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Leadership Development Within NCAA Division I Women's Soccer

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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITHIN NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S SOCCER

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
Beth Diane Solomon
May 2019

Accepted by:
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand what leadership skills are gained through participation in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I women's soccer. The population for this study was eight women on the roster of the NCAA Division I women's soccer team at the research site, a top tier southeastern research institution in the United States during the 2018 soccer season (August-November).

This qualitative research study utilized case study methodology. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The interview transcripts were coded for themes, which were analyzed to further discover what leadership skills were developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer.

This study revealed leadership skills were developed as a result of participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer. The analysis yielded six themes:

- Transferable Skills
- Team Roles
- Acknowledging the Complexity of Leadership and Leadership Development
- Difference in Coaching Strategy
- Self-Awareness
- Acknowledging Family Role.

Implications of findings of this study show that leadership development needs to be a focus of the coaching staff, as leadership skills are developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer. Additionally, ideas for future research studies are discussed.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents; my mom, Janet, and my dad, Joel, who have been on this adventure with me since day one. You are why I have succeeded, and I cannot thank you enough for loving, supporting, and believing in me.

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There are many people who helped me throughout this process who deserve to be acknowledged- there is no way that I could have completed this Ph.D. in three years without them. First to my parents, for supporting me my entire life in my endeavors, from school to ski racing. You helped me find my passions and helped me succeed. Additionally, you both helped fund this journey (and my visits back home), in which I not only found myself, but helped me reach a goal that I have had since I was 18. To Pudge, who came into my life when I needed her most. Pudge licked my tears when times were tough, got me to leave the apartment and walk outside and enjoy life. Pudge (though she cannot read) sat with me while I wrote and edited and was my audience for all of my practice presentations. To my sisters, who sent funny gifs in our family text message chain, photos of dogs, and for laughter when the writing was tough. To my fiancé, Jacob, who loves me unconditionally (even on days I sat in sweats and did school work all day). Jacob, you helped me succeed when I thought I could not. From statistics help, to late night formatting, and everything in between, I will be forever thankful. I love you more than you know. Thank you so much for your support and love during this process.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Chapter one of this dissertation introduces the research study. The chapter contains a summary of background information explaining the significance and purpose of the study, as well as the research question that guided the study. Additionally, there is informational details on the institution where the study was completed, and key operational terms used throughout the dissertation.

The results of this study add to the literature regarding women in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I athletics, specifically women's soccer. Studies have been completed about leadership development, leadership development during college, and leadership development in athletics. Despite studies previously completed, there is a gap in the literature surrounding leadership development for female athletes. Studies that focus on women's soccer typically focus on knee injuries (Sokolove, 2008), and are not focused on the development of leaders. The purpose of this study was to understand what leadership skills are developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer.

Significance of Study

Leaders influence positive change (Maxwell, 2018). Developing leadership skills is necessary so individuals understand how to use their strengths to create positive change (Maxwell, 2018). Leadership development for traditional college students in the United States (U.S.) is often completed by participation in co-curricular activities. Traditional

co-curricular activities can include activity boards, fraternities and sororities, and other student organizations (Weaver & Simet, 2015). Practice and travel schedules for student-athletes at the collegiate level, especially at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I level, is time consuming (Gayles & Hu 2009). As a result, student-athletes are not typically able to participate in the same traditional co-curricular activities as their peers. Therefore, student-athlete leadership development needs to happen as a component of participation in athletics. Leadership development is not always included in practices run by coaches (Weaver & Simet, 2015).

NCAA Division I student-athletes need to balance their time among classes, physical conditioning sessions, team practices, team meetings, and travel for competitions. Traditional co-curricular leadership activities do not fit the schedules of student-athletes (Weaver & Simet, 2015). Furthermore, leadership development is not always a coach's priority, their focus is on winning to maintain job stability. With winning being a priority, leadership development opportunities are not often integrated into practices. Captains, or student-athlete leaders of the team, are often selected based on tenure on the team or their athletic abilities rather than their ability to lead the team (Weaver & Simet, 2015).

Leadership skills are not necessarily taught or supported as student-athletes take on these formal leadership positions (Weaver & Simet, 2015). More needs to be done to help student-athletes develop leadership skills that non-student-athletes are gaining from participation in other campus activities. While the NCAA has a section of their website dedicated to leadership development, it is not about developing specific leadership skills

of student-athletes (NCAA, n.d.). Understanding what leadership skills are developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer could help student-athletes get the most out of their playing experience and be better prepared for life after college. With this information, athletic departments will be able to help student-athletes become aware of the transferable skills that are developed through participating in collegiate athletics.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of what leadership skills are developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer. Much of the current literature on leadership development within athletics either focuses on men's athletics, or athletics in general. While there are studies that focus on women's soccer, Sokolove (2008) noted the older studies tended to focus on knee injuries, specifically Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) injuries and rehabilitation. There is a significant gap in the literature surrounding leadership development within participation in NCAA Division I women's athletics. This study aims to fill a gap within the literature surrounding leadership development in women's sports by focusing on women's soccer, a sport played internationally and on most NCAA Division I campuses. This study not only adds to the literature, the data illustrates what leadership skills are developed by participating in NCAA Division I women's soccer. Coaches, educators, players, and parents benefit from having an understanding of what leadership skills are learned while playing collegiate soccer. This information can help young women prepare for their futures.

Research Question

The following research question guided this study: What leadership skills are developed by participating in NCAA Division I women's soccer? Player perspectives were explored through a qualitative case study.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Northouse's (2019) definition of leadership, and two leadership theories: Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and Transformational Leadership. Specifically, I looked at how Northouse's definition of leadership influences LMX theory and Transformational Leadership theory. I also explored how these leadership theories were utilized within women's soccer. The following section provides a brief overview of the definition of leadership as well as the two leadership theories used in this study. A full discussion occurs in chapter two.

Leadership

There are many definitions of leadership and leadership development seen by work done by Astin (1993), Wren (1995), Maxwell (2018), and Northouse (2019). For this study, I chose to focus on the definition of leadership developed by Northouse (2019). Northouse (2019) stated "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 5). This definition of leadership fits with LMX and Transformational Leadership (outlined below), as it includes influences of the individual, which can also impact relationships.

Leader-Member Exchange

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) is centered on relationships among leaders and followers. Primarily, LMX focuses on the dyadic relationships between the leader and the follower (Graen, 1976). Trust among leaders and followers must exist to make decisions. In my study, leadership relationships are seen informally between players, as well as within formal leadership dyads such as coach and player, or team captain and player.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership theory focuses on the individual within an organization. Change is a large component of Transformational Leadership. Transformational Leadership utilizes Weber's (1947) theories on a leader's charisma impacting others. Selznick (1957), found individuals, with competing interests, impact the attention of leadership. Competing interests balance internal powers within the group. Transformational Leadership theory also links to Northouse's (2019) definition of leadership, specifically, how an individual influences others. A more robust discussion occurs in chapter two.

About the Research Site

The institution where the study was conducted is a high-level research university located in southeastern United States (U.S.). The institution is a state land grant institution with a student enrollment of 20,000 and 25,000 students (undergraduate and graduate) in Fall 2018. The total number of students included in-state, out-of-state, and international students. For athletics, the institution competes as a part of one of the NCAA Division I conferences.

The university's athletic department supervises both men's and women's athletics. Teams supported by the athletic department for NCAA Division I competition included baseball, basketball, cross country, track and field, football, golf, soccer, tennis, volleyball, rowing, and softball. The athletic department has an academic staff in addition to athletic directors, trainers, compliance staff, and coaches.

Methodology

For this study, a phenomenological case study methodology was used. Qualitative case studies have thick, rich descriptions, and are appropriate when researchers are looking to gain a deeper understanding of how a program works, and what dynamics exist (Merriam, 1998). The case study includes the investigation of the bounded unit (Merriam, 1998). The research question for my study was bounded by participation in a season of one women's soccer team. A case study design was an appropriate methodology to gain a deeper understanding of what leadership skills are developed in a NCAA Division I women's soccer team. To inform the full study, a pilot study was conducted during summer 2018.

All participants were on the roster of the research site's NCAA Division I women's soccer team during Fall 2018. To complete the study, semi-structured interviews were completed with participants. Additionally, document analysis was conducted on the team's Website, along with materials given to women during an official recruiting visit to the institution. The recruitment email (found in Appendix A) was sent by the athletic department only to members of the women's soccer team. Since participants were willing to share their experiences with me, I assumed what they were

sharing with me was truthful. Once interviews were transcribed, transcripts were coded using concept or analytical coding (Saldaña, 2016). More about the methodology and analysis can be found in chapter three.

Positionality

As the researcher, acknowledging my positionality is important to increase trustworthiness (Merriam, 1998). I chose the topic of this study because of my past involvement in athletics and my desire for women to be more present in the literature. I also played soccer as a young woman. Additionally, the site was chosen based on feasibility of completing this study as a part of my dissertation. For a full positionality statement, please see Chapter Three.

Trustworthiness of Study

To increase trustworthiness of this study, the researcher utilized several strategies. I acknowledged my positionality and biases I had as the researcher completing the study. To acknowledge biases and keep from incorporating them into my work I kept a researcher journal throughout the process. Through this journal I was able to recognize biases or assumptions I had based on personal experiences (Roulston, 2010). Through the journaling process, I wrote down thoughts, comments, and experiences I had throughout the process. During the pilot study I identified how the codes and themes I found could fit into the full study. I also recorded any codes that could have been identified through the work I did each day. The journal kept me on task and allowed me to see growth in myself as a researcher. Additionally, I was able to identify where biases could be found as a

result of my upbringing, participation in soccer at an early age, or though my learning in the classroom.

I took actions to eliminate assumptions by having participants participate in member checking, a form of participant validation (Whittier, 2013). As a part of the member checking process, I had participants read the redacted transcripts of their interviews and gave them a chance to respond to the codes and themes I had identified through the analysis process. A full discussion of precautions I took to eliminate bias in the writing and boost trustworthiness of this study can be found in chapter three.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

This study utilized case study methodology. For this case study, I utilized qualitative research, meaning I had to interpret the results. There were assumptions made throughout the study (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993). Assumptions included each participant was being honest and truthful with me during their interview. I assumed the recruiting email was sent out to only women on the roster of the NCAA Division I women's soccer team by the athletic department. A delimitation of the study was the case study was limited by one institution and one team being studied.

I also conducted document analysis of the team and athletic department Website, as well as materials given to women during the recruiting process. I reviewed the athletic department Website, and recruiting packet looking for where leadership development was noted. This analysis allowed me to verify participants' experiences, and what they were told. More about the document analysis process can be found in chapter three.

Key Terms Defined

The following operational terms were used throughout this study.

- **National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)**-The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which consists of 1,117 colleges and universities. There are over 100 conferences and 40 affiliated sports organizations. The NCAA is dedicated to the success and well-being of student-athletes (“What is the NCAA?” n.d.).
- **NCAA Division I**- NCAA Division I is one of three divisions within the NCAA, composed of 350 institutions, which tend to have the largest student populations and athletic budgets. There are over 6,000 teams, and over 170,000 student-athletes participating in NCAA Division I athletics. This division is the only NCAA division to have subdivisions based upon football (“NCAA Division I,” n.d.).
- **Title IX**- Title IX was established in 1972. Title IX prevents individuals from discrimination, being excluded, or denied benefits, on the basis of sex in federally funded education programs and activities. Title IX is known for opening the door to collegiate athletics for women, as equal funding was required for both men’s and women’s teams (Title IX and Sex Discrimination 2015, para 1-2).
- **Case Study**- Case studies are qualitative studies used to gain a deeper understanding of how a program works, through thick, rich descriptions. Case studies are bounded by a time and group of individuals (Merriam, 1998).

