramural sports official:

“Confidence in yourself; assertiveness to correct something if you see it, and to notice that it needs to be fixed; general knowledge of what you’re doing—you can’t go out there and do something that you have no clue what it is.”

She further explains factors that have affected her development as a female and college student:

“I think I’m pretty—I feel like all of those make a solid person—not just a solid ref. It creates a strong person as well. Someone who is not confident in themselves is going to have difficulty developing as far as they can whether it’s in college or career or something; they have to take a stand for what they know is right. And the assertiveness to push further and take it as far as you can and not just be complacent, and I think that definitely has—all of those, going along with the college and female thing, those will develop you if you keep working with them.”

Participant 4 expresses how confidence has affected her ability to be successful presently and in the future:
“Just being confident—confidence in yourself to make decisions. Everything happens so fast and just to be able to make a decision and stand by it…Confidence just being the biggest thing—just being out there and being able to know that I can do this and not having any doubt.”

Participants also denoted how confidence levels affected their filtering through their own perceptions of gender in the world of intramural sports officials. Participant 6 noted that at first, she felt she had to be stricter than her male counterparts, but those feelings changed her internal perceptions of self:

“At first, yeah. I think when I first started officiating I felt like I had to be more strict in order to show that I had the skill set, but once I felt more confident in my skill set, in my knowledge, then I didn’t feel like I really had to act much different than my male counterparts because if someone did question me or was on the field seeming to be harder on me than others, then I can explain myself better, or I don’t have to explain myself because I already know, but I think at the beginning, yes, I felt like I had to prove myself more than I have to now.”

Participant 8 describes her internal dialogue in regards to confidence:

“It probably is a—I’m trying to think for other people too, but—cause I mean, I know when I started out, I was nervous like, “I want to make the right call. I don’t want people to get mad at me,” and stuff like that, and in my mind I’m like, “They see this girl out here…” I’m already thinking that in my head, first of all, so that’s just—wrapping your mind around that and remaining confident, I guess, in yourself is something…”

The researcher noted a different view of confidence when participants discussed their perceptions of female sports officials outside of intramurals. When asked if they notice female officials while watching sports on television, when they were playing or in person at a sporting event, participants, most participants expressed admiration for those females levels of confidence. Participant 4 described these feelings:

“To me, it means that is a very confident woman—for her to be out there, she obviously made it to that level, so to me, it puts her above—that’s a strong female that’s out there supporting her—a strong female, I guess, I would say. I don’t know how else to describe her.”
Participants also articulated that they pay attention more to female officials to see how they act and take more interest in their characteristics than male officials. Participant 1 explained:

“I definitely take notice of them because they stand out apart from men—when you see a crew on the court or on the field, you think, “oh, they have a girl!” And then, I don’t know—I think I tend to watch them more to see how they act on the court or on the field just to—I take more interest in watching them than I do a guy because it’s not as often that you see it.”

The researcher found that participants who paid closer attention to female officials outside of intramural sports officiating were able to better articulate their own levels of confidence and how it affected their identity.

**Filtering.** Filter theory discusses the idea that humans make some choices through a series of selection filters; the more important, the more effort and filtration (Changingminds.org, retrieved October 8, 2012). The impact of filtering became apparent to the researcher early on in the study when participants began to recount their experiences with sexist or discriminatory remarks or behavior from intramural sports participants. Confidence levels also greatly affected filtering due to the immediate reaction needed from participants while officiating. Participants expressed how filtering messages while officiating helped and hurt their self-esteem and led them to further develop themselves. Participant 2 described how intramural sports officiating and filtering of societal messages worked together to hurt and help her self-esteem:

“Sports officiating has hurt my self-esteem at times when I was constantly yelled at during a game. It has helped when I know I’ve done a great job or somebody tells me they recognize me doing well. I think the two have balanced each other out.”
Participant 1 discussed her own feelings of males’ views of her and how she filtered them out and relied on her own confidence:

“If there’s a sport I haven’t played and I go out to officiate, I feel like I learn at the same pace of anyone else who hasn’t played and hasn’t officiated—male or female. I feel equal in knowledge and capabilities as the males—whether or not they view me as equal, that’s a different story. I feel equal in my capability and knowledge.”

Participant 10 added how her perceptions of male officials changed through experience working with them and gave her a new level of confidence:

“I know—I guess the guys come in to sports officiating—like I told—the very first game I officiated, I told the guy, “Oh, I’m really nervous,” and I noticed the guys going in, they weren’t nervous at all, but the girls were, but then often, we were more educated about the rules than they were, but they just think—they go in with that macho, “Oh, I’m a guy. I know this. I’ve watched sports my whole life,” but really you can watch them, but you don’t know them. And then guys—when I’ve told them I played basketball since I was in 6th grade, I was all-conference—I was really good in high school, they’re just like, “Wait. Really?” They just didn’t expect me to be that educated about the rules.”

Participants also conveyed where gender is filtered through their internal dialogue. Participant 8 talked about wondering how intramural sports officiating affects other’s views of her femininity:

“Yeah, I would say—because girls aren’t supposed to like sports, or—so first of all, watching them playing, then officiating, it’s like, “What is that? Why would you want to do that?” Yeah, I guess they probably see me more as a tomboy. I don’t know, sometimes I’ve wondered—I guess I think about if guys look at me that way too, so yeah, I’ve thought about it before. It’s not been a main thing on my mind, but, I guess guys could see me more as a friend.”

Participant 9 discussed how societal views of women in sport change her habits off the field:
“I think sometimes when I came out onto the field, I would try to not be so—I guess, not ragged, but I would do a certain level of things to make myself look somewhat presentable. I wouldn’t want to come out on the field after having just worked out and sweaty and hair really gross because I am surrounded by so many people—a lot of them are guys—and I’m like, “Well, I don’t want to look completely terrible, so,” I think I had that in mind when I’m on the field, so I would present myself—come a little bit presentable to the games. Outside of officiating, I found that I dress up a lot more on a daily basis because I’m like, “Oh, well, this is where I work.,” and I’m always in work out gear, so I want to dress nice at some point, so I do that during the day going to classes.”

**Awareness.** Awareness of self in relation to others became another subcategory sitting hand-in-hand with confidence and filtering. Participants described awareness of self in relation to other male and female college student intramural sports officials, intramural sports participants, and other females in general. This awareness came to show that participants had confidence in themselves and in their successes, but also gave them the sense that they were alone in the world at times hindering relationship development.

Participant 1 described her feelings of awareness of how her views of others affect her actions or responses to intramural sports participants:

“…I definitely think it makes me more willing to see someone a second time because I feel like when you’re out here in the intramural setting, you’re seeing someone when they’re super competitive, and that’s not probably the best light to meet people in, so I kind of—“you may have been a jerk the first week, but we’ll go ahead and see what this week is like,” and I feel like that’s impacted just relationships in general because I don’t want to judge you off of one thing when you’re out here in a different setting than what I’d normally see you in. I still think you act that way, so you should be held accountable for that way, but everyone has a moment where—it could have been a terrible day for them; they could have had the worst day of their life, and you made the wrong call. I think it makes me more willing to see what else is going on.”

Participants also discussed awareness of self in relation to others in building confidence levels. This concept emerged from questions regarding experiences as an intramural
sports official affecting their overall self-esteem and achievement of success. Participant 6 identified that she is more aware of the strength in gender than maybe some males who come out to officiate intramural sports:

“Helped, but consequently it has made me much more aware of my gender identity. I don’t see this as a bad thing, necessarily, but I have learned to embrace my status as a strong woman and use it to my advantage. For instance, some men think they can come into intramurals and because they have a good knowledge bank of football then they will make good officials and not have to try as hard. This is the opposite for me in that I had to work hard and prove my capabilities because they weren’t already assumed by me or by anyone else. Therefore, I had a chance to improve my self-esteem by chasing a goal and excelling in something that I almost quit before I really started.”

Participant 1 commented on her experiences as an intramural sports official creating an awareness of increasing her effectiveness in working with others in general:

“I think it’s made me much more effective working with others, and in nursing, that’s huge. You work with nurses, doctors, PTs, OTs, like everybody. When you come out here, you work with all different personalities. You work all different—with people that care, people that don’t care, and I would say that’s made a huge difference in school.”

Participant 2 went a different direction with her creation of awareness of self as she talked about dealing with conflict in intramural sports officiating helping her become an adult:

“Conflict management is another big one. You’re forced to deal with the problems at hand. If someone approaches you and they have a problem with one of your calls, you can’t just run away from it and say “Whatever, just play,” you have to actually explain it or try to calm them down and deal with it like adults.”

While increased confidence levels aided participants in their success, the researcher noted, in some contexts, participants felt all alone when officiating whether they realized it or not. Participant 2 began discussing this concept when she mentioned being on a different level than men right from the start:
“Yes, to kind of establish that respect men already have when they’re out there. I think we kind of start at a different level than maybe men do, so we have to – instead of having respect when we step out there, we have to actually gain it.”

Participant 6 elaborated further on how her awareness of competition alienates you from other intramural sports officials:

“Also, not totally proud of this, but I somewhat feel like I’m competing with all officials for better shifts, respect, and the opportunity to officiate in the championship games. So I figure that if I associate with or form close bonds with the other girls, then I won’t have to opportunity to work my way up the ladder equally with the male officials.”

**Summary of Self-Esteem**

Intramural sports officiating gave each of the participants a way to increase confidence levels and become more assertive. Filtering messages in regards to societal and personal views of women enabled female college student intramural sports officials to increase self-esteem and create an awareness of self in relation to others. Awareness proved to sometimes alienate them further from their own gender, male counterparts and intramural sports participants.

**Goal Orientation**

Goal orientation became a category as the researcher noted participants’ drive to prove themselves as intramural sports officials and, overall, as successful females. Participants’ answers illuminated the concept through specific use of the word “goal” in relation to achievement, academic focus, and accountability. This category also supported increased self-esteem and a better attitude due to goal orientation. The next section discusses three subcategories: achievement, academic focus, and accountability.
Achievement. The emerging concept of achievement was present in every participant interview. Participants described varying ways in which achievement played a part in every definition of self-identity. The concept began to emerge through Participant 1’s comments on how she gets things done:

“Well, unorganization—if you don’t—I’m a super organized person, so I’m obviously very biased on this, but if I don’t have a schedule and I don’t have a to-do list and I don’t have an idea of what my day is going to look like, I don’t think I’d be very successful because I do very well when I have this and this and this to do instead of, “Oh, at some point, I’ve got to do this, and I’ll get to that...” To me, I don’t think I’d be a successful student at all if I just thought about things. I have to have a check list and get it done. That definitely is my success.”

She also discussed achievement as a characteristic needed to be a good intramural sports official:

“If you come out here and you’re just like, ‘Whatever, it’s just a way to make money,’ obviously, you’re not going to get anything out of it. But when you come out and you’re like, ‘I want to be a good ref. I want to improve things,’ I think that translates over into other life things where you’re not ok with being complacent.’

Participant 7 noted the need for achievement of respect and pride as well:

“I think you have to want to be an official. People are out there just to be out there – you can tell they’re just there to make a joke of it or just not serious, but you have to actually want to be good at it and want for the players to respect you, and you want to be proud of what you’re doing.”

This characteristic resonated through conversations with every participant. Participant 2 expressed the relationship between intramural sports officiating, achievement and becoming a successful engineer after graduation:

“I think it shows that I am a determined individual because a lot of people aren’t full time students and have a job, so if I can handle that—if I can keep my grades up and have a job at the same time, I think it shows good qualities in an individual: determination, time management, all of that.”
Participant 3 put it simply as “desiring lots of things – goal-oriented.” Participant 4 noted how effort has affected her goals; “I’ve put a lot of effort and hold my standards very high when it comes to schoolwork.” Participant 8 talked about achievement as pushing through; “I mean, say you don’t graduate when you plan to graduate as long as you keep going, and never – keep working at it until what you want to happen does happen, so just be relentless.” Participant 5 expressed achievement of balance as an important aspect of success; “Doing your best—so that doesn’t necessarily mean all A’s, but whatever your best is; learning to balance academics and social, work, any other things you’re involved in, volunteering.” Participant 6 discussed achievement through the lens of helping others:

“I just like working with people, and as far as officiating, you are just constantly integrated into—I just always feel like I’m helping people, even when I’m officiating, even though they might not agree with me, or I might not be helping them to win, or they perceive me as not helping them win, I feel like I’m out there for a reason, and that I’m helping student development, and between that and teaching and officiating, I just want to be a part of students’ lives and in their development as people, so that’s kind of where I see it fitting in.”

Participant 9 commented on the internal dialogue she has with herself in regards to achievement:

“It’s nice for me knowing that when I do a good job, I’m like, ‘Yes! I proved myself.’ Not that I need to, but it’s always good when the players leave a game, and I leave a game, and I’m like, ‘Ok, I did a good job. They don’t really have anything they can say against me.’”

Participant 10 discussed how achievement centers on being a well-rounded person, “You can be really smart in the classroom, but you have to have the social skills outside of that to get a job, to have a good life.” While only a freshman, Participant 11 expressed the role achievement plays in her goal orientation, “I’m really hard-working.”
Academic Focus. Along with achievement, participants described their priorities to be successful in the classroom and how intramural sports officiating aided them in reaching that goal. Participant 7 discussed the link between working and achievement in the classroom as an issue of time and motivation, “Time. Time is probably the hardest thing to learn to be a student. I mean, you just never seem to have enough to do everything you want to do, so – but I mean, I just think if you’re motivated, you can be a good student.” Participant 6 expressed the connection between intramural sports officiating and her success as a student:

“Well, my success is coming from just trying to find new ways in which to interact with other people, to find new way in which to gain more work experience, and trying to get away from the books a little bit. Being a communications studies major, you learn about theory and you learn about all these things in the classroom, but it’s not until you step out unto a job like intramurals or any other student development job on campus that you really understand how to use those.”

Participant 5 went on to explain the internal perception she has of intramural sports officiating’s link to her success in the classroom, “it’s helped me in speaking in front of my classmates.” The researcher noted that most participants’ feelings toward academic success revolved around not always focusing on academics and getting involved in something outside of the classroom. Participant 4 explained her ability to maintain good grades and how intramural sports officiating provides her with an outlet of play:

“If you plan out your schedule around work and plan out your tests and everything, it’s all doable, but I mean, I still have good grades, and I still can do it, so I still think I’m successful, and I don’t want it just to all be about school either. I think that’s the full picture of being happy and still enjoying school, and this would be my play time. This is getting away from school. It’s actually work, so.”

Participant 3 described the same feelings:
“It gives me—one thing, it gives me something to have fun with, and even though you have discipline and structure because you have rules in officiating, it’s something that I like doing, so it’s like a reliever, kind of.”

Summary of Goal Orientation

Through the concept of goal orientation, the researcher noted the similarities in certain characteristics of participants and success as a female college student intramural sports official. Achievement and academic focus were a functioning part of each participant’s self-identity. Participants’ descriptions of their successes in and outside the classroom centered on knowing what they wanted and working hard to get there. The researcher found that, while academics kept them at college, academic focus was maintained because of extracurricular activities, primarily intramural sports officiating.

Attitude

As the researcher conducted interviews, she realized that participants’ attitude, both positive and negative, affected their internal perceptions of self and their role as intramural sports officials. The internal dialogue on attitude aided participants in achievement of goals and increased self-esteem as well as led them to further awareness of changes in identity. The following section covers four subcategories within attitude: determination, integrity, pride, and reflection.

**Determination.** The researcher noted earlier, in gender roles, that participants felt the need to prove themselves more than males did, and this impression was due to society’s traditional views of women. This idea of determination to enhance their identity
continued through definitions of self and success. Participant 1 expressed how intramural sports officiating complements determination in development:

“It creates a strong person as well. Someone who is not confident in themselves is going to have difficulty developing as far as they can whether it’s in college or career or something; they have to take a stand for what they know is right. And the assertiveness to push further and take it as far as you can and not just be complacent, and I think that definitely has—all of those, going along with the college and female thing, those will develop you if you keep working with them.”

Determination was also represented through participants’ views of integrity in reference to sport and their role in maintaining integrity of self and of the game. Participant 3 described her determination to give the game her best, “I just—whenever I put on the stripes and I step on the court, I feel like I have to do my best because I want to keep the game fair and know that I know what I’m doing.” Participant 2 discussed her internal dialogue and determination to get past stereotypes and do her job well, “I always do the best I can while I'm working. That is enough for me to internally overcome the stereotypes. If I know that I can't possibly be putting more effort into my job, then I am satisfied.” Participant 6 goes on to explain how knowledge of self through determination is not a slow process in intramural sports officiating:

“There is a constant battle going on in my head where I question myself, ‘Am I good enough? Do I know the rules backwards and forwards? Can I be doing something better? Why did that dude look at me that way? He doesn’t think I can call this game. What can I do to prove that?’ You have to silence these thoughts in order to call a fair game. You can’t be biased or rattled in anyway. You can’t try to overcompensate or you won’t be a neutral party. It took awhile, but I had to accept that I will never been viewed as on equal playing field as a male in an officiating position but I have to rely on my fellow officials and my self-esteem to perform my job well. Not just accurate, to perform it to the best of my ability. I can’t change the opinions of all male athletes, or officials for that matter. But I figure if I can get a few key men on my side who look like leaders on the field, then I can slowly gain the respect of the masses.”
Pride. Along with determination, the researcher noted a strong sense of pride in participants. By knowing they could do the job of intramural sports officiating well, possibly change perceptions of women, be successful academically, and be a stronger person in general, participants expressed reinforced pride, in themselves and their identity. Participant 6 describes one experience specifically:

“Yeah, definitely. I’ve had several friends in my department—the Communication Studies Department—recognize me on the floor and say, “Oh, you officiated our game yesterday,” or, “Oh, I watched you officiate such and such game.” They’re like, “We saw you as a girl out there on the flag football fields, and you were doing awesome,” so it was more of a pride thing, and I definitely felt like it was more geared toward my gender that you typically don’t see a female out there on a flag football field, and it was definitely a proud reaction, and maybe a little big a surprise that a female could officiate well.”

She elaborated on the point of pride in a different context at the end of her interview:

“I just think it’s important to note that while females do experience struggles, and there’s always going to be those comments that are made by men—either in appositive light or a negative light—I think people need to understand that this is a really great job for most people, and that it is not for the faint of heart by any means. If you’re easily offended by things, or if you hear a male make a comment about you being a female official or you don’t know things, and you really take that in, it’ll beat you down, and it’ll take you out of the environment for sure. So, you have to have that thick skin and that confidence in order to do it and that will to make your female counterpart proud, to do something for your own gender.”

Participant 7 expressed her feelings of pride being a female college student intramural sports official:

“It’s something I’m proud of. I like to tell people I reffed the men’s championship game in volleyball. That’s something I, as a female, I got to ref all the men’s, so that was pretty cool to me, so I just feel like it’s—you can get as much out of it as you want.”

Participant 1 communicated her feelings of pride, “Proud. I feel proud to know that I can go out there and do it, and I feel like I’m a good official when I go out and officiate.”
The researcher also noted that pride was not always initiated internally, but aided in creating an internal dialogue within the participant. Participant 2’s parents began that internal conversation for her:

“They tell me they’re proud of me for doing something I love, and then also being a student and proud because I’m a student and I have a job at the same time. Yeah, they just love that I’m doing what I love, and I’m kind of good at it, so— I’m trying to be modest here, but—“

Pride in other female sports officials outside of intramurals also led participants to be able discuss within themselves how they can change perceptions of women and have pride in that direction. Participant 6 stated her thoughts on seeing women officiate sports outside of intramurals:

“I’m always really proud. I like that that there’s that opportunity out there for them to be in that position, and it’s kind of an empowering feeling that—being an official, I know how hard it is to get to upper level games, and for her to be able to make it there is a large accomplishment because you are definitely the minority in the group, so to stick out is a big accomplishment.”

**Reflection.** The researcher noted that reflection occurred only when a participant’s personality allowed it, and maturity level played a large part in the aptitude to reflect. Participants’ ability to reflect on their internal perceptions helped their ability to truly define themselves, create relationships, and move past negative stereotypes. A few participants expressed that the interview questions actually aided in reflection as their answers revealed thoughts that had never been connected before. Academic class and/or number of semesters officiating intramural sports also may have determined perception of self in relation to others.

Reflection, emerged mostly when discussing identity and its relationship to
intramural sports officiating. Participant 1 stated, “I’m proud of who I am, but at the same
time, I don’t think I’m done figuring out who I am,” proving that identity is constantly
evolving (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Participant 2 expressed, “It is helping me become
a better leader. It’s helping me become more courageous, I guess…”

Other participants showed reflective thinking in regards to their reasons for coming out to
officiate intramural sports and it’s link to identity. Participant 4 explains her reasons for
coming out to work for intramural sports,

“Because when I stopped playing and transferred, I wanted to find a job that
interested me and filling that sports need after not playing in college to coming to
school without playing a sport. I still know of my desire was to be in it, I just
didn’t know how and just wanted to get involved in an organization—it fit me
best.”

Participants also began to make connections within identity through reflection which
were not always positive but added to the internal dialogue. Participant 8 describes her
internal perceptions,

“And I over-think everything anyways. Yeah, I would say—because girls aren’t
supposed to like sports, or—so first of all, watching them playing, then
officiating, it’s like, ‘What is that? Why would you want to do that?’ Yeah, I
guess they probably see me more as a tomboy.”

One of the most interesting aspects of reflection came upon the researcher’s
realization that ten out of eleven participants’ career goals included going into a very
social field. The researcher noted that this element might have encouraged their decision
to come out and officiate intramural sports. Four participants intended to go into
communications, two into education, two into physical therapy, one into nursing, and one
into personnel management in the military. Participant 5 expressed her thoughts on sport
officiating’s role in her success as a female in regards to her future career goals:
“Maybe in the other areas where men—if I was going to be in business or something like that where females were not predominantly the head, I feel like it would help me more, but I’m going into teaching which is a female profession. I’m in class with mostly females, so I’m not sure.”

Summary of Attitude

Participants’ expressions of needing to prove to themselves and to others that they could perform just as well as or better than male college student intramural sports officials led to the concept of determination. Determination and the knowledge that they could possibly change societal perceptions of women led the researcher to elaborate on the sense of pride felt by female college student intramural sports officials. The researcher also acknowledged how reflection occurred to facilitate further identity development and enhance experiences in intramural sports officiating.

Gender

The researcher found that one of the most difficult internal conversations was in regard to gender. Due to the way participants discussed gender other than through societal views, the researcher decided to not come up with subcategories for this concept. Gender was such an all-encompassing idea that it became it’s own category, and the participants’ own words and stories describe the internal perceptions much better than subcategories. While gender identity was not a salient theme until they got into the environment of intramural sports officiating, the researcher did dig deeper into the amount of time spent thinking about gender during follow-up interviews. The role played by gender in identity is described further in the theme of intersecting identities.

Internal discussions on gender became most prominent when participants were
asked how they felt a female’s experience was different from a male’s in sports officiating and whether they viewed men as better sports officials than women. As McGuire’s (1984) distinctiveness theory noted, an individual’s distinctive traits in relation to others in a given context will be mentioned more than their more common traits in response to open-ended questions (Cota & Dion, 1986). This idea was confirmed as participants described feelings of frustration of societal views of women and the need to demonstrate their knowledge of sports as opposed to male officials. Participant 2 expressed,

“I feel like I’ve probably been looked down upon. The men officials, they get verbally attacked also, but they probably don’t get looked at right from the get-go, and people probably aren’t looking at them thinking, “Oh, they’re going to suck,” but they’ve probably looked at me saying that—prefomed opinions on me.”

Participant 10 explained her views of men as sports officials, “I feel like they have more confidence. They have more respect from the players a lot of times also.” Participant 9 went on to explain the differences,

“I think—I would say I think men probably are better official because they, in general, tend to care less what other people think. If someone gets upset about a call they make, they’re going to be less likely to actually care what that person says because they’re more confident with their skills of sports and rules.”