- **Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX)**- LMX focuses on the dyadic relationships between leaders and followers. These roles include directing, transacting, visioning, and self-managing. Building relationships is the base of this leadership theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991).
- **Transformational Leadership Theory**- Transformational Leadership theory focuses on an individual within an organization. The theory utilized Weber's (1947) theories on charisma, and how individuals can impact others. Transformational Leadership suggests success is created through having and using traits as well as acting on behalf of the organization, or team.
- **Leadership**- "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2019, p.5).
- **Leadership Development**- The process of developing skills and confidence to create leaders who can make positive change. Leadership development can occur in the classroom, from participation in traditional co-curricular activities, or athletics (Weaver & Simet, 2015).
- **Women's Soccer**- A soccer team consisting of all female team members. Women's collegiate soccer began after Title IX was passed in 1972. (Sokolove, 2008, Grainey, 2012).

Summary

Chapter one provided an overview of this study, by explaining the significance of study, the purpose statement of the study, and the research question. The theoretical framework, research question, and research site were discussed. In addition, researcher

positionality, analysis, assumptions and trustworthiness of the study were summarized, as well as outlining key operational terms.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of Chapter two is to give an overview of the literature as it pertains to leadership and leadership development, the student-athlete population, the rise of women's soccer, women in athletics, and leadership development in athletics. The purpose of this study was to understand what leadership skills are developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer. Additionally, I have introduced the definition of leadership and the theories used in the theoretical framework within the study. The research question framing this study was: What leadership skills are developed by participating in a season of NCAA Division I women's soccer?

Leadership and Leadership Development

There are many definitions of leadership. However, leadership definitions in well-known research studies historically include influence in the definition of leadership (Northouse, 2019; Maxwell, 2018). Maxwell (2018) stated, "Leadership is influence" (p. 3). Northouse (2019) defined leadership as "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 5). To understand leadership development, we need to understand what skills positively influence individuals.

Leadership development includes bolstering the skills and confidence of individuals to create positive change. For this study, I chose to focus on the definition of

leadership by Northouse (2019). Northouse's (2019) definition fits well with how collegiate soccer works. The team has a common goal. There are leaders within the group, both formal (coaches and captains), and informal (players) who influence the actions of the group to work toward a common goal. Formal leaders, according to Northouse (2019), are assigned leaders. Players who utilize their leadership positions are emergent leaders. Emergent leaders develop as a result of what one does, and how followers support them (Northouse, 2019). Leadership roles are seen through the formal and informal roles that occur on a soccer team throughout a season. Leadership can be seen through how formal leaders (team captains) work with emergent leaders (team members) to develop relationships which then create and foster a positive environment so the team can be successful.

Leadership Development and Skills in College

For traditional college students in the United States, leadership development often occurs as a result of participation in co-curricular activities. Some traditional co-curricular activities include student activity boards, fraternities and sororities, club sports, and other student organizations (Weaver & Simet, 2015). These organizations and activities are often run by the student involvement or student activities office within a student affairs division on campuses (Weaver & Simet, 2015). Average, non-student athlete, traditional-aged college students have time in their schedules for co-curricular activities. For student-athletes, specifically NCAA Division I collegiate athletes, their practice and travel schedules are time consuming (Gayles & Hu, 2009). Due to time constraints of NCAA Division I collegiate athletics, student-athletes are not typically able

to participate in traditional co-curricular activities. As a result, leadership development for student-athletes needs to occur as a part of participating in collegiate athletics.

Oftentimes, student-athletes are viewed as leaders on campus, as they are in leadership positions (both formal and informal, e.g. team captain). Leadership skills need to be developed for student-athletes just as for other college students. Unfortunately, leadership development skills are not always included in sports due to the focus on winning (Weaver & Simet, 2015).

Though there are formal student-athlete leadership positions (team captains), leadership skills are not necessarily taught by coaches as student-athletes take on these formal roles (Weaver & Simet, 2015). More needs to be done to help student-athletes learn and develop leadership skills that non-student-athletes are gaining from their co-curricular involvements so student-athletes are developing the same skills as their classmates (Weaver & Simet, 2015). Understanding leadership development, as well as the student-athlete population, can provide a lens for looking at leadership development within NCAA Division I women's soccer.

Leadership Development

Leadership development is a part of most collegiate co-curricular activities and has been studied since the early 20th century (Hunter & Jordan, 1939). Leadership development continues to be studied today in many different student populations (Dugan & Komives, 2007; Owen, 2015; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008; Rosch, Collier, & Thompson, 2015). While the literature points to a number of opportunities to develop leadership skills on college campuses, one group that may not get to take advantage of

these leadership development opportunities in traditional ways are student-athletes. NCAA Division I student-athletes have demanding schedules. Student-athletes need to balance classes, classwork, practices, and travel for competitions. As a result, many student-athletes competing at the collegiate level are not able to participate in traditional leadership activities sponsored by departments in divisions of student affairs (Weaver & Simet, 2015). Since many student-athletes, especially at the NCAA Division I level are not able to participate in traditional leadership activities, it is important to understand what leadership skills are developed as a result of their participation in athletics.

Astin (1993) argued men and women need to develop leadership skills in college because they will become leaders in the future. Likewise, Wren (1995) asserted leadership should be considered a human condition because regardless of the time-period or circumstance, the world needs leaders. Additionally, Maxwell (2018) stated, “Leadership is influence” (p. 3). Schools and universities have embraced leadership development, as leaders create positive change (Maxwell, 2018). The foundational work of Astin (1993) and Wren (1995) demonstrated leadership development as an important part of the college experience. Maxwell (2018) reinforced the importance of leadership development in college. With leadership development being included as a part of the college experience, understanding what leadership skills student-athletes develop as a part of their participation in athletics is necessary.

Many leadership skills developed through co-curricular activities are defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) as a part of career readiness

and development. NACE (2019) defined the competencies needed for successful transition into the workplace as:

- Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
- Oral/Written Communications
- Teamwork/Collaboration
- Digital Technology
- Leadership
- Professionalism/Work Ethic
- Career Management
- Global/Intercultural Fluency

The competencies NACE defined are necessary for successful transition from college to the workplace.

Galante and Ward (2015) and Weaver and Simet (2015) argue that leadership development for student-athletes is as vitally important as playing experience. Student-athletes are informal leaders on their teams and on their campuses (Galante & Ward, 2016; Weaver & Simet, 2015). Galante and Ward (2016), and Weaver and Simet (2015) suggest that student-athletes' potential to lead others after their college athletic careers. Despite the lack of participation in "traditional" leadership activities, student-athletes are still viewed as student leaders on campuses based on their participation in intercollegiate athletics. It is necessary to understand how "traditional" leadership activities are a part of the college experience and what leadership skills students gained from participation. The

understanding illustrated the importance of understanding why student-athletes need leadership development experiences as a part of the student-athlete experience.

The Student-Athlete Population

NCAA Division I athletes who participated in sports other than men's ice hockey, skiing, and tennis, must begin their NCAA participation within one year of graduating from high school (NCAA, 2019, p.83). Thus, the majority of student-athletes in the United States in 2018, were categorized as Millennials based on when they were born (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Millennials are categorized as having a birth year starting in 1982 until 2002 (Baker Rosa and Hastings, 2018; Howe & Strauss, 2000). Howe and Strauss (2000) noted the Millennial generation was the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in the U. S. There are distinct characteristics of the Millennial group including being high pressured, anxious, and "hyper-focused on achievement" (Munch, Wagener, Breitzkreutz, & Hellenbrand, 2014, p.38). According to Baker Rosa and Hastings (2018), and Howe and Strauss (2000), Millennials have strong computer skills, but weaker communication skills. Additionally, Millennials have grown up with interactive television, streaming music and digital audio (MP3) players, digital video discs (DVDs), microchips, and personal computers (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Successful utilization of some of these communication devices are considered part of leadership skills (NACE, 2019) essential for the workplace. Understanding what, if any, communication skills are developed as a part of participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer is necessary to understanding student-athlete leadership development.

When looking specifically at leadership development, Fuller, Harrison, Lawrence, Eyanson, and McArdle (2017) found Millennial, male, student-athletes looked at leadership as a social responsibility. They found male, student-athletes wanted to use their leadership skills to create positive social change. These student-athletes were found to be optimistic, and favored collaboration, modeling, and mentorship; all qualities of a leader (Fuller, Harrison, Lawrence, Eyanson, & McArdle, 2017). These results signify the importance of building leadership skills in college athletes. However, without building their leadership skills, student-athletes' desires to effect change may not translate into effective leadership strategies. In order to understand why leadership development in women's soccer is important, understanding how women's soccer grew as a sport is necessary.

The Rise of Women's Soccer

The rise of women's sports in the U. S. increased with the passing of Title IX in 1972 (Grainey, 2012). While Title IX was passed to incorporate gender equity in higher education, athletics were not the main focus. However, with public colleges and universities receiving federal funding, budgets within athletics had to be adjusted, and women's athletics benefited (Grainey, 2012). In 1972 there were 300,000 young women in the U. S. playing high school sports; by 2008, that number had grown to over three million (Sokolove, 2008). The first varsity women's soccer team began at Brown University in 1977 under coach Phil Pincince. Pincince not only started a team but organized games with other colleges and universities. Five years later, in 1982, the NCAA hosted the first women's soccer championship (Grainey, 2012).

The growth of women's soccer continued with the development of youth soccer leagues. When Graineey (2012) wrote his book, *Beyond Bend It Like Beckham: The Global Phenomenon of Women's Soccer*, there were three times as many girls playing soccer than there were girls participating in Girl Scouts. Participation in athletics helped shape girls as they developed into collaborative and competitive women (Sokolove, 2008). Management experts look for collaboration and competitiveness traits in employees when hiring (Sokolove, 2008). With former soccer players in high ranking positions in the workforce, such as executives, the U.S. population had begun to recognize the long-term benefits of girls and women participating in athletics (Sokolove, 2008). By 2007, there were approximately 18 million soccer players. Half of these players were female, with an average age of 15 years old (Graineey, 2012).

During the 1990s, NCAA Division I women's soccer programs experienced the greatest growth. The number of colleges with women's soccer teams tripled, while the number of men's programs remained relatively unchanged (Graineey, 2012). The growth of women's soccer not only changed participation in co-curricular activities for young girls, the sport opened pathways for college athletic scholarships. Soccer also allowed women to stay involved with athletics and soccer after they finished playing competitively by becoming coaches (Graineey, 2012). The growth of women's soccer has confirmed the necessity of understanding what leadership skills are developed through playing NCAA Division I women's soccer. Understanding what leadership skills are developed will not only shed light on how female soccer players coming out of college are prepared for the workforce. Workforce preparedness continues to help women's

soccer grow as parents look to place their children in sports that could have a positive impact on their futures.