Participant 8 expressed her experience being a female sports official,

“I feel like we’re looked down upon or people doubt us more than the male officials, simply because we’re female—even though the people that we are officiating with, we probably have more—or in my case, since I’ve been doing this for a couple of years, I had more experience than they did, and I was confident in myself, but just because they were guys, I would get yelled at more rather than themselves and stuff just because I was female.”

Participant 7 commented on why she thinks she gets yelled at more than men while officiating, “Just because they think I’ll change my mind easier than guys, and they
don’t—I guess they just don’t respect as much a female reffing men’s games than they do men’s reffing men’s.”

When asked what the advantages and disadvantages of being a female in sports officiating were, the researcher found that, while disadvantages resonated with previous answers on negative experiences, participants struggled to come up with advantages, and if they did, it was most often seen as a disadvantage too. Participant 1 stated, “You get noticed if you are a good official and if you’re not—which could definitely be a disadvantage, but if you’re a good official, you definitely get notice a lot easier.” Participant 2 expressed a similar thought, “I don’t know. If you’re a good official, maybe you can change the view of participants on female officials, but I don’t know if that’s going to offset the view because you have the poor officials too that are female, so…” Sometimes, the advantage denoted more internal discussion, Participant 4 noted the advantage to self, “To myself, to me, just giving me more self confidence. Being out there, making decisions confidently, making calls and being assertive, so to me, it gives you all those aspects you need for life, jobs, and…”

The researcher also found that a few participants who had more experience in sports officiating noted changes in views on their gender and were better able to articulate advantages for females and less likely to focus on disadvantages. Participant 6, a graduate student and veteran intramural sports official, stated:

“Disadvantages – it’s kind of tough to give disadvantages. Ok. Advantages—well, it’s—if you love sports, you’re getting paid to watch sports that you love. You gain a lot of work experience, and you gain a lot of communication skills. You learn how to give very authoritative messages to people that you might not have had to do in other jobs.
Participant 7, a sophomore and veteran intramural sports official, noted, “I think – I mean, you can surprise people – they don’t expect you to be good…”

The idea of gender perhaps was one of the most confusing parts for participants in regards to working for intramural sports and officiating. Several participants had difficulty stating whether certain things happened as intramural sports officials because they were female. In relation to a situation with a male participant reacting negatively to an answer she gave him, Participant 1 questioned whether it was in regards to her gender:

“I don’t know. Trey was sitting there too, and he didn’t say anything, and I don’t know if it’s because I’m the one that said something or if it’s because I’m a female. I couldn’t really—I think he was just so ticked off, he was going to say something to anybody, but—I think they’re most often surprised when girls say something to them—like the fact that I said something and not Trey because they always have that look on their face like, ‘I can’t believe you just said that.’”

Participant 2 had an experience with an entire team of international students that made her question her abilities as a sports official, but she struggled to understand if her gender affected their reaction to her as well. She made this comment about the situation, “...and I don’t know if that would have happened if that was a male official or not, and I kind of know my rules in soccer.” Participant 8 describes her relationships with intramural sport participants as providing another avenue for confusion in whether gender is a factor to her success as an intramural sports official:

“I think if I were to make a call, and the other person disagreed with it, they tended to argue with me more than they did other people, but then I saw where I knew the guys on a certain team, and they would be like, “Come on, now, get this guy,” straight because they had confidence in me. So it’s like people I knew, I guess, understood me, but it was the people that didn’t know that straight up looked down upon me, so, I don’t know.”

As the researcher noted earlier in external influences, either the participants’
abilities to establish relationships with other female college student intramural sports officials, or perhaps right forums for relationship development between women, were lacking. The researcher found that internal perceptions of gender might also have played a part in the lack of connections made between female college student intramural sports officials. Participants’ comments often expressed gender as causing isolation not through direct words, but some implications of congregating with each other and being too girly may make them vulnerable to negative views from others. In the follow-up interview with Participant 5, she suggested these reasons for not having closer relationships with her female co-workers:

“There are often some differences in personality that affect the relationships between female co-workers. Also, there's not much time TO talk during your shifts and honestly, unless there are common denominators besides the sports game you just officiated, conversation tends to run out. I think that females tend to already feel guarded surrounded by so many males at work and don't want to appear vulnerable or ‘too girly.’”

In follow-up interviews, the researcher delved further into how often participants thought about gender in their daily life and how they began to understand where gender fits in to their identity from an internal and external perception. Participant 2 expressed where gender fits into her thoughts:

“The only times I think about my gender playing a role in what I do is when I'm officiating, especially when I am officiating men sports. I haven't come across any other situations as a student, that I can remember, when I've thought about my gender playing a role.”

Participant 6 noted how societal messages on gender roles are filtered in and out of her internal dialogue daily, no matter the situation:
“Every day, all day. I embrace my status as a female and believe that the underdog always has the advantage. Don’t get me wrong, I am not a male-hating woman, but history has constructed this unbalanced, gendered society and that cannot be denied. Those who think men and women are on equal playing ground are the same who say that racism between Black and White people doesn’t exist. This is ignorance, and ignorance is bliss to most. Women have opportunities that men don’t, and vice versa for the sake of fairness. I always take the time to celebrate a milestone for women, be it nationwide or local. Just today I sung the praises of my mentor, who happens to be Miss Black South Carolina and the most accomplished twenty-four year old woman I have ever met face-to-face. So, yes, in my head and out loud I give an extra shout out to women who kick ass and take names.”

Participant 5 expressed how frequent thoughts on gender affect her as a student and as an intramural sports official:

“I think about my gender often actually. I am in a primarily female based major (elementary education) so it is difficult to go from something that typically fits the female characteristics of nurturing, guiding, etc. to officiating, something primarily male based. As a student, I feel as though my gender plays a helpful role - I don't have to work on becoming more of a nurturing "teacher type" because it is in my nature. However, as an official, I feel like my gender requires me to appear MORE assertive and requires me to "know my stuff" to make up for the fact that I am female.”

Summary of Gender

Gordon and Gergen (1968) suggested that one’s self-concept of identity is fluid and responsive to different societal and situational contexts. While participants’ expressed differing levels of internal dialogue in relation to gender at different times, the researcher observed that all participants seemed to be very comfortable in their sexuality. Very few participants articulated that gender was actually something they thought about often. It seemed to the researcher that with so many negative views toward women participants almost chose not to think about gender so that they could be more successful as college students and intramural sports officials. Data also confirmed that an individual
notices his or her distinctive traits more readily because of their greater informational richness and value for discriminating self from others (McGuire, 1984; Cota & Dion, 1986).

Summary of Internal Perceptions

Internal perceptions focus on the internal dialogue of the participants while working through identity development. Participants described intramural sports officiating aiding in increasing their levels of confidence in every aspect of their lives, including, but not limited to, as a person, as a female, in the classroom, in dealing with conflict with others, and in working with others. Filtering negative messages while officiating provided participants with clarification and reinforcement of society’s view of traditional gender roles, however, it also gave them more ammunition to prove to themselves and others that they could be successful at anything. The role of goal setting and attitude was apparent in every participant’s life. Achievement, academic focus and self-accountability for resulted in goal-oriented young women who knew what it would take to be or were working on being successful in everything they did. Moreover, participants indicated that their attitude of determination, integrity and pride in themselves and in their work allowed them to bypass negativity and create their own social construction of reality that women were just as good, if not better than men in whatever they do. However, their social construction also included women being just as good happening one woman at a time. Very little verbal communication between female college student intramural sports officials occurred to enable relationships that could possibly further the development of each other and women as a whole.
INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

The theme of intersecting identities stemmed from the researcher’s questions on identity and experiences in intramural sports officiating. Participants described varying identities that impacted their definitions of self, how they filtered external influences and their internal dialogue. The researcher noted an obvious overlap between several identities and came up with four categories: athlete, female, college student, and intramural sports official. See Figure 3 on the following page for a visual image of the intersecting identities of female college student intramural sports officials.
Athlete

The researcher’s questions were specifically designed to see if the identity of athlete was present amongst female college student intramural sports officials. With all of the participants having participated in competitive sports at some level prior to attending college, the researcher wanted to see if participants had ever defined themselves as an athlete, and if so, did they still define themselves as athletes. While participants sometimes had difficulty coming up with a specific definition of the term athlete, all participants were able to name characteristics that they felt an athlete possessed. The
researcher found that participants had problems with defining themselves as athletes or said they used to be an athlete. The difficulty in defining themselves as athletes currently could be with the elite mentality society puts on the term, and the idea that an athlete in college only participates at the highest level of intercollegiate competition (Bryant et al, 1994). However, in answers to other questions, the characteristics used to depict an athlete also described the participants through their own feelings of self.

Participant 1 gave this definition of athlete, “I think someone who trains and practices for a physical activity because – runners are athletes. They’re not out playing a sport with officials, but they’re definitely athletes. They’re training for a goal – a physical goal.” While she went on further to say, “I would have defined myself as an athlete in high school… I would say now I’m probably just athletic. I’m not really striving for a goal – to win a game…or something.” However, she explained later her comfort level as an intramural sports official, “I think being an athlete in that sense, definitely helped because athletes are comfortable on the field.” Participant 3 defined an athlete as, “A team-player; someone’s who’s also motivated, they have discipline.” She further stated that she still perceived herself to be an athlete.

In memoing, the researcher noted that while participants tended to not define themselves as athletes currently, for the most part, the characteristics participants mentioned in themselves would define them as athletes. Participant 2 described these characteristics of an athlete, “Someone – you have to be competitive. Someone who’s quick, strong…Leaders. Team players.” She went on to say, “I used to be an athlete. I kind of lost some of that.” Yet, in a description of herself, she used similar, if not the
same, words, “I would say I’m a leader – trying to get there; hard-worker, determined…”

Participant 4 had difficulty at first, but defined an athlete as,

“All those qualities. Someone who—that’s hard. A lot of skill, skill in the sport that they’re playing. Strength. Endurance. Competitive. Strong will power and desire to do good. It’s a lot of hard work, so hard-working. That’s about. Those are all good words.”

When asked how athlete fits into her current self-identity, she responded:

“I feel like the qualities I’ve learned from—I’m not saying I’m not an athlete because I don’t actually play anything right now—but the qualities that the athlete has taught me has bettered me in all my words. The qualities: hard-working and everything that being an athlete has taught me to persevere, to endure, to work hard for what I want has helped me in my school work and in my work to do those things.”

Participant 5 had trouble defining athlete and acknowledged that difficulty when asked if she perceived herself to be an athlete:

“That’s why I struggled with defining athlete because previously I thought of an athlete as someone on a team and involved in sports, and now that I’m not necessarily on a sports team competitively anymore—cause I think of an athlete as being competitive—I still consider myself to be competitive when I do play sports or run, even.”

Some participants were immediately aware an overlap in athlete identity with one of their identities as intramural sports official. Participant 6 expressed the connection:

“Yeah. Absolutely. I think you need to have that drive and that passion and that care for the sport in order to officiate it. You don’t necessarily have to have played it, but I think in order to be a good official or to take on that identity of official, you have to understand the identity of an athlete. If you don’t understand that they’re strong-willed and confident and driven, then you won’t understand, as an official, how to handle them. If someone’s passionate about that game and competitive and wanting to win, and you just come in there and you’re not doing your best job at officiating, you’re not paying attention to things, you’re not explaining things well, you’re not making the right calls, then you’re really disrupting the atmosphere on the court, so I definitely think you need to understand those identities, and I think to be a good official, you really need to embody those identities too.”
Participant 9 defined an athlete:

“I think an athlete is someone who works really hard to accomplish a goal, but within being an athlete—besides being in very good physical condition and knowing your sport well, you also have to be very considerate and have a lot of sportsmanship, and I think that’s the part that gets left out a lot for athletes—having respect for the players—not only on your team, but on other teams.”

She went on further to describe how the identities of athletes and sports officials overlap:

“I think—well that last part, I said, I think there’s a little bit of overlap in that there needs to be a mutual level of respect because—having been an athlete, you’re a lot more aware of what’s going on on the field, I think, and to you, the littlest thing—you’re kind of surprised, like “How did the ref not see that?” but when you’re in a sports officiating position, you’re—you can only focus on so much at a time no matter how hard you try, so you’re not going to catch every little thing, so I think there needs to be a mutual level of respect. I’m not trying to miss calls on purpose to hurt a certain athlete, and the athletes need to understand that I’m doing my best to look out for the field and call the best I can.”

**Summary of Athlete**

The characteristics of an athlete showed up in every participant based on their own definitions of the term and definitions of self-identity. However, the researcher found that some participants were hesitant to label themselves as athletes because they felt that either they had lost some of those characteristics or were not trying to achieve a physical goal through training or competing. This idea directly contradicted other participants comments that they found themselves competing with other intramural sports officials to move up the ladder or diminish negative perceptions of their gender even if it was only at the level of intramural sports.
Female

The researcher discovered that interview questions in relationship to gender identity outside of intramural sports officiating were sometimes the most confusing or the ones that were the most repeated to participants. While participants had little trouble describing their thoughts and feelings on society’s traditional views of women in sport, some participants had difficulty or chose not, even with further prompting or rewording of questions, to express feelings on how their gender affects relationships, being a student or their identity. When asked to define their current self-identity, not one participant mentioned gender in their definition.

Younger, not necessarily less experienced, participants were more hesitant to discuss identity in particular much less where gender fits in. This seemed to definitely be a developmental factor in relation to identity and confirms Erikson’s (1959) ideas of identity and the life cycle. Participant 7 did not want to define herself at all, “I don’t know. I don’t really like to define myself very much.” When asked, “why not?”, unbeknownst to her, she described the idea of intersecting identities:

“I feel like I have very different complex personalities and stuff like that. I can be really happy and stuff, but a lot of people know that I can actually be serious sometimes, but I guess I’m a very energetic person.”

Participants were also asked to discuss how intramural sports officiating has helped or hurt them maintain their femininity or be successful as a woman. Participant 2, who earlier mentioned that the only time she thinks of gender roles is when working, stated, “I don’t know if it’s hurt at all. I would say it’s more helped than anything—other than the people looking down upon you because you’re a female official, it’s helped me become a
stronger person in general.” Participant 3 expresses difficulty in knowing whether her job hurts her femininity and her relationships, “I don’t think it’s helped or hurt me. I mean the relationships that I gained – new people – meeting new friends, that’s a good thing, but it’s hard, on the feminine side, I don’t think it’s helped or hurt.” Participant 10 discusses how her identity as a new female in intramural sports officiating made her anxious, but realization that she knew more than the guys helped her develop confidence:

“I guess the guys come in to sports officiating—like I told—the very first game I officiated, I told the guy, “Oh, I’m really nervous,” and I noticed the guys going in, they weren’t nervous at all, but the girls were, but then often, we were more educated about the rules than they were, but they just think—they go in with that macho, “Oh, I’m a guy. I know this. I’ve watched sports my whole life,” but really you can watch them, but you don’t know them.”

Older, more experienced participants, with one or two exceptions, seemed to be better able to explain where gender fits in their identity. Participant 1, a senior and veteran intramural sports official, discussed how skills learned in sports officiating affect her success as a female:

“I think I’m pretty—I feel like all of those make a solid person—not just a solid ref. It creates a strong person as well. Someone who is not confident in themselves is going to have difficulty developing as far as they can whether it’s in college or career or something; they have to take a stand for what they know is right. And the assertiveness to push further and take it as far as you can and not just be complacent, and I think that definitely has—all of those, going along with the college and female thing, those will develop you if you keep working with them.”

Participant 4 went on to explain how she has never been very feminine or fit traditional views of women:

“I think I’ve—I don’t know. I’ve always been athletic, so I’ve always had that image of tomboy, athletic person, so in that case, it hasn’t helped or hurt, but if they do see me with my hair down outside of class, they’re like, “Whoa! You’re used to having a ponytail with it braided,” because they do see me as that type of
person, so when I do get dressed up… I guess it’s decreased it, but I guess it’s always been that way, though, so for me, I haven’t always been real feminine to…”

Participant 6 describes intramural sports officiating as helping her “develop my identity as a female…I developed a family within intramurals, so I didn’t feel like I needed to be part of a sorority or any other type of group.” Participant 9 noticed how intramural sports officiating actually helps her embrace her femininity outside of work:

“Helped or hurt. I think sometimes when I came out onto the field, I would try to not be so—I guess, not ragged, but I would do a certain level of things to make myself look somewhat presentable. I wouldn’t want to come out on the field after having just worked out and sweaty and hair really gross because I am surrounded by so many people—a lot of them are guys—and I’m like, “Well, I don’t want to look completely terrible, so,” I think I had that in mind when I’m on the field, so I would present myself—come a little bit presentable to the games. Outside of officiating, I found that I dress up a lot more on a daily basis because I’m like, “Oh, well, this is where I work,” and I’m always in work out gear, so I want to dress nice at some point, so I do that during the day going to classes.”

**Summary of Female**

The researcher found that the idea of gender was not a salient concern to participants when it came to identity. Some participants had difficulty expressing their thoughts and feelings on gender using their own words. Most participants discussed gender, unless specifically asked how it fits in their identity, through views of society and how it affects their job as a female college student intramural sports official. The pressure of societal views of women on internal dialogue seemed to sometimes be more influential on the lack of focus on gender leading to a constant battle within identity.
College Student

The identity as college student was an obvious one to the researcher. However, participants expressed, while college is why they were there, intramural sports officiating got them out of the classroom and gave them an outlet to the stresses of academics. The researcher found that the identities as athlete, intramural sports official and female sometimes complemented their identity as college student more than intersected with it. Yet, it became obvious that experiences as an intramural sports official affected most participants’ identity as a college student.

Participant 3 specifically expressed student as an identity in her definition of self, “Right now, I’d say a student leader, motivated, accomplished…” Participant 4 also defined her identity, “Identity…I’m a student. I would use my job position, supervisor, official – that’s basically my life right now – going to school and working.” Participant 6’s perception of her self-identity also included use of the word student: “Confident. Strong. Student. Caring. Authoritative. Leader. Specifics like ‘friend.’”

Participant 1 describes an experience as an intramural sports official that shaped her identity as a student:

“Well, I—yeah, I remember the first time I ever had to give someone a card as an official, and I saw the kid in class the next day, and he saw me, and it was kind of like, ‘Oh, you’re in class with me. I have to see you on a regular basis.’” And I had never noticed that he was in my class before until after I had given him a card, and from that point on, it was kind of like—when he saw me out here, he acted a lot differently.”

Participant 6 also articulated an event that changed her views of herself as a college student and intramural sports official:
“Whenever—it was my first semester officiating, and I was recognized—I’m not really sure who recognized me, but I was approached by a graduate assistant at the time about going to the state extramural tournament, and I was brand new to Clemson. I didn’t really know very many people, and I’m not from around here, so I’m kind of used to being back at home and being recognized and getting opportunities in that way—by people knowing my family, and being here, that was the first time I had been recognized for my skill set without anyone knowing anything about me in the past, so once I was approached to do the state tournament, it built up my confidence so much that I knew that whatever skills I brought to the table, to my academics or to my job or anything, that that can be recognized even without having known me for a very long time.”

Participant 7 describes what intramural sports officiating has taught her as a student in relation to others:

“Hm. I might have to think about that one. There’s been a couple of times where I’ve had almost fights and stuff like that, and I have to realize that sarcasm is not the best, appropriate thing in the moment, and sometimes I have to realize that my teachers don’t understand my sarcasm as much, and definitely the whole patience thing. You can’t expect group members or your teacher to respond to your email the second you send it. You have to realize people have their own lives too.”

Summary of College Student

The category of college student explained factors involved in participants’ maintaining this identity. Participants noted intramural sports officiating as aiding in strengthening their identities as college students. The identities of college student and intramural sports official overlapped allowing participants to become stronger students, more aware of themselves and their academics in relation to others, and gave them useful skills to apply to school. This last concept will be discussed further in the final theme, student success.
Intramural Sports Official

The category of intramural sports official explains how participants identify themselves on and off the field in relationship to their work. Female college student intramural sports officials’ describe experiences that show their realization of being an intramural sports official both in and outside the classroom. More specifically, participants explain challenges and achievements associated with being an intramural sports official.

Participant 9, during member check one and a follow-up question, suggested that her identity as an intramural sports official allowed her to become more independent in all her identities:

“In the interview I mentioned how being independent and able to not let little upsets affect you off the field and I think going away to college and being on a campus helps you become much more independent and adapt to not being around the usual support system you have at home with your parents and develop a new support system. When you first move onto a college campus you're not going to be successful at everything you try but you can easily learn from your mistakes, the same thing applies to reffing.”

The researcher found pride in being recognized as an intramural sports official leading to strength and confidence in self. Participant 4 expressed, “People recognize me from being on the field and officiating their games. I am known as an official and I believe as a strong female with confidence.” Participant 8 also discussed how the campus community knows her as an intramural sports official, “…most people know me because I go into Fike, and I’m in there all the time either playing pick up or officiating or doing intramurals or any of that stuff, so a lot of people will see me on campus and recognize
me either as their official or supervisor.” The researcher found that intramural sports officiating provided participants with another identity that supplemented their strong, goal-oriented personalities. Participants’ love of sports and competition also enabled them to continue to maintain some of their athlete identity through intramural sports officiating.

**Summary of Intramural Sports Official**

The category of Intramural Sports Official explained how female college students intramural sports officials create and identity through work. The identity of intramural sports official intersects with other identities in that working for intramural sports becomes an identifying factor for many of the participants in class, when out socially, and even in future career plans. Participants described how their identity as an intramural sports official provided them with confidence and enabled them to achieve a sense of belonging to something outside of the classroom and their families.

**Summary of Intersecting Identities**

Navigation of identity development began to be explained by the presence of intersecting identities. All participants had at one point identified themselves as an athlete prior to attending or possibly while attending college. The interesting fact was that, when asked to define the term athlete and then self-identity, the similar or the same characteristics were listed. As the identity of sports official was brought to the table, participants once again listed similar characteristics or mentality as an athlete. While gender was not a part of the definition of self-identity for any of the participants, it was
obvious across the data that being a female was part of their whole persona most prominent when officiating. The identity of college student remained salient throughout the study. Participants’ academic focus was the reason they were at college, but they didn’t want it to be the only thing they did. All of their goals coincided with academic success but included learning transferrable life skills and different personalities on and off the court or field. Perhaps one of the greatest findings in the navigation of identity development was that female college student intramural sports officials’ internal perceptions or dialogue was sometimes more important than family or peer support, societal views and/or campus culture.

**STUDENT SUCCESS**

The following section outlines the theme of student success and explains the grounded theory which answers the research question: What is the meaning of the relationship between identity development and intramural sports officiating for female college student intramural sports officials in a higher education setting? The researcher denoted three categories that described how external influences, internal perceptions and intersecting identities influence student success: definition, transferrable skills, and implications. See Figure 4 for the visual diagram of the subcategorical breakdown.
**Definition**

The definition category consists of participants’ definitions of student success. Participants’ descriptions of what student success means to them provides a context for the overall theory. Specifically, participants describe what student success is to them and articulate how their identities help them achieve success. While definitions seemed to be simple in description, the overarching theme of success led participants to be able to work through and understand their own identity development.
The researcher found that participant definitions of student success focused on goals, growth, and achievement. Participant 3 defined student success as, “Maintaining your good grades. Being involved. Being well-rounded – not only just the 4.0 GPA, but experience.” Participant 10 also mentioned “being well-rounded” as vital part to student success. Participant 11 defined student success, “Um, like setting goals and reaching your goals, actually putting yourself out there, and working hard to achieve something.”

Participant 1 stated:

“I see success as you setting a goal and then achieving it. And for some people, it depends on what their goal is. Some people don’t have as high of a goal, and just because they don’t have as high of a goal doesn’t mean they’re not successful. They’re successful in their own mind and in their own opinion. Successful to me is going out and graduating with honors. Successful to someone else is barely scraping by and getting through college, and that doesn’t mean that they’re not successful. They’ve made it on their standards.”

Participant 4 said this about student success:

“Student success for myself is achieving the best of my ability. I’ve put a lot of effort and hold my standards very high when it comes to schoolwork. I would say enjoying college, enjoying the different aspects of it, keeping studies important, just doing your best in every area that you’re involved in as a student.”