Women in Athletic Leadership Roles

In 2007, the NCAA calculated the number of female student-athletes at the Division I level to be 72,419 (Swanton, 2010). The total number of female student-athletes was 48.8% of all Division I student-athletes (Swanton, 2010). Despite the number of women participating in athletics having grown since 1972 and the advent of Title IX, there are still few women as coaches within collegiate athletics (Swanton, 2010). Even with coaching being an option as a leadership position and job for women upon graduation, coaching remains a male-dominated domain (Fasting & Pfister, 2000).

Though the number of female coaches has grown since Title IX, women who become coaches often face resistance by men (Fasting & Pfister, 2000). Swanton (2010) argued there has been little effort to help women integrate into coaching positions. Though the overall number of women participating in NCAA Division I athletics has grown, there is still a need for growth in equitable numbers for women in athletic leadership roles at NCAA Division I institutions. Understanding how participation in NCAA Division I athletics can be positive for women may help to increase participation, and the desire to take a leadership role within a NCAA Division I institution.

Leadership Development in Athletics

Leadership development is not always a coach's priority. Having a winning record is necessary for coaches to keep their jobs (Weaver & Simet, 2015). With winning

being a priority, leadership development opportunities are not typically integrated into practices (Weaver & Simet, 2015). Captains, or student-athlete leaders of teams, are often selected based on their tenure on the team or their athletic abilities rather than their ability to lead (Weaver & Simet, 2015). Leadership skills are not necessarily taught as student-athletes take on these positions. Further, more can be done to help team captains learn leadership skills that non-student-athletes are gaining from participation in other campus activities (Weaver & Simet, 2015).

Participation in athletics is linked to leadership development at the undergraduate level (Galante & Ward, 2016). Galante and Ward (2016) note while many studies have been conducted on leadership styles of coaching; less is known about how coaches implement leadership development in student-athletes. Some studies provide longitudinal data that links participation in leadership programs to helping participants grow in civic responsibility, multicultural awareness, and other competencies that can be career-specific (Galante & Ward, 2016; Weaver & Simet, 2015). While these studies were done with traditional collegiate leadership development programs, there is data from studies with athletes showing leadership development improves satisfaction, communication, motivation, and performance (Galante & Ward, 2016; Weaver & Simet, 2015).

A survey of female executives completed in 2002 revealed that 82% of participants participated in collegiate team athletics (Sokolove, 2008). The study further exemplified leadership skills gained through participation in athletics. These skills depended on the relationship and participation in athletics; whether informal or highly

involved. Women who participated in soccer learned how to lose gracefully, and rebound from disappointment (Sokolove, 2008). Though there are not as many formal leadership roles on a collegiate athletic team, as there are in student organization executive boards, leadership development is still critical for student-athletes.

Gayles and Hu (2009) studied student engagement in academic related activities. While they did not find a direct relationship between engagement and leadership, they did deduce that student-athletes serve in formal and informal leadership roles based on their status as athletes. With large teams (i.e., football, men's and women's soccer, baseball, and others), athletic practices may be held by position, meaning there are smaller groups within the larger team. In these situations, there may not be formal captain roles. Instead, there are individuals who stand out as leaders. These leadership positions are informal; however, they still play a role in the development of the greater team (Gayles & Hu, 2009).

Coaches and staff in collegiate athletic departments work to put together teams for their institutions. Building a team begins with the recruiting process and continues as new players start at the institution. Aoyagic, Cox, & McGuire (2008) highlighted the importance of time spent by coaches and staff in the effort of building effective teams. Team development must be intentional. Therefore, coaches must set aside time for this endeavor. While there are many ways to lead and develop a team, the literature focused on the theories of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and Transformational Leadership (Galante & Ward, 2016; Weaver & Simet, 2015). Understanding what leadership skills

are developed through relationships and transformational moments is one of the goals of this study.

Relationships and interactions are a part of team sports. Understanding what activities are done on and off the field to develop leadership skills will help coaches be more proactive in the future about developing student leaders.

Effect of Leadership Development on College Athletics

Participation in NCAA Division I athletics is a time consuming co-curricular activity. For some athletic programs, navigating the demands of being a scholar-athlete are reversed, meaning the focus is on athletics first. Student-athletes are often seen as athlete-students, meaning athletics are put before academics (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). The demands for time are not hidden during the recruiting or onboarding processes. The focus on academics is highlighted, but when athletes get into their season, pressure from their coaches often shifts their focus to the demands of the sport (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). While understanding the demands on student-athletes' time, it becomes necessary to work leadership development into team practices for student-athletes to reap the greatest benefits from participation in their sport. These leadership skills will help prepare them for the workforce upon graduation (Sokolove, 2008).

Even though leadership development is not necessarily focused on as a result of participating in NCAA collegiate athletics, student-athletes still are profoundly affected by participating in athletics (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001). Howard-Hamilton and Sina (2001) noted many who have studied student development theories have shown

student-athletes develop leadership skills from interactions with other student-athletes, coaches, or staff members (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001). Often, student-athletes are interacting with individuals from a different racial or ethnic background than their own furthering personal development (Howard-Hamilton, Sina, 2001). Participating in collegiate athletics can also help students achieve independence, which is a key component of student development for college students (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001). In addition to collegiate student-athletes developing independence through participation in collegiate athletics, development is occurring within the traditional classroom.

Athletic departments often collaborate and meet with faculty to get a better understanding of a student's course requirements. To help facilitate learning across the entire institution, athletic departments need to work with more than faculty to help student-athletes have the fullest college experience. Athletic departments do not always integrate with student affairs divisions on campuses. Student affairs divisions are responsible for programming which is where a great deal of the outside-the-classroom learning is garnered (Howard-Hamilton, & Sina, 2001). This collaboration among athletics, faculty, and student affairs would allow for work that is done on and off the field within athletics to be linked to the overall institutional mission (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001). The link to the overall institutional mission is something that is often in place for classic co-curricular activities, as they are managed through student affairs. Despite athletics being a part of colleges and universities, there is not always a direct link

to the institutional mission statement. The link between athletics and the institution, beyond representing the school, is not always well defined.

In general, college students are placed under large amounts of stress. Stress can come from financial pressures of attending college, grades, social involvements, etc. College student-athletes are under even more pressure due to the expected performance in their sport (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001). If student-athletes are not supported in a holistic manner, they can be viewed as only athletes, which can perpetuate the “dumb jock” stereotype many student-athletes face at the Division I level. The “dumb jock” stereotype can influence student-athletes to feel less like students first, and more like athlete-students (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). The importance of understanding the effects of leadership development on college students-athletes explains why this study was critical. Knowing what leadership skills student-athletes are gained through participation in a sport is necessary for a well-rounded collegiate experience.

Theoretical Frameworks

I utilized Northouse’s (2019) definition of leadership and two theoretical frameworks about leadership to understand what leadership skills are developed through NCAA Division I women’s soccer. I utilized Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and Transformational Leadership theories as my theoretical framework.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory is focused on relationships between leaders and followers. LMX focuses on the dyadic relationships between the leader and

followers (Graen, 1976). Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991) describe the many roles of a leader to include directing, transacting, visioning, and self-managing.

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991), as well as Marion and Gonzales (2014) described LMX in three phases of building relationships. First, the leader and follower have a transactional relationship. In a transactional relationship, the leader offers performance incentives, and the follower responds due to their self-interest. Second, the relationship becomes an acquaintanceship. To get to the acquaintanceship phase, a member of the dyad must offer to form a defined relationship, and the offer must be accepted. Finally, the pair become a dyad. In this dyad, there is trust and understanding between the two. There is more conversing and sharing personal information in the dyad relationship (Marion & Gonzales, 2014). This dyad is especially crucial in the relationship between coaches and their athletes. There needs to be a trusting understanding between the two to make decisions. In collegiate athletics, coaches must have strong leadership skills and positive, trusting relationships with their athletes to develop necessary leadership skills (Weaver & Simet, 2015).

Developed in the 1970s, LMX focuses on three domains of leadership. According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), LMX theory defines the domains of leadership as leader, follower, and relationship. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) noted that there had been revisions since the inception of the theory. LMX began by looking specifically at leader and follower relationships. More analysis has been completed looking specifically at the different stages of development within LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). While the dyadic relationship has remained a focus, it is an area where the theory can continue to be

developed, as relationships are oftentimes larger than dyadic. Specifically, in regard to athletics, there are dyadic relationships on teams, but there is also the larger group relationship.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership theory is focused on the individual within an organization and how the individual impacts change. Change is a large component of Transformational Leadership. Transformational leaders are change agents for their organizations. For change to be made, traditional rules of the organization may not be followed. Instead, Transformational Leadership theory utilizes leaders who value universal rights and altruism to empower those who are able to create change among the group (Marion & Gonzales, 2014). Often, Transformational Leadership is used with transactional leadership theory where goals are set by leaders, and when the goals are met, rewards are received (Marion & Gonzales, 2014). While transactional leadership may be used with Transformational Leadership to help organizations create change, my focus is specifically on Transformational Leadership. Change must occur in participants for leadership skills to be developed

According to Hunt (1999), Transformational Leadership theory reshaped the study of leadership. Transformational Leadership theory was criticized as a result of the individualistic focus found in the United States. Despite the individualistic focus criticism, the manner in which individuals experience charisma is individualistic. As a result, the experiences and the way they transform individuals will vary.

Marion and Gonzales (2014) listed four elements to Transformational Leadership:

1. Charisma or idealized influence
2. Inspirational motivation
3. Intellectual stimulation
4. Individualized consideration/attention (p.158).

Transformational Leadership utilizes Weber's (1947) theories on a leader's charisma impacting others. Weber (1947) focused on the different personality individuals had based on being viewed by others as a leader. Weber (1947) believed that charisma was a predictor for how influential a leader could be. Individuals will respond to leaders based on charisma, including, but not limited to body language, tone, and visual presentation (Marion & Gonzales, 2014). Bass (1985) stated: "In social science and political science, charisma has been used to describe leaders who by the power of their person have profound and extraordinary effects on their followers" (p. 35).

Transformational leaders have confidence, vision, and drive to create change, even if it is not popular (Bass, 1985).

Selznick (1957), found individuals with competing interests always impact the attention of leadership. Competing interests of team members also balances internal powers within the group. Transformational Leadership suggests success is created through having and using traits as well as acting on behalf of the organization. In the case of athletics, the organization is the team.

Transformational Leadership began to flourish as a theory during the 1970s and 1980s (Hunt, 1999). Criticisms of Transformational Leadership added to the "doom and

gloom” of leadership research during the 1970s and 1980s (Hunt, 1999). The study of Transformational Leadership shifted the way researchers looked at the field of leadership. Transformational Leadership added a new perspective, which focused on creating change in the way leadership was viewed (Hunt, 1999).

Within athletics, utilizing a specific leadership theory can push coaches towards success. McCann, Kohntopp, and Keeling, (2015) noted that transformational coaches are visionary. Additionally, transformational coaches are looking for holistic development (mind, body, and heart) to get full engagement from student-athletes. Coaches who are transformational in their leadership style are looking to develop their student-athletes from followers to leaders (McCann, Kohntopp, & Keeling, 2015).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explain what leadership skills are developed from participation in NCAA Division I women’s soccer. The following research question guided the study: What leadership skills are developed by participating in a season of NCAA Division I women’s soccer?

In this chapter, I provided readers a literature review about:

- Leadership and Leadership Development
- The Student-Athlete Population
- The Rise of Women’s Soccer
- Women in Athletic Leadership Roles
- Leadership Developments in Athletics.

This chapter contains the theoretical framework and a discussion of the definition of leadership. The results of my study will help fill a gap in the literature. The following chapter will give a summary of the research design, and participants used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

This chapter looks at the research design used to answer my research question: What leadership skills are developed by participating in a season of NCAA Division I women's soccer? In this chapter I explain the case study methodology I utilized. Furthermore, I explain the theoretical frameworks, Institutional Review Board and Athletic Department approval, participants, data, trustworthiness, positionality, analysis and pilot study in this chapter.

Case Study

For my study, a case study research design was used. Case studies are a form of qualitative research, where researchers gain a deeper understanding of a specific program, and create knowledge based on data collected by the researcher. This data is not accessible without the case study (Merriam, 1998). Case studies have thick, rich descriptions, and are appropriate when researchers are looking to gain a deeper understanding of how a program works, and what dynamics exist (Merriam, 1998). Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) noted case studies typically look in-depth at a program, which is bounded by time and activity. By utilizing a case study methodology, I was able to take empirical details of the case and put them into context, giving the case study depth and dimension (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993).

A case study includes the investigation of the bounded unit (Merriam, 1998). Merriam (1998) defined a bounded unit as one that has a distinct end to the number of people interviewed or observations completed. Therefore, the boundaries of the study are defined by time and individuals participating in the study (Merriam, 1998). For this study, the case is bounded by participation on the NCAA Division I women's soccer team from August 2018-November 2018. Please see Figure 3.1 for an illustration of the boundary for this study.

Figure 3.1 Boundaries of Case Study

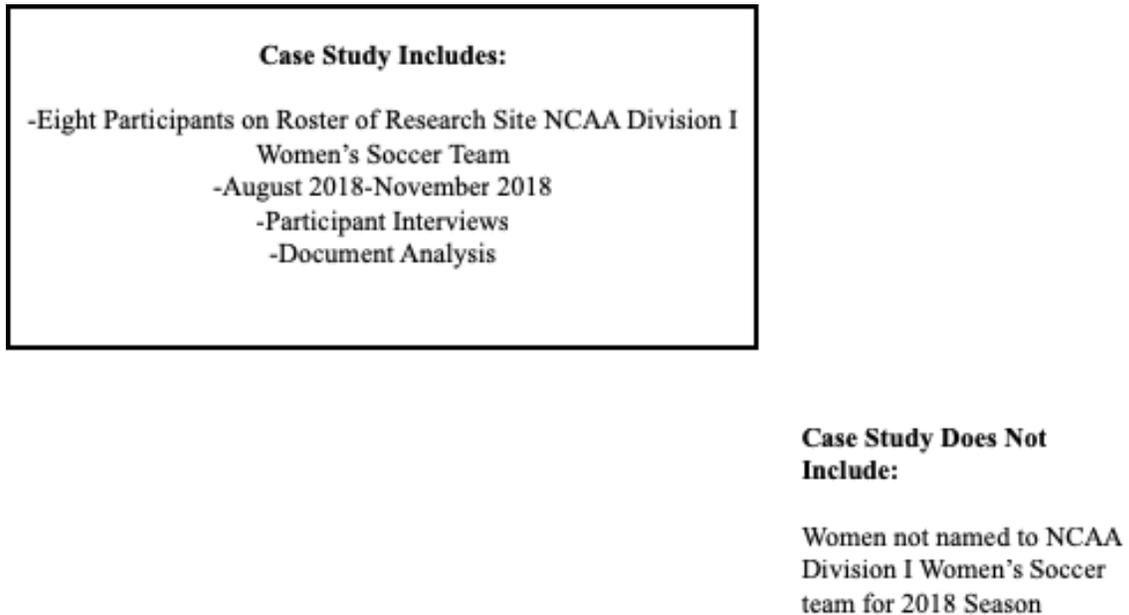


Figure 3.1. Illustration of the bounds of the case study. What was included in the case study, within the bounds is, within the box. Outside the box would not be included in the case study.

Case studies require a theoretical framework to explore and explain a social phenomenon (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993). The theoretical framework comes from the stance the researcher brings to the study (Merriam, 1998). The theoretical framework

structures the study. In this case study, the theoretical framework centered around leadership development, through relationship building (LMX theory) and through experiences (Transformational Leadership theory). The theoretical framework used to shape this case study illustrates how leadership development was developed through experiences and/or relationships.

One of the benefits to a case study design, according to Merriam (1998), is how the study can reveal unique aspects of a case. Qualitative case studies reveal knowledge one would not know or have access to without the completion of a case study. The case study may validate or eliminate a theory or general model (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993). In the case of this study, I examined leadership development as a result of participating in NCAA Division I women's soccer.

The research question for my study was bounded by participation in one season of one women's soccer team. Case study was an appropriate methodology to gain a deeper understanding of what leadership skills are developed by women on a NCAA Division I soccer team. To inform the full study, a pilot study was conducted during summer 2018.

Research Question

The following research question guided this study. What leadership skills are developed by participating in a season of NCAA Division I women's soccer?

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Northouse's (2019) definition of leadership, and two leadership theories, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and Transformational Leadership.

Northouse (2019) stated, “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 5). LMX looks at relationships between leaders and followers. Transformational Leadership theory explains how an individual develops as a leader through an experience. In this case study, the experience was bounded by participation in NCAA Division I women’s soccer during Fall 2018 and examined what leadership skills were developed at an individual and team level. These theoretical frameworks allowed me to understand how relationships and experiences changed participants and helped them develop leadership skills.

Institutional Review Board

Prior to data collection, I received Clemson University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for this study (see Appendix B). Part of the IRB application for approval included how I would protect the anonymity of participants. I assigned pseudonyms to protect the identity of my participants. The pseudonyms were fictional names assigned to each participant and staff member spoken about in the study. Pseudonyms are often used in research to protect the anonymity of participants required of ethical review boards such as IRB (Given, 2008).

Athletic Department Approval

Interviews were conducted with student-athletes requiring athletic department approval. Athletic department approval can be found in Appendix C.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted during the summer of 2018. Completing a pilot study allowed me to test the interview protocol, and practice transcription, coding, and analysis. This pilot study informed the full research study. After the first round of coding from the pilot study, there were 15 codes that were found. The codes were: accountability, areas of improvement, captains, club soccer, coaches, confidence, development outside of soccer, drive, family, for the sake of the team, leadership, perseverance, post-college experience, scholarship, and team dynamics. The codes were grouped into the following themes: self-awareness, athletics, personal development, opportunities, and support. These codes and themes were utilized as a starting point in the codebook that was developed as a part of the data analysis for the full study.

The pilot study interview I conducted lasted just over 32 minutes. The student-athlete, Molly, shared her experiences based upon being a team member for the prior year. Her experience may be slightly different, as she was a “redshirt”. As a “redshirt” Molly did not use a season of intercollegiate competitions during her first year of being a full-time college student (NCAA, 2018, p. 81). As a “redshirt”, Molly was still required to be at practices and home games.

I found from the work I had done within student-athlete academic services I had already started to build rapport with members of the team. This experience made conducting the interview much easier, more like a conversation. Despite this, I found my interviewing skills were still developing. There were areas where I should have probed more. After completing the pilot study, I did not change the semi-structured interview

protocol for the full study. Therefore, the results from the pilot study were able to be incorporated into the full study, and the transcripts were recoded utilizing the same analysis process as the other full study transcripts. For the full pilot study, see Appendix D.

Participants

Sampling Method

For this study, I used purposeful sampling to obtain participants. Purposeful sampling is when participants are selected by the researcher based on specific criteria (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). In this case study, participants had to be on the Fall 2018 roster of the women's soccer team at the research site and had to have completed at least one season on the team.

Recruiting Process

Sampling occurred after the season had concluded, the recruitment email (Appendix A) was sent out to the women's soccer team by the Associate Athletic Director. Interested participants responded directly to me with contact information, which was how interviews were scheduled. For the pilot study, participants responded to their coach, who then forwarded their information to the Associate Athletic Director. The Associate Athletic director then sent the names and contact information to the researcher. For the pilot study, there were two responses to the recruitment email. The pilot study recruitment email can be found in Appendix A. The first woman to email back was selected as the participant for the pilot study. The other respondent was contacted and

told that the spot for the interview had been filled. She was notified more interviews would be conducted at the conclusion of the soccer season and was asked if she would like to be included in that process. She agreed to be contacted for the full study and was contacted once I received approval from both IRB and the Athletic Department for the full study. The informed consent statement can be found in Appendix E. Full study participants received an incentive gift for participating. Since the only change to the process after the pilot study was the addition of the incentive gifts, I was able to incorporate the pilot study participant into the full study. The pilot study participant was able to be given an incentive as well. I confirmed responses to the call for participants with the 2018 women's soccer roster that was available to the public on the Internet.

Participant Details

All participants were on the roster of the NCAA Division I women's soccer team at the research site. There was a total of eight participants for this study. I had participants representing all four academic years in college (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior), as well as a variety of playing experiences on the roster of the team. These experiences included: freshman, sophomore, junior, redshirt freshman, and an academic senior who received a redshirt due to injury and had one remaining season.

All participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identity, which is frequently done in research (Given, 2008). Out of the eight participants, six participants (Tory, Sally, Katie, Kara, Resi, Molly, and Amy) were out-of-state students, meaning they lived outside of the state where the research site was located. One of the eight out-of-state students was an international student. Though Tory, the international student-

athlete grew up outside of the USA, she was still included in this study as the questions asked were specific to experiences at the research site. Additionally, soccer is an international sport. The rules of soccer are uniform throughout the world according to The International Football Associate Board (TIFAB) (TIFAB, 2019) Seven participants identified as White (Tory, Katie, Kara, Molly, Mikaela, and Amy), one identified as White/Hispanic (Sally), while one (Resi) identified as African-American. All participants had at least a partial athletic scholarship. Two participants (Tory and Katie) had full athletic scholarships, and three (Kara, Resi, and Mikaela) had partial academic scholarships along with their athletic scholarships. All but one interview was completed after the conclusion of the soccer season More information about participants can be found in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Participant Information

Participant Pseudonym	Race	Academic Year	In/Out-of-State	Scholarship	NCAA Playing Year
Tory	White British /Caucasian	Junior	Out-of-State	Full Athletic	Junior
Sally	White/Hispanic	Sophomore	Out-of-State	Partial Athletic	Sophomore
Katie	White/Caucasian	Senior	Out-of-State	Full Athletic	Senior
Kara	White/Caucasian	Junior	Out-of-State	Partial Athletic Partial, Academic	Junior
Resi	African-American	Sophomore	Out-of-State	Partial Athletic, Partial Academic	Redshirt Freshman
Molly	White/Caucasian	Sophomore	Out-of-State	Partial Athletic	Redshirt Freshman
Mikaela	White/Caucasian	Freshman	In State	Partial Athletic, Partial Academic	Freshman
Amy	White/Caucasian	Senior	Out-of-State	Partial Athletic	Senior, with one year of eligibility left due to injury

Case Study Data Collection

I utilized semi-structured interviews to collect data. The interview protocol for my study contained eight questions that were asked to all participants. Semi-structured interview protocols are flexible and allow the researcher to ask follow-up questions and dig deeper about specific responses given (Given, 2018). The questions in my interviews inquired about participants' involvement in soccer, their goals for participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer, and questions regarding leadership. Participants were asked about who promoted leadership on the NCAA Division I women's soccer team, what the term "captain" meant to them, and what activities during practices that supported or encouraged leadership. Semi-structured interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The semi-structured interview protocol can be found in Appendix F.