Participant 7 discussed how determination and enjoyment play a role in student success:

“I think if you want to be a good student, you can. There’s certain levels of intellect, obviously, but I think you have to like what you’re doing. When I was an agriculture major, I just hated everything. That was my worst semester at Clemson. I just hated all my classes, but I think if you’re enjoying what you’re doing, you can be successful.”

Participant 9 goes on to mentions improvement as a big part of student success:

“I think success—student success is mostly just growing as a person and increasing your knowledge. I don’t think you need to reach a certain level to have success, but I think as long as you’re improving a good amount, it’s successful because I know that when I first started college to where I am now, I think I’ve grown so much as a person and academically.”
Transferrable Skills

Participants often had strong feelings on how intramural sports officiating helped them become better students and stronger people in general. The researcher separated transferrable skills into three subcategories: time management, communication and teamwork. Participants’ easily described their experiences in intramural sports officiating as complementing identity development.

Time Management. Participants expressed that one of the most difficult challenges they had to face upon arriving at college was managing their time. They also explained how intramural sports officiating aided them in overcoming this obstacle.

Participant 1 stated:

“I think if anything it’s made me a better student. It’s made me use my time wisely because I know I have to be at work so I have to get this done in these two hours in between classes or something. I think I’m definitely—I definitely do better when I have a set time to do something, and I would say it’s made me a much better student in being efficient and getting work done when I know that this is the only time I have.”

Participant 3 stated simply, “Being able to manage your time wisely,” as a factor to be successful as a student. Participant 4 articulated similar sentiments, “I would say it’s helped me in a way because I know I have to work extra hard while working. I have to manage my time more…” Participant 7 explains:

“Yeah. I mean definitely the time management stuff has just been the biggest part of my college. That was my hardest part when I got here. Just being able to handle things and just know that you’ve got to just be prepared, and I mean, you’ve got to—just like in intramurals—you’ve got to study up on the rules if you want to do anything—do good.”
**Communication.** The development of improved communication skills presented itself in conversations with each participant no matter age, academic class or experience as an intramural sports official. Participants expressed in detail how intramural sports officiating aids them in achieving student success through making them better communicators. Throughout the themes of external influences, internal perceptions and intersecting identities, ability to communicate with a diverse population became a common concept for participants. Participants described how communication skills helped not only on the field but also in the classroom. The researcher found that participants’ expressions of increased ability to communicate effectively with others also led them to have more confidence in themselves and be able to filter out negative comments more easily in their internal dialogue.

When participants were asked about advantages of being a female in intramural sports officiating, they most commonly expressed an increase in their ability to communicate effectively with others of any background. Participant 1 stated how intramural sports officiating gave her opportunities to improve her communication skills:

“I think that it’s definitely helped my communication skills because—especially in flag football, if you’re confused on a call, you have to talk to the other refs—you’re working with two other refs—and you have to make sure that you guys are in agreement and are working together—”

Participant 3 describes how intramural sports officiating helps her communication skills and applies to her future career plans:

“Dealing with people, of course. Sports officiating, you’ve got to know how to talk to people and get what you are trying to say across—team captain’s meeting, and then on the Air Force side, you’ve got to know how to accomplish your goal and your mission, so your people communication.”
Participant 6 explains how intramural sports officiating aids in her communication with establishing relationships on campus or at work:

“I would say definitely positively. Officiating my first semester was very intimidating—in fact, after the—probably the first or second training session, I probably wasn’t going to come back. It was just a lot of knowledge and very intimidating, for sure—especially just being in that male-dominated arena, but you learn how to—first of all, you have to work with your peers, so you have to work with people your own age, and you have to show authority over them and also learn to work with them so you’re creating a positive atmosphere on the field, so I think that that’s helped me a lot as far as communicating with my own peers and also showing leadership. It’s given me more confidence as far as work skills and communication skills, learning how to give very succinct, clear messages in such a way that has affect on people. That’s kind of all-encompassing, I guess.”

She goes on further to describe how intramural sports officiating provides you with communication skills possibly not learned by other students on campus:

“You gain a lot of work experience, and you gain a lot of communication skills. You learn how to give very authoritative messages to people that you might have had to do in other jobs. In other jobs, you might not have had to discipline people, and you’re required to do that in that game, and they’re going to be your age, so that’s definitely a skill set to learn and also keeping that relationship because you’re probably going to see them again—either at work or off work.”

**Teamwork.** Participants explicitly articulated teamwork as a skill they learned from intramural sports officiating aiding their success as students. Participant 4 expressed, “Working as a team; that’s always big in jobs and life—you’ve got to back up the ones that are out there with you.” One participant also described experiences as intramural sports officials as enhancing skills learned as athletes such as teamwork.

Participant 9 stated:

“I think it’s helped because I’ve been in the athlete-position before, so I know that aspect of the game, and then I think sports officiating gives me a different aspect—a more—I wouldn’t say like an outsider, but it gives you a different view
of the game and a different respect—especially for other people involved in sports—not just on the field.”

She goes on further:

“Someone knows their position on the field and what they’re supposed to be calling, so knowing your responsibilities and being able to talk with other officials, and it’s really working as a team that helps officiate well on a field.”

Participant 6 talks about how intramural sports officiating forces you to see the value in creating teams:

“You might be a really quiet individual, but you’d still make a good official because you know how to kind of turn it on the field, and at the same time, you have to learn how to make friends with the other teams too. They’re not going to respond to you very well, and you’re not going to be able to create a very good atmosphere on the field if you piss everybody off. If you’re just throwing flags left and right or throwing T’s on something that you shouldn’t be or not explaining why you maybe threw that flag or not using preventative officiating, you’re creating enemies, you’re not creating—maybe not so much as friends out there, but you don’t want to create enemies, you want to build that working relationship with your players as well as your other officials. That’s why they call it—the second team on the field is the officials. I think that all those parts of identity really fit into that.”

**Implications.** The researcher found that participants’ definitions of student success along with the inclusion of transferrable skills learned provided an opportunity for them to further establish an emerging professional identity. Female college student intramural sports officials articulated very clearly how skills learned aided them not only in and outside of the classroom in their day-to-day lives but also how their experiences applied to their future career plans. Participant 6 states this idea clearly, “As a sport official, I have gained so much experience as a leader that will help me in an administrative position someday.” Participant 1 applies it to her career goal of being a nurse:
“I would say a lot of the skills you have as an official and as the supervisor—like the communication skills are definitely applicable in nursing. You have to be able to talk to all different types of patients with all different types of understanding levels—intellectual levels. You have different participants out here you have to convey to. I would definitely say communication is—and the organization of being an official is definitely key in nursing. You can’t be an unorganized nurse.”

There are further implications in just learning how to think outside of academics and having a job that doesn’t feel like work that aided participants in their career goals and achievement of success. Participant 4 stated, “so I still think I’m successful, and I don’t want it just to all be about school either. I think that’s the full picture of being happy and still enjoying school, and this would be my playtime. This is getting away from school. It’s actually work, so…” Participants expressed how intramural sports officiating helped them become not just supportive people, but supportive employees. Participant 5 stated:

“You learn to really be supportive of whoever you work with because you’re not always working with the same people. You kind of have to get to know each other—especially at the beginning—in like a quick 15 minutes before the game or whatever—excuse me—and you have to be able to take a lot of back talk.”

Summary of Student Success

The final theme, Student Success, resonated throughout the study. The category of student success developed through the definitions of participants and their descriptions of experiences within intramural sports officiating that applied to their own successes as college students. Participants’ definitions of student success included one main idea: set your own goals and achieve them while being active outside of the classroom. The researcher found that participants were able to explicitly express how intramural sports officiating aided them in setting goals and achieving success through the development of
transferrable skills. Transferrable skills learned through the combination of being a college student, on-campus student employee, and a female all translated to participants feelings of success and a foundation being laid for future success. Participants described experiences through work as providing them with the opportunity to make themselves better students. Female college student intramural sports officials learn teamwork, time management and diversity through a job that challenges them personally, professionally, and socially. By proving to the campus community and themselves that they can achieve anything and work with anyone, participants articulated how working on-campus helps you gain a passion for success, as a female, as a student and in their future careers.

THE TWO MODELS

The purpose of the study was to determine how working as a sports official in a college intramural sports program contributes to the developmental growth of female college students. The researcher denoted four categories which described and affected the identity development of female college student intramural sports officials: external influences, internal perceptions, intersecting identities, and student success. The following two models reflect the emergent nature of this study by showing how each category affects another. The first model, A Model for Student Success in Female College Student Intramural Sports Officials answers the primary research question: What is the meaning between the relationship of identity development and intramural sports officiating for female college students in a higher education setting? The second model, A Model for Identity Development in Female College Student Intramural Sports
Officials, answers the secondary research questions: (a) How do female college student intramural sports officials filter societal messages on gender roles in sport? And (b) How does their personal view of women affect their identity development as a female college student intramural sports official?

**A Model for Student Success**

The model for student success answers the research question: What is the meaning between the relationship of identity development and intramural sports officiating to female college students in a higher education setting? The researcher denoted one core component found in female college student intramural sports officials that led to their own definitions of success within themselves. See Figure 5 for a visual diagram on the following page explaining the achievement of student success in female college student intramural sports officials.
Participants were asked to give their definition of student success and what it meant to them in terms of academics, gender, work and future plans. Female college student intramural sports officials expressed student success in very basic terms but elaborated more in other areas of how they are successful. The subcategories established fell only under transferrable skills as this topic had very separate, tangible items articulated by the participants. The category of student success and its subcategories became the definitive link between identity development and intramural sports officiating for female college student intramural sports officials.

A core component for student success in female college student intramural sports officials was identified as a knowledge, or awareness, of self-identity. Becoming
critically aware of one’s own “composing of reality” requires acknowledging that one’s identity is a part of knowing (Baxter-Magolda, 2003). Participants’ descriptions of experiences through the identities of athlete, female, college student, and intramural sports official led to a knowledge of self perhaps not found in other college students and constructed a reality only they could know. The researcher found that without awareness of self, participants would have difficulty setting and achieving goals both academically and personally, understanding what activity outside of the classroom was right for them, and developing relationships and skills needed to become successfully employed in the future. The links between the intersecting identities of female college student intramural sports officials presented the idea that on-campus employment, specifically intramural sports officiating, enhances, if not, leads to student success.

Intramural sports officials, male and female, are part of a small group of students and sports officials who referee their peers on an almost daily basis. Intramural sports officials will possibly sit next to intramural participants in class and mingle with them in social settings, live next door to them in their dorm, or even be close friends with them from high school. At no other level of sports officiating is it likely to step on the field or court to referee participants of your similar age or social status. With the uncommon intersecting roles of female, college student and intramural sports official adding a much more social aspect to the job than in any other sports arena or on-campus job, female college student intramural sports officials may have a completely different college experience than their male counterparts. Colleges and universities also have a shorter window of time to manage issues affecting female intramural sports officials such as loss
of staff due to waning interest, societal messages received, demands on a student’s time and the pressure of being a college student (Titlebaum, Haberlin, & Titlebaum, 2009).

**The Model for Identity Development**

The following section incorporates all of the aspects previously mentioned to represent how identity develops within female college student intramural sports officials. The model explains the phenomena of female college students as intramural sports officials and relationship to identity development. See Figure 6 on the following page for the visual diagram that represents identity development of female college student intramural sports officials.
External Influences (Gender Roles, Relationships, Time/Location, Campus Culture) are filtered through and into the self-identity of the female college student intramural sports official and have an effect on her identity. The effect of external influences will depend on her internal perceptions, or internal dialogue, in regards to self-esteem, goal orientation, attitude, and views on gender. True self-identity depends on the management of each of the intersecting identities, acceptance of herself within each of these roles and how they relate to each other.
Under the theme external influences, gender roles discuss the idea that males are automatically more credible than females in every aspect of the sports arena with blatant sexist remarks and comments directed toward female college student intramural sports officials and even the females themselves viewing women negatively. This category includes the subcategories of general expectations and sexism. Participants explained various relationships and how they impacted their experiences and behavior as intramural sports officials, females and college students. This led to the creation of the subcategories of peer, family, faculty and on- and off-the field. To better highlight participants’ perceptions of how the campus culture affected their experiences as intramural sports officials and college students, the following subcategories were created: “jock school”, opportunity, and visibility.