As the researcher, I kept notes on the interviews and documents I analyzed. All personally identifiable information (PII) was removed from documents and transcripts to protect anonymity of participants. Per IRB requirements, all data was stored in locked environments, or encrypted digitally.

Trustworthiness

Several steps were taken to increase the trustworthiness of my study, thus increasing the validity including:

- Triangulation
- Member Checking
- Utilizing Peer Debriefing

- Acknowledging my Positionality

Triangulation means utilizing two or more views of the data (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) stated, “Triangulate different data sources by examining evidence from other source and using it to build a coherent justification for themes” (p. 200). Document analysis was used in addition to interviews I conducted with participants. I analyzed the team’s Website, as well as materials given to female student-athletes as a part of their official visits during the recruiting process for triangulation. Document analysis provided further depth to the case study (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993). The analysis supported the interviews in learning about what leadership skills are developed through participation in NCAA Division I women’s soccer.

I engaged in member checking. Member checking is referred to as respondent validation by Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013). The purpose of member checking was to ask individual participants for confirmation the researcher had accurately captured the participant’s responses. Member checking adds to the trustworthiness of the qualitative study (Cresswell and Cresswell, 2018; Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013; Merriam, 1998). In addition to having participants review their transcripts, all eight participants were also sent the themes I found and asked to review them. Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) noted member checking can be used to determine the accuracy of the findings by sending themes to participants for review.

I also participated in a peer debriefing meeting with a Ph.D. prepared person who had completed qualitative research. I utilized this meeting to talk through the coding

process, codes, and themes that were found. During the peer debriefing meeting, I explained the coding process. As a result, we re-named themes and collapsed themes to allow for better understanding. Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) noted peer debriefing “...enhances the accuracy of the account” and adds to the validity (p.201). Throughout this process, I ensured that themes used in the coding process were understandable by those outside of the study and were transferable to other studies if the study was replicated.

Finally, I acknowledged my positionality as the researcher. More about my positionality can be found below. Acknowledging my positionality is an important part of building trustworthiness of my study (Wolcott, 2009). To continuously engage in reflexivity about my positionality, I utilized reflective memos throughout the research process. The reflective memos allowed me to write personal notes throughout the research process about my past experiences, and how the experiences can influence my interpretation. The memos allowed me to look back at the research process and limit my personal conversations and experiences in regard to this research project (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018).

Researcher Positionality

As the researcher, it was important to note my involvement with soccer, and the athletics department at the institution where the study was conducted. Part of my interest on the subject of the case study comes from having previously played soccer and having had participated in two years of athletics in college. I played soccer from the eighth grade through my junior year in high school. In college, I went through the NCAA paperwork

to participate in Division III women's cross-country. I left the team at the beginning of the season (within the first month) due to an injury. I participated in two seasons of U.S. Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association (USCSA) alpine ski racing.

Athletics have always been a part of my life. My dad competed in NCAA Division III men's swimming, and my mom benefited from Title IX, having played tennis competitively in high school. As a child I participated in ballet, gymnastics, swimming, skiing, soccer, field hockey, tennis, lacrosse, figure skating, and other athletic activities. I was raised with the understanding that women and men are equals and gender is not a limiting factor in life. I see how the mentality of being a strong woman has shaped the work I do. My involvement in athletics continued after college as I moved into a coaching position. I coached alpine ski racing for four seasons. I was the only female head coach on the team, and frequently was the only woman involved in organization of the races. My interest in studying collegiate women's soccer had to do with observing the increasing numbers of girls and young women playing soccer, and its international appeal. In addition to participation, I currently hold a paid position in the area of academic support for student-athletes.

One of my considerations for selecting the research site was its feasibility. Working with student-athletes within academic support at the research institution I chose as my research site allowed me to have a number of interactions with the women's soccer team. Over the past year, I have worked with and had a variety of interactions with student-athletes as a study-hall monitor. This work, as well as my work at the front desk of the student-athlete academic center, and the bookroom, where scholarship student-

athletes pick up their books each semester, allowed me an opportunity to get to know many student-athletes. With many of the women's soccer team knowing me, contacting the women allowed for easier recruitment. Also, being on campus made scheduling interviews feasible.

Data Analysis

In-person, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all eight participants. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded. The transcribed interview was uploaded to NVivo12 and coded using a concept or analytic coding process (Saldaña, 2016). Concept coding assigns meaning to data; meaning a word or phrase was assigned to the data that suggested a larger meaning (Saldaña, 2016). After the document was coded, a codebook was developed. The codebook contained a complete list of codes that were used when coding the transcript. For example, the codebook contained the code, the word or phrase, as well as a description of how the code was defined (Saldaña, 2016). After the transcripts were coded the first time, a total of 15 codes were found. These codes were:

- Accountability
- Communication
- Drive
- Respect
- Time Management
- Coaches

- Support Staff
- Teammates
- Teamwork
- Club Soccer
- Informal Leaders
- Captains
- Quiet Leaders
- Needed Improvement
- Development Outside NCAA Division I Women's Soccer
- Family

These codes were then grouped into themes for the second round of coding. Refer to Appendix G for a more detailed chart on the coding process.

I utilized the concept of theoretical coding for the second round of coding. In theoretical coding, umbrella themes are utilized to cover and account for other codes and categories (Saldaña, 2016). The themes in my codebook for the second round of coding were: **transferable skills**, which included accountability, communication, drive, respect, and time management, **team roles**, which included coaches, support staff, teammates, teamwork, and club soccer, **acknowledging the complexity of leadership and leadership development**, which included informal leaders, captains, and quiet leaders, **difference in coaching strategy**, which included needed improvement, **self-awareness**, which included development outside of NCAA Division I women's soccer, and

acknowledging family role, which included family (See Appendix G). The transcripts were then coded utilizing the refined codebook.

Summary

This chapter explained the case study methodology used within this study. The participants, data, trustworthiness, researcher positionality, analysis and pilot study were discussed. The following chapter will discuss the participants, coding and themes, and the summary of themes from semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter shares the results from this study. The research question that guided the study was: What leadership skills are developed by participating in NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Division I women's soccer? To understand what leadership skills are developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer, I utilized a case study methodology. The case was bounded by participation in the 2018 season of the NCAA Division I women's soccer team at the research site. To complete the case study, I interviewed eight current members of the same NCAA Division I women's soccer team and completed document analysis of the team's and athletic department's Websites, and recruiting materials given to women during official NCAA recruiting visits.

Interviews with participants were recorded and professionally transcribed. I utilized concept and theoretical coding to make sense of the data (Saldaña, 2016). I read transcripts multiple times and coded twice; first utilizing the codes found, and second, using the themes that were found. I fit the codes and themes into the theoretical frameworks of Transformational Leadership and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX). There were 15 codes found during the first round of coding. The codes were then sorted under 6 umbrella themes: transferable skills, self-awareness, team roles, differences in coaching strategy, acknowledging family role, and acknowledging the complexity of

leadership and leadership development. See Appendix G for more detail. The following chapter explains participant details, the coding process and resultant themes and how these themes linked to the theoretical framework.

Participant Descriptions

For this study, I interviewed eight women who were on the roster of the same NCAA Division I women's soccer team for the 2018 season. All participants had completed at least one season playing on the NCAA Division I women's soccer team and were able to give their perspectives about leadership development and how it is utilized and developed on the team. Additionally, all participants had some form of scholarship. Full scholarships included tuition, fees, room and board, and required books for classes, which make up the full cost of attendance. Partial scholarships covered only part of the full cost of attendance ("Scholarships", n.d.) One participant (Molly) was a part of the pilot study completed in Summer 2018. Her interview was included in the full study. The participant vignettes below give a more detailed description of each participant.

Participant Vignettes

Tory

Tory self-identified as a White British and Caucasian. At the time of the interview, Tory had just completed her junior soccer season, and was considered an academic junior. Tory was an out-of-state international student with a full athletic scholarship. She had been playing soccer since she was five years old. Tory began playing soccer with boys and transitioned to an all-girls team around the age of 10.

Sally

Sally was an out-of-state student. She identified herself as White/Hispanic. Sally had just completed her sophomore season of soccer and was an academic sophomore. She was on a partial academic scholarship that she described as: “not a lot, but like books”. Sally had been playing soccer since before she could remember. Sally estimated she was around four when she began playing. Her father was a former soccer player, a fan, and influenced her decision to play.

Katie

Katie had just completed her senior soccer season and had one semester of her academic senior year remaining at the time of her interview. She was an out-of-state student and had a full athletic scholarship. Katie also identified as White/Caucasian and had the influence of her father who was a former player. Katie had been playing soccer since she was four years old. Her father coached her team until she was between 10 and 12 years old. At that time, Katie started playing with bigger teams, which was when and where the recruiting process for Division I teams began.

Kara

Kara identified as White/Caucasian. Both academically, and for NCAA playing status, she identified as a junior. She was an out-of-state student with a partial athletic, partial academic scholarship. Kara began playing soccer around the age of four or five. She remembered being on her first team, The Ladybugs, which her father coached. She described the experience to me, “...we won the championship, and it was a lot of fun. I have pictures of the trophy and stuff...” Kara also played lacrosse and began really

focusing on soccer when she entered her sophomore year of high school. Part of her decision to focus on soccer was to prevent injury.

Resi

At the time of the study, Resi had just finished her redshirt freshman season of playing soccer. This means she was a student-athlete at the institution last year, and practiced with the NCAA women's soccer team, but she did not play in competitive games, and did not travel with the team (NCAA, 2018). Resi was redshirted due to a season-ending injury last year. Academically, Resi was midway through her sophomore year. She identified as African-American and was on a partial academic and partial athletic scholarship as an out-of-state student-athlete. Resi had also been playing soccer since she was four or five years old. She began playing after watching her older sister play.

Molly

Molly was an out-of-state student-athlete who identified as White/Caucasian. She had a partial athletic scholarship. Molly was the participant of my pilot study whose interview was included as a participant in my full study. Her interview was at the beginning of her academic sophomore year and beginning of her redshirt freshman soccer season. Molly started playing soccer when she was four. She began playing because of the combination of her parents' encouragement and watching her older brother (two years older) play soccer.

Mikaela

Mikaela was the youngest participant in the study. She identified as White/Caucasian. She had just finished her freshman soccer season and was entering her first finals week of her freshman year at the research site. She was an in-state student with a partial athletic, partial academic scholarship. The combination of her athletic and academic scholarship, and in-state student status, meant she did not have to pay a lot of money out-of-pocket to attend the university. Mikaela had been playing soccer since she was around three years old. Mikaela was very close with her father, who took her to her games growing up, and helped with her recruiting process.