The theme of internal perceptions includes an internal dialogue female college student intramural sports officials seemed to have within themselves to navigate identity development and external influences. Subcategories to explain the dialogue within self-esteem include confidence level, filtering, and awareness. Participants articulated their confidence levels and filtering of societal messages as making them more aware of self. Female college students set goals in and outside of the classroom, hold themselves accountable for their actions and achieve those goals while keeping academic focus at the forefront leading to the subcategories under goal-orientation: achievement, academic focus, and accountability. Within participants’ experiences, attitude became a major focal point of internal dialogue. To better express participants’ attitudes, subcategories became determination, integrity, pride, and reflection. Finally, while gender became an obvious
internal perception, subcategories were not necessary because it was such a general idea throughout participants’ comments.

Each category in the theme of intersecting identities became a subcategory within itself due to the overlapping nature of the categories. Participants’ articulation of identity intersection included constantly battling identity but showed an awareness of self that few other students may be able to voice. Whether they express gender within their definition of self or not, awareness of internal perceptions versus external influences proved that female college student intramural sports officials are faced with their gender identity frequently. Finally, female college student intramural sports officials have different personalities on and off the field that may affect the way they act as a female, college student, intramural sports official and their perceptions of self and others.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an in-depth overview of the data analysis procedures, imparted the researcher’s findings, and discussed the grounded theory that explains the meaning of the relationship between identity development and intramural sports officiating for female college students in a higher education setting. Data analysis procedures were explained in great detail, and the researcher offered examples to show their application within grounded theory methodology. The findings of the study were communicated in a narrative form using the words of the participants, sources of data triangulation, and the researcher’s own observations and thoughts. Finally, the researcher provided a summary of the grounded theory through the use of two models.
Chapter Five is the final chapter of this study. In this chapter, the researcher discusses the findings in relation to Chickering’s (1979) theory of identity development. Implications for practice in Higher Education Student Affairs divisions, Campus Recreation Intramural Sports programs and Academia are also noted. Lastly, the researcher comments on limitations of the study and makes recommendations for further study.

**Theoretical Implications**

Arthur Chickering’s (1979) theory of identity development served as the theoretical basis for this study. Student affairs practice, and the student development theories that have supported it since the middle of the twentieth century, grew from a counseling and vocational psychology approach (Miller & Prince, 1976). Torres, Jones and Renn (2009) discussed how “identity is often conceptualized as a developmental construct...emphasizing the fluid, dynamic, and performative nature of identity” (p. 578). This suggests that individuals create and recreate their identity through their actions, which are constantly shifting (Abes & Kasch, 2007). Chickering (1979) proposed seven vectors specific to college students within Erik Erikson’s (1959) stage of identity crisis, however, his vectors were not mutually exclusive or unilinear (Torres et al, 2009).

Because identity is influenced by students’ many roles, expectations, and beliefs, it is important to address the intersectionality of identity dimensions (Torres et al, 2009).
Throughout the study, emergent data echoed research that female college student intramural sports officials “inhabit multiple social locations that are lived and experienced simultaneously (Jones, Kim, & Skendall, 2009, p. 698; Dill, McLaughlin, & Nieves, 2007). Baxter-Magolda (2009) discussed the importance of constructing a holistic perspective on student development requiring focus on intersections rather than separate constructs. This more recent perspective along with the emergent data led the researcher to focus on intersection of identity as an integral part of explaining the experiences of female college student intramural sports officials.

**Seven Vectors.** Chickering and Reisser (1993) called the seven vectors “major highways for journeying toward individuation” (p.35). This study confirmed that female college student intramural sports officials move through the vectors at different rates, that vectors can interact with each other, and that they often find themselves reexamining issues associated with vectors they had previously worked through (Evans et al, 1998). Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) revised theory included the following vectors: (a) developing competence, (b) managing emotions, (c) moving through autonomy toward interdependence, (d) developing mature interpersonal relationships, (e) establishing identity, (f) developing purpose, and (g) developing integrity. Astin’s (1984) “theory of involvement” demonstrated by the links between involvement and a range of attitudinal and developmental outcomes, was also apparent in this study.

Female college student intramural sports officials noted that working as an intramural sports official made them better students, better leaders, and better communicators. All participants discussed the confidence gained from being an
intramural sports official and how it affected their self-esteem, their academics, their relationships and their futures. Female college student intramural sports officials commented on society’s overall negative perceptions of women in sport as expected behavior from intramural participants. A few participants spoke on their current identity as difficult to establish or a work in progress. Although the presence of a strong female role model was apparent in most participants, it was not addressed fully by the participants. The researcher found that participants did not really think much about other females in their lives as affecting their experiences in officiating even as several mentioned that their mothers pushed them to pursue officiating. As one participant mentioned, the researcher’s professional roles as Intramural Sports Director and sports official may have also provided a strong female role model or mentor that contributed to another avenue of support and/or success. The participants further related a sense of invisibility, not as females, but as student employees within the campus community, which implies that academic focus, and not extracurricular activity, may still be at the forefront of institutional pressures.

The researcher found that cognitive development played a large role in identity salience for female college student intramural sports officials. Older, more experienced intramural sports officials were more reflective and expressive when asked questions in regards to gender, identity and experiences on and off the playing field. The older, more experienced participants had already found their way through most, if not all, of Chickering’s vectors. Younger, less experienced intramural sports officials seemed to be slowly navigating the vectors and less aware of identity salience and development. Age
and length of time as intramural sports officials were both factors in participants’ ability to productively reflect on the meaning of the relationship between identity development and intramural sports officiating.

**Developing competence.** Developing competence includes intellectual, physical and manual, and interpersonal qualities (De Larossa, 2000). The intellectual level involves the development of forming points of view when dealing with life experiences. Characteristics of the physical and manual levels include athletic and artistic achievement along with increasing self-discipline. Chickering and Reisser (1993) defined interpersonal qualities encompassing skills of listening, understanding, and communicating and functioning in different relationships.

This study validated the presence of developing competence as a part of identity development in female college student intramural sports officials. The intellectual level presented itself in every participant’s feelings on societal perceptions of traditional gender roles. Concerns were raised when a few found themselves viewing female officials negatively and inline with negative experiences they had faced while officiating. While a few participants noted that they held those same negative views of women in sport, most felt that experiencing those negative comments or behaviors from participants made them a “stronger person in general”. Some participants actually mentioned attainment of physical and manual competence in their feelings that they had to prove themselves because they were females and perceived automatically as a “bad ref”. Several participants also referenced that they go to work to “be the best I can” or “do the best I can”. This sense of goals and achievement resonated through all participants’
comments and confirms the realization of self-discipline by the female college student intramural officials in this study. Most participants also found that they established more understanding for participants when they saw them on-campus or in class than on the field. This awareness seemed to enhance their interpersonal skills when it came to communicating and functioning within overlapping identities, one as a college student and one as intramural sports official. One participant did note the negative effects sports officiating produced when relating to other students on-campus in viewing a specific group of intramural participants, Greek Fraternity members, as people who just don’t care about the sport, about her personally and what she does, or how it effects perceptions of them on campus. This level of understanding, while different from others, actually shows she is very aware of her identity in relationship to others.

Managing emotions. The second vector of Chickering’s (1979) theory is managing emotions. Managing emotions become important so that feelings of anxiety, anger, depression, guilt, shame, desire, and embarrassment do not grow to the point that they interfere with educational progress or process (De Larossa, 2000). Knowing and becoming aware of these emotions at their minimum and maximum levels and finding ways to cope with them are key to moving through this vector (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

The researcher found that female college student intramural sports officials seem to move through this vector fairly quickly. One of the most prominent life skills learned through intramural sports officiating amongst the lower classmen was the increased ability to manage conflict. As Participant 2, a sophomore, stated “It’s helping me
become…more confrontational, when I need to be. You’re forced to deal with the problems at hand…you can’t just run away from it.” Other participants mentioned that the job of intramural sports official might be the only place they gain experience in dealing with conflict that will make them a better employee in their future careers.

Being an athlete prior to attending college and coming out to officiate intramural sports seemed to give these females confidence in themselves before they stepped onto campus. As participants explained in this study, being females in the male-dominated world of sports officiating, they must have “thick skin” and “roll with the punches”. The researcher found that they quickly began to realize that the campus community, including intramural participants, institutional faculty and staff, as well as their friends, truly has no idea what they do at work or why they do it. Most of the participants noted that the “automatic lack of respect” led them to questions themselves at some point, but the more confident they became, the better communicator they became with others and with themselves.

**Moving through autonomy toward interdependence.** The third vector defines autonomy as dependence on others and interdependence as dependence on one’s self (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Moving through autonomy toward interdependence requires the individual to have emotional and instrumental independence (De Larossa, 2000). When the individual begins to strive for one’s goals and express her own opinion separate from family, friends, teachers, etc., emotional independence occurs. Instrumental independence includes self-direction, problem-solving, and mobility (Evans et al, 1998). Thinking up ideas and then putting those ideas into action is instrumental independence
(Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Students come to realize the importance of interdependence and become aware of their interconnectedness with others (Evans et al, 1998).

The researcher found that the intersection of identities was key for participants to develop emotional and instrumental independence. The roles of female, college student, athlete, and intramural sports official all provided characteristics that allowed participants to navigate college and life based on their individual definition of success. All participants were very goal-oriented in their academic pursuits, work ethic and career plans. Participants seemed to start the process of moving through this vector the day they stepped onto campus prior to becoming intramural sports officials. The intramural sports official identity intersected with being a college student in the realization for most participants that the life skills learned from sports officiating helped them in achieving their goals and encouraged them to develop their own opinions of themselves and others. Athlete identity’s influence became apparent when participants began to define the term athlete and connect it to their self-identity. The participants, with the exception of one Freshman, immediately saw the overlap in qualities of an athlete, intramural sports official and college student. Gender did not seem emotionally to play as big a role to the participants, however, being a female conditioned to plod through negative preconceptions of their gender, assisted participants tremendously in realizing their interconnectedness with the campus community and how they can positively change perceptions of women in sport.
**Developing mature interpersonal relationships.** Chickering and Reisser (1993) discussed two aspects of developing mature interpersonal relationships: (a) tolerance and appreciation of differences, and (b) capacity for intimacy. Tolerance is intercultural and interpersonal with understanding of a person based on qualities they possess instead of stereotyping (De Larossa, 2000). The capacity for intimacy entails moving from dependence on others toward an interdependence between people in one’s environment (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Both aspects involve the ability to accept individuals for who they are, to respect differences, and to appreciate commonalities (Reisser, 1995).

More experienced female college student intramural sports officials highlighted an increased realization that the intramural sports environment is different from most on-campus settings and that intramural participants could act differently off the court or field. Participant 1, a senior who has officiated for three years, commented “as a student, it made me aware that these people are different on the field than they are in class” and “it makes me more willing to see someone a second time”.

Female college student intramural sports officials seemed to have more trouble within this vector when dealing with other female college student intramural sports officials. Most participants noted an unspoken connection with other female college student intramural sports officials. Societal perceptions of traditional roles seemed to play a part in the ability to develop mature, supportive relationships with their peer female college student intramural sports officials as most commented that their perceptions of women as officials was stereotypically negative. The researcher also observed an added undertone of competition among the participants that may relate to their innate identity as
a female athlete where competition rules the game. As participants discussed their thoughts about, views of and relationships with other female college student intramural sports officials, comments were vague and somewhat disinterested in the topic of establishing relationships with other females at work. Not until follow-up interviews with direct questions relating to the lack of relationships between female college student intramural sports officials did participants seemed to realize the potential for and advantage of developing better relationships amongst themselves to create a more united front against negative societal perceptions.

**Establishing identity.** Establishing identity encompasses development that occurs in the first four vectors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The development of identity includes the following: (a) comfort with body and appearance, (b) comfort with gender and sexual orientation, (c) sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context, (d) clarification of self-concept through roles and life-style, (e) sense of self in response to feedback from valued others, (f) self-acceptance and self-esteem, and (g) personal stability and integration (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Knowing one’s self and the attitudes towards one’s self is important in establishing identity (De Larossa, 2000).

The researcher found that participants either had words to describe their current self-identity immediately or hesitated to identify themselves within a role or characteristic. As intended in Chickering’s (1979) identity development theory, establishing identity seemed to be occurring at different times for the participants with most understanding that identity is everchanging. Academic class, athlete identity and age seemed to play a larger part in comfort levels with appearance and gender and self-
concept than number of semesters officiating. However, some participants did indicate that more officiating experience would provide them with more confidence and respect for self at work and on-campus.

Participants noted how actions of other students while playing intramural sports have affected their perceptions of those same students on- or off-campus. One of the experienced officials acknowledged that she is much more aware that people are different on and off the field, just as she is different when she is not officiating. Several participants had similar comments, however, these comments were mostly made by older, experienced female college student intramural sports officials. Based on these remarks, the researcher found that this realization of self in relationship to others enabled a few participants to have moved through this vector but each other them knew they would be back to it in the future. The researcher also noted that age and academic class played a large part in this vector, but that each of the participants was moving toward establishing identity if they had not already achieved it or did not want to define it.

**Developing purpose.** The sixth vector is developing purpose. Developing purpose focuses on career goals, personal aspirations, commitments to family, and other aspects of one’s own life (De Larossa, 2000). To move through this vector, college students must make decisions to learn to balance career and personal goals as well as family commitments (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

The resounding theme of life skills learned amongst female college student intramural sports officials was time management. Participants noted that their biggest
challenge when deciding to work as an intramural sports official was managing their time to be successful as a student, an official and as a person. The ability to be a student, have a job and be successful at both resonated with each participant and alluded to the fact that goals played a major part. Every participant mentioned attainment of goals as a measure of Student Success. The navigation to reach those goals was not always easy, but each participant was on the road to achievement or already had achieved their goals and created new ones.

**Developing integrity.** Integrity for one’s beliefs, values, and purposes must be established to fully develop identity. Also, thinking about others beliefs and points of view and the willingness to preserve self-respect while monitoring behavior is important in college students’ development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). One of the components of identity development that arises quickly on most campuses is the process of students learning how to balance their needs with the needs of others (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Kroger, 2004; Torres et al, 2009).

Sportsmanship and respect became common topics among participants when societal perceptions of traditional gender roles were mentioned. Every participant held strongly to her values and beliefs that women were just as strong and capable as men and preserved that self-respect even when facing negativity from others in regards to their roles as female college student intramural sports officials. Respect for self and others remained steady when discussing societal views, goals, and support for and from others.
Theoretical Implications Summary

Chickering (1979) argued that educational environments exert powerful influences on student development and proposed nine key factors: (a) institutional objectives, (b) institutional size, (c) student-faculty relationships, (d) curriculum, (e) teaching, (f) friendships and student communities, (g) student development programs and services, (h) integration of work and learning, (i) recognition and respect for individual differences, and (j) acknowledgment of the cyclical nature of learning and development.

This study presented aspects within the development of female college student intramural sports official that support all nine of Chickering’s (1979) proposed ideas when it comes to implications for educators. Participants articulated that experiences in intramural sports officiating led them to create a variety of relationships within their campus community, some positive and some negative.

The researcher found that perhaps, prior to this study, participants may not have either viewed part of their identity to be intramural sports official, but during and after the process, participants began to understand where the role fit into their identity. While personality characteristics were not assessed, it became obvious that certain traits were present in participants, including goal-oriented, resilience and focus on purpose. Within Chickering’s (1979) theory, an individual’s purpose overrides everything else and eclipses the vectors in the process of identity development. In reflection, most participants expressed recycling through the vectors to attain student success and gain a clearer sense of identity upon leaving college to enter the workforce. The researcher was able, through interviews, to bring to light for participants how the environment of
intramural sports officiating exerted powerful external influences and created compelling internal dialogues while leading them to learn through work for identity development and student success.

**Limitations**

Several limitations exist in this study. Some of the most obvious limitations exist within the demographics of the participants. This study was very much the experiences and stories of white female college student intramural sports officials. Only one participant identified as Black or African-American and was unavailable for a follow-up interview due to her commitments with Air Force ROTC. The lack of representation in terms of race and ethnicity is noteworthy. A more diverse participant group, while unachievable due to the demographics of the entire population of female college student intramural sports officials at the research site, could have provided greater context to the study.

Data are not generalizable due to the qualitative nature of the study. The study was conducted at one institution, further limiting general applicability of data and findings. The presence of a female Intramural Sports Director, who was an intramural sports official as a college student and collegiate level sports official while supervising the participants, definitely influenced some participants’ experiences as intramural sports officials at the research site. While the professional role of the researcher arose through the answers of one participant, the researcher did not delve further in to this topic in order to limit researcher bias.
The researcher’s bias towards the female college student intramural sports official population was another limitation on the research. This bias stemmed from the researcher’s own experiences as an intramural sports official as an undergraduate college student as well as her experiences as a high school and college athlete and collegiate level sports official. Another bias came from the researcher’s role as supervisor, sports officiating trainer or academic instructor to all participants at some point in their experience as a female college student intramural sports official.

Perhaps the greatest limitation was the inexperience of the researcher with qualitative exploration. Novice mistakes were certainly made which impacted data analysis and findings within the study. The researcher would have liked to investigate further the effects female role models possibly had on participants. However, not knowing how to ask proper questions about her possible role in participants’ experiences, without increasing researcher bias, led to limited data emerging on that topic. This possibly could have led to more insight into how and where gender fit in to the identity development of female college student intramural sports officials. Furthermore, the researcher had to rely on self-reported data from participants in regards to academic class, ethnic background, and work experiences, which adds inherent bias to the study.

**Implications for Practice and Policy**

This study provides several important implications for practice. By understanding the areas in which a female college student intramural sports official faces challenges, practitioners can be more aware when issues arise and be prepared to discuss them with the student. The researcher found that awareness of self-identity is a critical factor and
core component to student success. Because reflection is emerging as a critical component in student development, practitioners need to be able to identify and promote strategies for productive reflection (Hall et al, 2008). Practitioners must be able to provide female college student intramural sports officials with better opportunities to develop relationships amongst themselves and create an environment throughout the campus of sportsmanship.

Although success has often been narrowly defined, Tinto (1975) argued that persistence to graduation is predicted by students’ academic and social integration into the institution. Perhaps the greatest discovery of this study was that female college student intramural sports officials, through on-campus student employment, gain skills they may not have acquired otherwise. Being presented immediately and often with negative societal views of women in their work as intramural sports officials, participants established filtering methods and awareness of self in to relation to others perhaps quicker than if they were either not officiating, only at college to be a student or in a different job on campus. Work as an on-campus employee provides students with a view of the campus culture from a different and professional perspective. It is vital that this one subculture is not the only on-campus arena for students to gain skills that are transferrable to their personal and professional lives. Higher education professionals must stop asking students what they think they learn as on-campus student employees through Likert scale surveys and dig deeper into student success through genuine conversations outside of their offices.
Another finding was that while participants felt they were part of something within the intramural sports program, they hesitated to establish relationships with each other due to feelings of competition. Female college student intramural sports officials sense the campus community does not fully understand what they do as intramural sports officials nor are they concerned with the sacrifices that these young women are making to provide a safe, fair sports environment. Female college student intramural sports officials feel they are strictly used as either an informational tool for students to learn whether games are rained out or a nail to be hammered on the day after they or one of their co-workers called an unsportsmanlike foul. This is one area where student affairs and intramural sports professionals may be able to encourage further development. The relationship found in this study between participants and staff members allowed for some of these conversations to begin, however, the researcher did not realize, until the completion of the study, how her previous role as a female sports official and mentor could have facilitated some different discussions amongst participants leading to them becoming more comfortable sooner with each other on and off the field. Discussions centering on camaraderie amongst female officials and/or differences between male and female officials as well as intentional mentor programs partnering female officials could encourage relationship development between intramural sports officials. No matter the gender of the intramural sports professional who supervises female college student intramural sports officials, they must be aware of the differences in experiences between males and females in intramural sports officiating to enable continued success of students on and off the field.
A huge implication for practice also includes the indication that Intramural Sports programs are not just an outlet for fun and more life skill learning may take place not just as a participant, but as a student employee in the program. This hopefully will translate into the awareness by other Student Affairs professionals outside of Campus Recreation that recreation programs are valuable and can actually help all Student Affairs programs achieve their goals of promoting and showing college students the avenue to student success. The skills learned through intramural sports officiating can be translated into other jobs on campus if Student Affairs professionals intentionally create opportunities to “fail forward”. While it is difficult to emulate the unique environment of intramural sports officiating, Student Affairs professionals need to be aware that they can aid student success through similar engagement and training activities.

Another implication for practice is participants’ views of faculty’s lack of interest in their activities outside of the classroom. Most study participants noted that, unless initiated by the female college student intramural sports official, faculty did not seem interested in their lives outside of academics. The researcher found participants wanted faculty to be more aware of students’ outside commitments that affected and enhanced their educational focus. Academic and student affairs professionals should look at extracurricular activity as a way to connect to their student body not alienate them. On most campuses, Campus Recreation programs, including intramural sports, touch more students on campus than most other non-academic programs. Regardless of major, faculty members’ interest in student success should be a constant presence in the student’s mind as opposed to only associated with sitting in a classroom and being
Intramural sports participants also seemed to ignore the idea that intramural sports officials work hard to provide an opportunity for the campus community to participate in safe, fair competitive sports. While intramural sports officials may choose to remain invisible within the college student community to maintain anonymity on the playing field, methods must be devised to support intramural sports officials as academic students and student employees. More effective measures must be developed to educate the campus community on sportsmanship and respect for their peers in a competitive sports environment such as intramural sports. College recreational sports professionals can begin to document their impact on student development and assist the entire campus community in understanding the role college recreational sports departments play in the broader mission of the university (Fortman & Haines, 2011).

Intramural sports professionals continuously look for ways to teach intramural sports participants about sportsmanship and encourage better behavior on the playing field. Most of these practices include one-on-one interaction with intramural sports participants following ejection for unsportsmanlike behavior or captains meetings with the designated “leader” of intramural sports teams. One policy consideration is the need for diversity education in regards to not just women, but to all genders, races and backgrounds, for all intramural sports participants and officials. While diversity education courses are available on most campuses, rarely are they mandated unless due to a specific situation. The inherent international and competitive nature of sport, along with
traditional views of women, gives diversity education a new meaning. Sessions would provide another point of contact between the institution and students. The result of these courses could also create increase a more conducive atmosphere to sportsmanlike conduct, decrease negativity towards women in general, and give intramural sports participants a greater understanding of positions on both sides of the field. As most intramural sports programs track unsportsmanlike issues, diversity education course documentation could provide a method for linking behavioral issues for students outside of the classroom and help student affairs professionals reach out to students and give more opportunities to more students to achieve success.

Student Affairs and youth development professionals could also look at how sports officiating would fit into positive youth development frameworks and programs. A couple of the participants officiated youth sports prior to working for intramural sports. They indicated that dealing with poor sportsmanship issues at an earlier age from a different view than as an athlete helped them learn to deal with others better. Many youth programs focus on sports and recreation from a participant standpoint. If youth development professionals began to show youth at an earlier age both sides of the field, athlete and sports official, perhaps sports officials would not be looked down upon as much and communication and conflict management skills would improve while increasing self-esteem.

A final implication for both practice and policy pertains to academic offerings of sports officiating courses. Several of the participants began intramural sports officiating by taking a one-hour credit leisure skills sports officiating course specifically designed to
train students officiate intramural sports and educate students on how they can learn transferrable skills through officiating. Participants’ answers and reflections provide a solid reason for a course such as this to continue to be offered and perhaps be expanded into other programs such as Women’s Studies, Athletic Leadership, Recreation and Sport Management, etc.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

The purpose of this study was to inform readers of the experiences of female college student intramural sports officials in relation to their identity development during college. While the study achieved its purpose, the researcher found several topics that should be investigated further. The following paragraphs discuss the researcher’s recommendations for further study related the female college student intramural sports official subculture as well as the culture of intramural sports and campus recreation departments.

This study lacked representativeness in terms of race and ethnicity. The lack of diversity in the current population at the research site may have effected representation. However, future research should seek out more diverse populations if available and incorporate how participants’ experiences are influenced by race and ethnicity.