Amy

Academically, Amy was an undergraduate senior who was dual enrolled in a Master of Business Administration (MBA) program at the university with a partial athletic scholarship. She was an out-of-state student who identified as White/Caucasian. Amy had one season of eligibility left, as she sat out the 2018 season with an injury. Amy began playing soccer at the age of four. Amy's father played soccer in college and influenced her decision to begin playing soccer.

Coding and Themes Explanation

To make sense of the data, I went through two rounds of coding utilizing concept and theoretical coding (Saldaña, 2016). Concept coding is also referred to as analytical coding. Concept coding is defined by Saldaña (2016) as utilizing a word or short phrase that suggests a larger meaning. Saldaña (2016) defined theoretical coding as similar to an umbrella that covers the codes in the category. For the first round of coding, I utilized 15

codes that emerged from the interview transcripts. These codes were: academics, accountability, captains, club team, coaches, communication, development outside NCAA Division I women's soccer, drive, family, informal leaders, leadership, needed improvement, quiet leaders, respect, scholarship, support staff, teammates, teamwork, and time management (see Appendix G).

After completing the first round of coding I utilized theoretical coding. I then looked at all 15 codes and tried to find ways to put them under umbrella themes. I collapsed the 15 codes into six themes. The six themes were: transferable skills, team roles, acknowledging complexity of leadership and leadership development, difference in coaching strategy, and self-awareness. I then re-coded each transcript using my revised codebook with the final six themes. Appendix G contains a table showing the first coding process, second coding process, final theme, and theoretical framework.

I linked the themes to the theoretical framework I used to explain what leadership skills were developed as a result of participating in NCAA Division I women's soccer. See Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Themes to Theoretical Framework

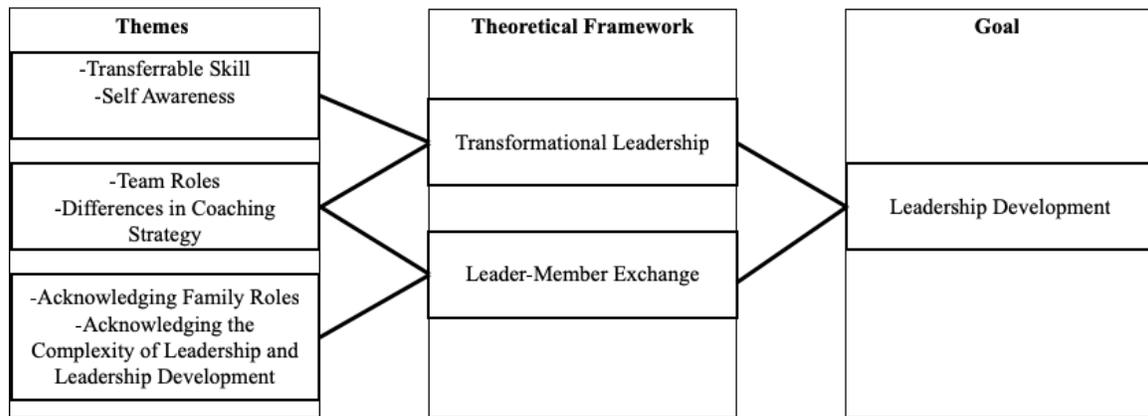


Figure 4.1. Final themes as a result of analysis. Each group of themes is linked to one, or both, of the theoretical frameworks used to shape the study. The theoretical frameworks then link to the goal of leadership development, which is part of the research question guiding this study.

Transferable Skills

The first theme I identified was transferable skills. To gain a better understanding of what transferable skills were looked at upon graduation from college, I looked at the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) competencies. The NACE competencies defined career readiness and development. All eight participants mentioned transferable skills they had gained from participating in NCAA Division I women’s soccer.

Amy summarized transferable skills she had learned through participating in NCAA Division I women’s soccer and how these skills linked to her future. Amy stated:

...Time management for sure. And I’m very result oriented now and setting small goals, having overall picture. A plan. All very important. Things like if you don’t like your boss, how to bring up a conversation with him. Or coworkers you don’t

like, or situations you have. So many people bring up so many work life examples. Oh, I've dealt with that already just with sports and stuff like that. Academically, Amy is a senior, and had been a part of the women's soccer team since her first year on campus. While Amy did not play this past season due to an injury, which was supposed to be her senior season, she will play next fall while attending graduate school. Amy was dual enrolled in a master's program and undergraduate program at the time of her interview, so she had been through different experiences than some of the younger participants.

Despite different experiences and level of classes, all eight participants touched on communication skills, self-awareness, giving and receiving feedback, transitioning to college and college soccer, as well as time management. Overall, time management and communication were common topics for participants. The time management aspect of participants' experiences was similar to what a previous research study showed (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). Participants emphasized the expectation of hard work and excellence on and off the field. Kate spoke about time management skills when asked what skills she had developed since starting as a collegiate student-athlete: "I think a big one is time management because I really struggled with that my freshman year, and then... I guess it's just being able to learn, that one was really big for me." Kara also touched on some transferable skills she had gained from playing NCAA Division I women's soccer by saying:

Definitely time management. Freshmen year you learn all those hard, the first year. Time management for sure. Kind of taking in criticism and being able to

apply that, I guess. Problem solving, definitely. Honestly, you're with the same girls all the time, so I guess companionship, learning how to live with each other in a way, in a sense. The same people, day after day.

The need for time management comes from the high demands of being a student-athlete. Participants were doing more than playing soccer at the research site. Collegiate academics demand a large time commitment. This time commitment and responsibility for managing time was seen in the document analysis as well. Both the athletic department Website and recruiting materials outlined study hall requirements, tutoring support, advising, class, and practice as a part of being a student-athlete. The focus on managing time came with gained responsibility as a collegiate student-athlete.

Jayakumar and Comeaux (2016) noted the large time commitment of student-athletes, and many of the transferable skills by my participants as a result of participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer. Results of my study linked participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer to the theoretical framework of Transformational Leadership theory. Each player was their own change agent. They took responsibility for managing their time and completing their assigned tasks. Coaches were confident in their players, putting trust into their followers, which Bass (1985) discussed in regard to Transformational Leadership Theory. Additionally, older players influenced the younger players which is discussed more in the theme of team roles.

Self-Awareness

Numerous opportunities exist for college students to develop as leaders. As Weaver and Simet (2015) noted, oftentimes student-athletes do not have the same

opportunities to participate in campus-wide leadership activities due to their schedules. As a result, their leadership development looks different. The athletic department at the research site had opportunities for leadership development outside of attending practices and team meetings for all NCAA Division I student-athletes. By participating in leadership development opportunities outside of soccer, student-athletes were able to become more self-aware. All eight participants talked about leadership opportunities that were provided outside of soccer. However, not all eight women participated.

Amy, Kara, Molly, and Tory participated in these outside-of-sport leadership opportunities. Katie, Mikaela, Resi, and Sally were aware of the outside leadership opportunities, but had chosen not to participate. Sally explained:

I didn't really know how to get involved. I knew there was some sort of leadership meeting type thing, but I didn't know what to do. I remember I asked somebody once and you had to apply for, and I never knew about it.

Katie also decided not to participate in the outside leadership development activities. She told me:

I mean I probably should have taken advantage of some [leadership development opportunities]. But it's more like, I don't know, at the end of your day, you've spent so much time with team sometimes you're like, "ugh, I don't know if I want to do this."

Despite Sally and Katie not having taken advantage of leadership development activities outside of NCAA Division I women's soccer, there were other participants (Amy, Kara, Molly, and Tory) who had taken advantage of these additional opportunities.

Molly talked about leadership meetings that she participated in outside of soccer. She explained:

They just started it [leadership meetings] with my class because, I don't know if you were here or following our team a couple years ago, but class of 2017, so the year before I came in, or like that year, that graduating class, they graduated 13 seniors, eight of which were started.... And, so, they really put a lot of pressure on us to be exactly like that class and blah, blah, blah. And I think they kind of heard our concerns like, "Hey, you cannot compare us to that class. We're our own people." And, so, second semester Suzanne [full time athletic staff member focusing on leadership development] came in and had a freshman leadership meeting with us every two weeks which was really good. I feel like that helped a lot.

Tory also participated in leadership development meetings that were held with a variety of different sports in the off season. She shared:

The first time we got together was in spring, and then we'll come back again this spring. That's cool because now you're sharing things, you're hearing things from different teams so I think it's always useful like "well this is what they're doing on that team, can I transfer that to our team?" which has been valuable.

Kara was a part of the same leadership development group. She explained:

So, in the part one, the part we did, in the beginning, in the first half of it, you learn a lot about yourself. You take self-tests and you learn how you... kind of your personality traits and how, what is most effective for you, like how

effectively you could lead or how effectively you are led, basically. Like what you look for. I think that was really important, learning about yourself and also learning that everyone's kind of different, so there's going to be different...sometimes there's gonna be different strategies. If you're trying to reach one individual, it's gonna be a different strategy than trying to reach another one on your team. So just learning that there's different forms you can take as a leader to reach everyone.

Kara also touched on the self-awareness that was necessary to play at the college level:

So, you know, you gotta be your own critic, because yeah, the coaches are gonna say stuff to you, but they have 25 girls they're gonna say something to. You don't have your parents sitting there, like, "Okay, this is what you need to do this." You gotta be your own planner, your own critic, but you also have to be your own support system. The coaches aren't gonna baby you. Your teammates aren't gonna baby you, either. You have to, it's a lot of self-talk that you learn.

Amy was the one participant who had a very different experience in the outside leadership experiences. Amy discussed the leadership opportunities she had taken advantage of:

I've been doing internships last semester and this semester, which I've gotten more close to them and things like that. But I kind of have everything set, so I didn't want to add anything more... But we had a leadership group, apparently,

since my sophomore year. No. Freshman, sophomore, and junior year. We didn't have it this year.

As a dual enrolled student, Amy is taking both undergraduate and graduate classes towards an MBA. Focusing on internships was intentional and fit within her academic schedule. Based on the time commitment of her coursework she had decided not to add another meeting to her schedule. Despite not participating in the leadership meetings, Amy had still gained self-awareness skills, understanding herself, and how she needed to balance her schedule. The internship experience was transformative as it showed Amy's maturity. Her coaches trusted her to complete her team requirements, academics, and her internship. Amy was mature enough to understand how busy her schedule could be before she was unable to balance everything.

Overall, all eight participants knew about different leadership opportunities to get involved outside of NCAA Division I women's soccer. When asked about if she knew about leadership development opportunities outside of soccer, Mikaela noted, "I know our team is very involved in a bunch of stuff [leadership roles] like on campus and stuff." All eight participants noted their involvement in leadership activities and how it had or would help them in the future.

Sokolove (2008) noted the large number of female executives who had participated in collegiate athletics. Working toward an executive position requires self-awareness and understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses. For participants in my study, awareness was brought out through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer. Though the recruiting materials did not talk about growth in self-awareness, the

theme can be found on aspects of the athletic department Website. Participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer was a transformational experience for the women in my study. Their leadership development was evident as they became more self-aware through activities and practices as a part of the team (Galante & Ward, 2016; Weaver & Simet, 2015; Sokolove, 2008).

Team Roles

The theme team roles contained codes of coaches, support staff, teammates, teamwork, and club soccer. All eight participants mentioned at least one of the codes that fell under the theme of team roles. The most frequent codes were support staff, and teammates and teamwork which are discussed below.

Support Staff

With a large athletic department, the team had many supporting staff members. The supporting staff also assisted with leadership development of the team. Mikaela shared how the support staff impacted the team and assisted in leadership development. She explained:

We always have Carter's [pseudonym] Corner. He's our athletic psychologist or whatever. Our mental coach basically. He is always addressing leadership. Getting in groups and just kind of like, not just being one leader but the whole team in general.

Mikaela was not the only participant to discuss the work Carter, the sports psychologist, did as a support staff member. Another supporting staff member that worked within athletics and mental health was Dr. Britt [pseudonym], who is a licensed

psychologist. Dr. Britt splits her time between the counseling center on campus, and appointments within the athletic department. Molly talked about working with Dr. Britt:

I think the biggest thing was I just didn't know... because I didn't even realize I had such bad anxiety until I started seeing Dr. Britt and stuff. And so I feel like learning how to settle, that has helped me tremendously- time management, and getting everything done.

The work Dr. Britt had done with student-athletes extended beyond the women's soccer team, but she had made an impact on Molly's development.

Carter challenged the team to break down each game to improve. Dr. Britt challenged and assisted players individually and the team pushed each other daily to better themselves.

Teammates and Teamwork

Another key element participants discussed was the role of teammates and team work. Resi talked about how members of the team, specifically upperclassmen helped her. She stated:

Like for example, Alice, when I was struggling, she took me out to work on some of my touches like multiple times a week at the beginning of the season...

Kara also discussed how the upperclassmen influenced the younger members of the team. She explained:

A lot of times, it is the older girls, because coming in as a younger girl, you do look up to them, because they've been through it and you want to know from them how to get through it, and they tell you. They have great advice, and they

tell you. I've been giving a lot of advice this year to the younger kids, and I know other juniors and seniors have.

Kara also touched on the culture of the team by stating:

It's just, it's basically ... What I'll say is it's a culture here. It's just something that you are thrown into and you learn as ... Like I said, day in and out, we have training every single day, so, and every day, the culture doesn't change. The culture's gonna be the same. So, leadership is one of those really important pillars in that culture, so just being faced with it every single day for your four years here, you kind of get accustomed to it...

Work the team members did together extended beyond the field. Each team member played an important role, both on and off the field. Team members lived together and were expected to spend time together off the field. Because of their schedules, many participants were also in classes together. The leadership development aspect of the theme team roles, links back to the theoretical frameworks of both Transformational Leadership and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX).

There were relationships built between all aspects of the team. The process of being a member of the team was transformational as the women were change agents, and trusted, linking to Transformational Leadership theory (Selznick, 1957; Marion & Gonzalez, 2014). The dyadic relationships between leaders and followers, both formal informal, impacted leadership development as related to LMX theory as the relationships were deeper than surface level (Graen, 1976; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1994). When examining recruitment documents, as well as looking at the athletic department Website, the focus

on teamwork and importance of staff within the athletic department was highlighted, which showed the deeper relationships the department expected of their student-athletes.

Differences in Coaching Strategy

Though participant interviews, I saw how participants were coached differently. While most of the study yielded positive results about how leadership was developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer, six out of eight participants (Kara, Katie, Molly, Resi, Tory, and Sally) spoke about areas where improvement in leadership and leadership development was needed within the team. Molly was very open about areas where the team needed improvement. When asked about who influenced leadership on the team, Molly responded: "Well, if I'm being honest, I think that's our biggest area we struggle in". Resi responded to the same question by stating:

We were very inconsistent. I'd probably say, like there were moments where I felt like some guidance that would have been needed was just totally absent from a lot of people and when it was there, sometimes it wasn't always correctly expressed and I think... some of it was because you know, they are in that role or they have the advantage they really just take advantage of it sometimes or they try to overdo it and... I guess it just kind of ... it gets kind of gets imbalanced sometimes at the wrong times.

Inconsistencies and struggles appeared to stem from the top. Resi explained further:

And I think Jason [head coach] had a very hard time or just our coaches in general, picking whether they wanted a positive domino effect or rip into your player because they needed to do better. I understand there needs to be a balance

but that's where constructive criticism works a lot better and I don't think he [Jason] could really pick one and that was really hard because I know a lot of players it affected and he'd be mad at some people for getting mad at others and be like why are you complaining to each other, but he wouldn't tell people like how to fix it. He would just say one or the other and it would depend on the day, and yeah, I think it just got lost in translation.

The need for improvement in communication was not just expressed by Resi and Molly. Sally explained the need for improvement in communication: "We need more communication about that, and what they want, I guess. What our team needs because we do need more leadership, definitely." Tory also mentioned she had shared communication techniques with the coaches from her experience on her national team:

I feel like back home in the national team there's a really big emphasis on leadership and they try to spread that throughout the team. I've tried to implement a few things. Given the coaches a few ideas like "this is what we do" and I think it has helped. A big thing for us was, I think it was sophomore year I said something like half time for us was, excuse my language, a shit show. Regardless of how the game's going, especially if we're not playing well, you've just got 20, 25 voices trying to get their idea across. Eventually I just said, "this is what we do back home, you split into units and then after five minutes or so, everything you want to feed back to the other unit, you have your assigned person for the unit" and that works. That helped us a lot.

While more leadership from within the team was an area noted for improvement, there was the need for more improvement at the coaches' level as well. Molly shared a story about the head coach, who had been making racial comments towards a player on the team. A group of players addressed their concerns with the compliance representative for the team. The next day the team got called into a team meeting. Molly shared:

... it was like, "it's not my fault if y'all don't understand my jokes." And you know, "I'm sorry, I'll try not to be funny anymore. And if you really want me to be that boring." And all of us [players] were like, "did he really just turn the blame on us?"

According to participants, despite the uncomfortable situation and need for improvement, the team committed to work on the area of communication. There was a distinct difference about communication improvements that needed to be made based on how many years the participant had been on the team. Leadership through better communication had become more of a focus for the team recently. Resi explained:

I wouldn't say promote leadership but maybe just promote like conversation and communication I'd say rather than leadership. I know the coaches will sometimes talk about how sometimes it's not just the captains' jobs but everyone's job to help out a teammate and stuff like that.

Amy shared a bit more:

If it's [leadership] talked about in meetings, it's not specifically leadership, it's more of this past season we had a recommitment phase. It was each person step up and do all the little things that we need to, to get the certain amount of wins

that we needed to then get our goal. So, they haven't really been specifically captain related, if that makes sense. It's been more of overall motivation of the team to step up and do what you're supposed to.

Despite leadership being spoken about by coaches, the focus on the leadership skill of communication still needed improvement. Participants shared how some players were treated differently than others or spoken to differently. The difference in communication among coaches and players could have helped the team's success. Improvements in communication were mentioned by all participants. Noting the difference in coaching showed participants' understanding of leading differently. Furthermore, my participants understood differences in leadership based on the relationship between coach and player, or the situation. For participants, part of the focus on leadership development may have been supported by opportunities outside of NCAA Division I women's soccer.

Leadership development opportunities offered to student-athletes outside of team participation were not mentioned in the recruiting packet but were highlighted on the athletic department Website.

The difference in coaching strategies depended upon the player and the particular situation. These experiences linked both to Transformational Leadership theory, as well as LMX theory. The combination of change agency and trust from teammates linked my participants' experiences to Transformational Leadership theory (Bass, 1985), and the relationships built between leaders and followers (Graen, 1976) influencing LMX.

Acknowledging Family Role

The theme of acknowledging family role focused on family support and influence on participants. Seven (Amy, Kara, Katie, Mikaela, Molly, Resi, and Sally) out of eight participants in the study discussed their family. The seven participants who spoke about their family role, talked about being close to their families. Specifically, participants spoke about the role and involvement of their fathers. Soccer was the connection between fathers and daughters. Parental participation decreased as participants' age and ability increased. The change in family dynamic drove leadership development for participants.

The seven participants discussed how their fathers had coached their soccer teams when they were younger. The involvement of participants' fathers developed as they matured. Mikaela described her relationship with her family: "Very close with my dad and step-mom. I love them a lot. Very family oriented". Despite the closeness Mikaela had with her dad, there were still moments where things were not always easy for their relationship. She explained:

My dad was very hard on me when I was younger. Always yelling at me during games, even when I was not playing a lot of the 11. He was always on top of me and like honestly at times I was like I hate this. It made me hate it [soccer] at times, but then honestly, I'm so thankful for it because it made me like stick with it. He pushed me so much. The older I got, he wasn't as bad but just realizing, just accomplishing everything. Really like I wanted to fulfill his dreams and make him proud. I know I always make him proud but make him proud but also like, I guess it's for me. It's something I have always wanted to do.

While Mikaela realized it was both a dream of her and her father to play at the NCAA Division I level, she acknowledged his pushing and challenging her to be better had helped her get to where she was at the time of her interview. As Mikaela grew older, the role her father played in her soccer development changed. Mikaela realized the important role her father played as she developed as a soccer player.

Molly was another participant whose father helped her get to the NCAA Division I level and acknowledged the role he played in her development as a player. She was having a bad experience with her club soccer coach, and her dad helped her figure out the NCAA recruiting process. Molly divulged when her dad stepped in and began to help her sort out the recruiting process. She described:

I came crying every single night. I almost quit soccer so many times throughout my high school career just because he [club coach] made me feel so worthless like I didn't deserve to play anywhere. And then when my junior year rolled around and coaches were able to call me, I started getting phone calls and texts in, emails saying, "Yeah, we contacted your coach and never heard from him. Are you interested? Are you committed anywhere?" And so, this was actually, my dad was like, "Give me your list of schools and we'll figure out what camp you can go to," because my brother was in the midst of his football season, too. So, it was hard. I could never really travel.

Molly's father spearheaded her recruiting process and assisted her while still supporting his son and getting to his football games. The role of parent involvement for Molly changed though, when she entered college and was not playing in games. She explained:

So, like I said, my brother plays football and this is his last year. And the year I left, my freshman year, he transferred home to a school in Texas. So, my parents could go to every single one of his games and since we have the same season, my parents were like, "Hey Molly, Steve [brother] has two years of football left. And you're not going to play this year." And I completely understood it, but I'm really close to my family. So, them never coming out was the hardest thing.

The change in family involvement and the role they played as a support for Molly changed during her first year at the research site. She acknowledged that adjustment was hard. Part of the growth and development occurring for Molly was the change in the role her family played.

While the seven participants who talked about acknowledging family role noted a shift in the family role after entering the research site, how the family role changed depended on several things. One factor was how far the family was located from the research site, or from stadiums where the team played away games. All participants who talked about the role their family played mentioned their father.

The role fathers played for participants varied. While some fathers were helpful in the actual recruiting process, others helped their daughters look for an institution where they could be happy both academically and athletically. Amy's father played soccer at an academically well-known college. She talked about how a good academic program was just as important to her father as to herself. Amy shared:

My dad and I talk about it now of looking back and I said I wanted to play in the [Redacted: NCAA conference] and I got here... It's the best women's soccer

program, or league. So, it's known to be that way. But also, most of the schools are good academic wise. So overall that was a goal of my dad and I to have soccer and academics be just as important.