Future studies should inquire about “factors such as strong group membership, learning about leadership, and presence of mentors” (Komives, Longerbeam, Owens, & Mainella, 2006, p. 405). A more specific study might focus on the part a strong female role model or mentor may have played in the female college student intramural sports official’s experiences and identity development during college. The external influences
on a female college student intramural sports official’s experiences and identity were
very apparent in this study. Research that examined support more in-depth from females
outside of their peers would provide better information on how female college student
intramural sports officials became involved in sport as athletes and officials and what
drives them to set goals and succeed.

A study examining the relationships, or lack thereof, between female college
student intramural sports officials would provide further description of the impact of
competition in the relationships of female college students and in sports officiating in
general. By using focus groups of female college student intramural sports officials, the
researcher would have been able to delve into the subcategory of relationships with co-
workers much more visibly. This insight would provide Student Affairs professionals
with ways to encourage support groups and decrease competition amongst female college
students.

As the population studied is unique to one subculture at an institution, another
area of interest is to compare female college student intramural sports officials with other
on-campus female college student employees. A study using focus groups along with
interviews including all on-campus female college student employees would provide
institution faculty and staff members more insightful understandings into the way in
which on-campus female college student employees make meaning of their experiences
during college and navigate their academic progress.

Another avenue of research would be to further delve into other student
population’s definitions of student success and examine whether an institution is
supporting its students in the proper way. By determining the other core components of student success, institutions and Student Affairs practitioners can re-evaluate strategic plans, visions, missions and goals to properly align with the goals and successes of students.

To fully understand the societal perceptions of female college student intramural sports officials, members of the campus community, including male college student intramural sports officials, intramural sports participants, faculty, and staff should be interviewed. By including these participants in a study, a researcher would be able to verify or deny the claims of the female college student intramural sports officials that males are automatically “viewed with more credibility” or intramural sports participants “look at you completely different if you’re a girl”. A study such as this may also measure the campus climate in regards to the intramural sports program at any institution.

The researcher studied only female college student intramural sports officials in this study. A separate study of male college student intramural sports officials within the theoretical framework of Chickering’s (1979) identity development theory would provide Student Affairs and Intramural Sports professionals with additional information on how to support on-campus student employees. In particular, a study, which examined identity development of male college student intramural sports officials, would offer the discovery of the similarities and differences in identity development for males and females through sports officiating.

Qualitative research could also be used to study the attitude of student employees towards the Campus Recreation department at any institution. For campuses that are
concerned with the impact Student Affairs programs have on their student employees, studies of this type would emphasize areas of improvement in training, advisement and supervision of student employees. Studies gauging the climate of a Campus Recreation Department should include all constituents within the facility and program areas – professional (permanent and temporary) staff, student employees, outside vendors, and facility and program participants.

Lastly, quantitative research is needed to add to this study and create generalizable results. The primary area of interest that would benefit from quantitative study is the concern that academic faculty seem not to be worried about the outside activities of students and how academic success may be affected by those activities. Quantitative examination would provide understanding of faculty’s priorities when it comes to student success and give information on how to get faculty involved outside of the classroom. Research would also provide faculty information on programs outside of the classroom that would successfully supplement their teachings.

Another area for quantitative research should focus on opportunities of campus support outside of faculty for on-campus student employees. While most quantitative studies administered to student employees center on finding out what life skills are being learned from employment, research concentrating on the needs and expectations of students through on-campus employment would provide Student Affairs practitioners alternate ways to enhance student success and ensure divisional definitions of student success match those of the students they are serving.
CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter Five is the final chapter of this dissertation. The researcher discussed theoretical implications of this study related to Chickering’s (1979) identity development theory. Limitations of the study were noted in detail and the researcher put forward implications for practice which resulted in findings from the study. Finally, the researcher made recommendations for further study of female college students, intramural sports officials, and on-campus student employees in and outside of Campus Recreation.
APPENDICES
Appendix A

Participant Information Sheet

Please answer the following questions:

1. Please circle the group you most closely identify with.
   a. American Indian or Alaska Native
   b. Asian
   c. Black or African American
   d. Hispanic or Latino
   e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   f. White/Caucasian
   g. Other _______________

2. Please circle one.
   a. Freshman
   b. Sophomore
   c. Junior
   d. Senior
   e. Graduate

3. Please circle one.
   a. U.S. Citizen
   b. International Student

4. Please circle one.
   a. Age 16 – 19 years
   b. Age 20 – 22 years
   c. Age 23 – 25 years
   d. Age 25 years and above

5. Prior to becoming an intramural sports official, did you play on a JV or Varsity sports team or other competitive level sports team? (Please circle one.)
   a. Yes
   b. No

6. If Yes to question 6, at what level? (Please circle one.)
   a. High School
   b. College
   c. Other _______________

7. How many semesters have you worked for Intramurals and in what sports have you officiated? (Please circle one.)
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3 or more

8. If you have refereed sports outside of intramural sports, how long have you been officiating in general and at what level of sports?

__________________________________________

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Appendix B

Interview Questions

• What do you think when you see female referees on TV?

• From your perspective, how is your experience as a female official different than that of male officials?

• Why did you want to become an official with intramural sports?

• Why do you think men are or are not better officials than women?

• Have you had an experience in intramural refereeing in which the fact that you were female played a role? Please describe.

• How has you being a female intramural sports official affected your ability to successfully create relationships on campus, in class, or at work?

• Do you feel that intramural players prejudge you because you are female? Please describe.

• What are the disadvantages of being a female in the field of intramural sports officiating?

• What are the advantages of being a female in the field of intramural sports officiating?

• Do your parents, friends, and/or family members support you officiating intramural sports?

• What kind of support do you feel you receive from your female co-workers? from other female students, female participants, and/or other important females in your life?
- If you were asked to explain your current self-identity, what words would you use?
- Where does sport officiating fit into your self-identity?
- How do you define the term athlete? Do you perceive yourself to be an athlete?
- What do you really want to do as a career? How does sports officiating fit into that goal?
- When communicating with male participants do you feel like they listen to you? What about with male co-workers?
- How do you feel when you put on the stripes to officiate?
- Do you think you have to try harder or be more strict than your male counterparts?
- How do you define Student Success?
- How has being an intramural sports official helped or hurt your ability to maintain your femininity or be successful as a woman? to be academically successful? to be, by your definition, successful?
- Do your faculty members know you work and officiate for intramural sports? What are their thoughts?
Appendix C

Member Check: Phase One

Hi, (Research Study Participant’s Name),

I wanted to thank you for your participation in the female college student intramural sports official research study and bring you up-to-date on my progress. I have transcribed your interview. I am now in the process of conducting initial analysis of the data. I would like to ask you to offer any feedback you might have. I have attached the transcript from your interview. If you would please take a look at the transcript first before moving on to the following request, I would greatly appreciate it.

I also would like to ask you to watch the FIRST MINUTE ONLY of the following video clip with the sound off: http://www.ghsa.net/2011-ghsa-basketball-officials-training-video. Then answer the following questions and email me back your response: What were your thoughts on the officials during the first minute of the video clip? Did you notice the gender of the officials and players? Does watching this video change any of your answers to the interview questions? If so, which one(s) and how would your answer(s) change? How much do you think the campus culture has affected your experience as a female college student and as an intramural sports official?

Please respond to me with any changes or additions that you would like to see in the interviews. Once I finish initial analysis of the data, I may send you another email requesting more feedback.

Once again, please know how much I appreciate your time and assistance with this study. Sincerely, April
Appendix D

Member Check: Phase Two

Hi, (Research Study Participant’s Name),

I wanted to touch base with you once again and update you on my research findings.

I have completed my analysis of the data and have attached a document for your review that includes the overarching themes and categories and subcategories within each theme on the first page. The second page of the document includes a visual diagram that expresses the grounded theory.

The following two parts describe the emergent theory shown in the attached documents.

Part One is a brief explanation of themes, categories and subcategories I have seen emerge thus far from the data. Part Two is a brief explanation of the visual diagram.

Part 1: Emergent Themes, Categories and Subcategories

The primary research question of the study was: What is the meaning of the relationship between identity development and sports officiating for female college student intramural sports officials in a higher education setting? The researcher discovered overarching themes in the navigation of identity development for female college student intramural sports officials: (a) External Influences, (b) Internal Perceptions, (c) Intersecting Identities, and (d) Student Success.

External influences explained the effect social construction has on gender roles, relationships, time and location, and campus culture within the environment of intramural sports officiating and higher education. With men being viewed as more credible in the sports officiating realm, participants described an increased pressure to prove themselves as just as good if not better than their male counterparts. While the athletic environment of intramural sports and the institution encourages participation from all, participants seem to have difficulty relating to some students. Negative or sexist remarks directed
toward female college student intramural sports officials from intramural participants hinder the ability for study participants to establish relationships with their peers on the court or field. Female college student intramural sports officials are receiving great support from family and friends, but intramural participants and faculty remain oblivious to what female college student intramural sports officials do on the court or field and outside of the classroom. Participants noted that the time spent officiating has affected the way they perceive others and possibly how they are perceived as females.

Internal perceptions focus on the internal dialogue of the participants while working through identity development. Participants described intramural sports officiating aiding in increasing their levels of confidence in every aspect of their lives, including, but not limited to, as a person, as a female, in the classroom, in dealing with conflict with others, and in working with others. Filtering negative messages while officiating provided participants with clarification and reinforcement of society’s view of traditional gender roles, however, it also gave them more ammunition to prove to themselves and others that they could be successful at anything. The role of goal setting and attitude was apparent in every participant’s life. Achievement, academic focus and self-accountability for resulted in goal-oriented young women who knew what it would take to be or were working on being successful in everything they did. Moreover, participants indicated that their attitude of determination, integrity and pride in themselves and in their work allowed them to bypass negativity and create their own social construction of reality that women were just as good, if not better than men in whatever they do. However, their social construction also included women being just as
good happening one woman at a time. Very little verbal communication between female college student intramural sports officials occurred to enable relationships that could possibly further the development of each other and women as a whole.

Navigation of identity development began to be explained by the presence of intersecting identities. All participants had at one point identified themselves as an athlete prior to attending or possibly while attending college. The interesting fact was that, when asked to define the term athlete and then self-identity, the similar or the same characteristics were listed. As the identity of sports official was brought to the table, participants once again listed similar characteristics or mentality as an athlete. While gender was not a part of the definition of self-identity for any of the participants, it was obvious across the data that being a female was part of their whole persona most prominent when officiating. The identity of college student remained salient throughout the study. Participants’ academic focus was the reason they were at college, but they didn’t want it to be the only thing they did. All of their goals coincided with academic success but included learning transferrable life skills and different personalities on and off the court or field. Perhaps one of the greatest findings in the navigation of identity development was that female college student intramural sports officials’ internal perceptions or dialogue was sometimes more important than family or peer support, societal views and/or campus culture.

The final theme, Student Success, resonated throughout the study. Participants’ definitions of student success included one main idea: set your own goals and achieve them while being active outside of the classroom. Transferrable skills learned through
being a college student, on-campus employee, and a female all translated to participants feelings of success and the foundation for future success. Participants described experiences through work as providing them with the opportunity to make themselves better students. Female college student intramural sports officials learn teamwork, time management and diversity through a job that challenges them personally, professionally, and socially. By proving to the campus community and themselves that they can achieve anything and work with anyone, participants articulated how working on-campus helps you gain a passion for success, as a student and in their future careers.

**Part 2: Explanation of the visual diagram**

The intersecting identities of a female college student intramural sports official External Influences (Gender Roles, Relationships, Time/Location, Campus Culture) are filtered through and into the self-identity of the female college student intramural sports official and have an effect on her identity. The effect of external influences will depend on her internal perceptions, or internal dialogue, in regards to self-esteem, goal orientation, attitude, and views on gender. True self-identity depends on the management of each of the intersecting identities, acceptance of herself within each of these roles and how they relate to each other.

Again, I invite you to critique my themes, categories and subcategories so that I have accurately portrayed your feelings, thoughts, experiences, etc. I would like your feedback on the diagram to see if it fits your thinking as well. I truly appreciate the time and feedback you have given to this study!

Sincerely, April
REFERENCES


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