In choosing a college, it was more than just finding one that was academically sound for some participants. Katie spoke about how her family played a role in selecting her major once she got into the institution. "They make you pick one [a major] even before you get here so I just picked business online because my family is in the business, they own a business back home." Katie had linked her family's success in business to a business degree, which helped her select a major. In Katie's case, her family had not told her to pick a school with a business major, but instead, after being accepted to the research site, she deducted her major choice on her own. Each participant had a different experience with family involvement and the role their family played.

Though the role of families changed throughout each participant's life, there was a heavy focus on fathers being involved for many participants. Most participants had a distinct relationship with their father. Soccer had been their time to spend together. The father-daughter dyadic relationship noted in my findings is what Selznick (1957) discussed in regard to leadership development. The role of leader and follower changed as the women developed. Most participants started their lives seeing their family as leaders, especially their fathers. Over time, the women began to take more control over their soccer situation, and choices they made, and became their own leader. For many participants, the role of follower became the role of the family once they entered college at the research site and were making their own choices and accepting responsibility for

themselves. The change in the family role was not discussed in the recruiting materials. On the athletic department Website, there was some discussion regarding the transition to becoming more independent. I linked this finding to the change in family role.

Acknowledging the Complexity of Leadership and Leadership Development

The theme of acknowledging the complexity of leadership and leadership development contained the codes: informal leaders, captains, leadership, and quiet leaders. Each participant was sent and read the definition of leadership used for this study by Northouse (2019). Northouse (2019) defined leadership as, "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p.5). In addition to the definition used for this study, participants were asked to define leadership. Kara reacted to Northouse's (2019) definition of leadership:

I think that is a good, especially in an athletic setting, I think that's definitely a good definition of leadership, because if you're gonna have anyone behind you, if you are going to be a leader for this kind of program, you need to have a common goal and everyone needs to buy into it, or else what are you leading? You don't have a team if no one buys into a common goal. You want everyone to succeed in one thing and that's, whether that be winning one game, or making it to the tournament, or winning the tournament, or just even the intangibles like getting a better team culture or something like that, it just has to be something that everyone believes that they can do and they want to do.

Katie also agreed with Northouse's (2019) definition of leadership:

I definitely agree with that just based on the soccer program. It was all towards a common goal, everything you did was ... At the beginning of the year we would come together as a group and talk about what we all felt was a goal that was realistic as well, and then that's what you work towards all year. Yeah I think everyone has to be a leader in order to get there, so. I would definitely agree.

In addition to looking at the definition of leadership, participants were asked about who influenced leadership development on the team, and what qualities they possessed. Tory reflected on how she defined a leader:

Definitely someone who leads by example and someone who is also well respected. When I think of leadership, I take that into someone who's the captain of the team for example. A thing from my point of view is being respected between the players and the coaches because ultimately you are the middle man. You need to be someone who the coaches can trust, that you will relay their messages, what they want for the team. The team obviously wants someone that they can look up to but you're also still a teammate.

All participants stated that leaders needed to be respected and have respect for others. Additionally, the formal leadership role of captain was mentioned by all participants. Each participant was asked about the process for selecting captains at the university, and what being a captain meant. Sally explained what skills and characteristics she believed a captain should have:

Well, I think that it should be someone who leads and serves the team on the field and off the field. It shouldn't necessarily be the players who play the most or the best. And not political either, because that happens a lot.

Resi shared:

Because I think on the field it's [leadership] really big because sometimes people who are really good on the field aren't the best off the field and I mean, no one is perfect but I think it was just ... with the three people that we have, like combining the qualities so that they balance out each other so the people that are vocal also have someone who like I talked about earlier, is also coming over to check up on like the kids who are struggling maybe a little bit more.

The point of acknowledging on-and-off-the-field leadership was critical for the role of captains. As Molly noted, there are expectations for the team captains both on and off the field:

And so that's a big thing. A lot of people just really hate that. And then my biggest thing is just accountability which I don't know about the other girls, but it's just hard because like we got a text saying rules for this weekend. Like it's our last weekend of summer and people are trying to go out and do it crazy or whatever so Jennah [team captain] sent us a text and was like, "Hey, rules for this weekend. I hate to say this, but no drinking."

When talking about leaders on the team, both verbal and quieter leaders were mentioned. While some leaders on the team were louder than others, having quiet leaders

was valued by a number of participants. When asked if leaders needed to be loud or could be quieter, Kara responded:

They could be both, so sometimes the quiet ones lead by example, and that's great. And then the ones with the voice, they definitely lead by voice. They push you, and that helps, too. It just ... Different people like different ways to be pushed and stuff, definitely on our team, too, there's definitely a difference. But we have both of those, so I think it works...

Sally also shared her experiences with quieter leaders:

Definitely not confetti cannons or boom boxes [regarding very vocal leaders], but it's always better if they [leaders] have voice. Mia [a senior] would have been a perfect leader if she would have been able to have the vocal part of it.

While all participants touched on the different types of leaders on the team, what varied the most was who was viewed as a leader on the team. All participants noted that leadership on the team was influenced by coaches and the captains on the team. However, there was variation among participants as to who else was viewed informally as a leader on the team. The biggest difference was between underclassmen and upperclassmen. Mikaela, who had just completed her first season on the team saw things very differently than Tory, who had completed her third season at the time of her interview.

Tory explained how informal leaders on the team influenced the group, especially in regard to new student-athletes. Tory explained:

I think everyone in their own right tries to take on a bit of responsibility to set a good example, especially to freshman. It all comes down to this season because

we just had a senior who was, like what I mentioned before, big personality, you don't want to get on the wrong side of sort of thing, she was a captain so that took a big effect on everything so in the season we had few issues which she was involved with. It's just a difficult person to have an individual constructive conversation with. You don't want to rock the boat too much. Those personalities, people give off the vibe that we're beneath them or they're too above the team. When they're a leader and a captain, it makes it difficult to really respect them and listen to them.

Tory also mentioned since freshmen do not know as much about the culture of the team, they are not necessarily seen as leaders.

Mikaela, on the other hand, believed everyone had a part in influencing leadership on the team. She stated:

During the games, a lot of people use their voice and then some people will come up after like the fact mentioned things. But actually, I think everyone somehow shows some leadership on the team.

Katie shared:

Like even off the bench they [teammates] are just motivating and accepting of their role. Trying to think. They don't like to pity themselves, they'll bring other people up no matter what.

The responses on who was a leader, formal and informal, varied based on how many seasons the student-athlete had been on the team. Many changes had occurred on the team from four years ago until when the interviews were conducted. For example, a

large percentage of the team had graduated and there was the addition of leadership meetings. Many of the changes that were incorporated on the team included the way leadership development was handled. Acknowledging the complexity of leadership and leadership development linked to Leader-Member Exchange theory by acknowledging the variation in relationships depending on with whom. The more developed relationships allowed for coaches and players to understand how each team member is different and may respond to situations and conversations differently. The same strategy for leading will impact each person differently. Marion and Gonzales (2014) noted the importance of informal and formal leadership relationships, which was seen in my participants' responses about who influenced leadership and leadership skill development on the team. While the importance of individuals was not seen verbatim on the recruiting materials or the athletic department Website, readers are able to understand the importance of each individual on the team.

Summary of Themes

Participants shared their experiences about being on the NCAA Division I women's soccer team at the research site at the conclusion of the Fall 2018 season. From interviews I gained a deeper understanding of their experiences on the women's soccer team, as well as at the university, and how they had developed leadership skills from those experiences. While most of the experiences were positive, some areas note needing improvement. Overall, six themes were found in this study (transferable skills, self-awareness, team roles, differences in coaching strategy, acknowledging family role, acknowledging the complexity of leadership and leadership development). Within the

theme of differences in coaching strategy, participants were able to offer constructive criticism of teammates and coaches and show where leadership development from within the team was able to shine through.

Summary

In chapter four, I explained the six themes found as a result of this study. These themes included: transferable skills, self-awareness, team roles, differences in coaching strategy, acknowledging family role, acknowledging the complexity of leadership and leadership development. After discussing each theme in detail, I gave a summary of the themes and provided where possible results from my document analysis content that supported the theme. Additionally, I linked the theme back to my theoretical framework. In chapter five, I provide the major findings from my study linked to the literature review in chapter two, the results linked to the theoretical frameworks, recommendations for practice, and outline topics for future research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

In the previous chapters of this study, I explained the literature surrounding student-athletes and leadership development, the rise of women's soccer, and women in athletics, the case study methodology, and results of my study. The case was bounded by the participation on the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I women's soccer team at the research site during the 2018 season. There were eight participants in my study.

The purpose of my study was to understand what leadership skills were developed by participating in NCAA Division I women's soccer. My study was guided by the following research question: What leadership skills are developed by participating in NCAA Division I women's soccer? In this chapter, I explain the limitations of my study, the major findings, the results linked to the theoretical framework, as well as recommendations for practice and for future research.

Limitations

As a qualitative study, there were limitations. First, I am a novice researcher. A research study of this magnitude was new to me. Second, because my study was qualitative, I interpreted all of my data. I relied on participants to be truthful in their interviews. I took their word as the truth as they shared their experiences. Finally, this

case study was a single site case study. There was one institution and one team that was looked at for the case study. The bounds of the case study impact the transferability to other institutions. While this case study was intentionally designed to be bounded by one team at one research site, it does mean study findings are not generalizable.

Major Findings

First, and foremost, I was able to determine leadership skills were being developed by participating in NCAA Division I women's soccer at the research site. After analyzing the data and developing six themes (transferable skills, self-awareness, team roles, differences in coaching strategy, acknowledging family role, and acknowledging the complexity of leadership and leadership development), there were several findings I determined to be significant. The themes found through the data analysis supported leadership development occurring as a result of participation in the sport. Below, I break out the major findings of each theme and link it to the existing literature.

Transferable Skills

When looking specifically at what leadership skills were developed, transferable skills were at the top of the list. Transferable skills were the first theme I explored during the coding process. All participants spoke about transferable skills they gained through participation in women's soccer. The theme was significant because college is a time to develop skills to assist students after college; some of those skills are leadership skills. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) (2019) compiled a list of competencies for career readiness. The competencies are skills college students should

develop while attending college. Many of the skills my participants gained from participating in NCAA Division I women's soccer were similar to the NACE (2019) career readiness competencies. The participants in my study shared their experiences and growth in problem solving, oral communication skills, teamwork, collaboration, and leadership. Amy shared how she felt comfortable communicating with supervisors, dealing with conflict, and managing her time in the work place. She noted she gained these skills from participating in athletics. The skills my participants spoke about and showed growth in were competencies NACE (2019) defined as necessary for career readiness.

Additionally, time management was another area where leadership skills were further developed under the theme of transferable skills. Existing literature illustrated the time commitment needed to participate in NCAA Division I athletics. Players are often well aware of time commitments on the field and in the classroom (Weaver & Simet, 2015; Gayles & Hu, 2009). Participants in my study focused on time management and shared how their time management skills had grown since participating in NCAA Division I women's soccer. The need to negotiate among the time demands of college academics, NCAA Division I athletics, and any social obligations were mentioned by all participants in the study and was supported by the literature (Weaver & Simet, 2015).

Self-Awareness

The second theme I discovered through analysis of the data was participants' self-awareness. Within the theme of self-awareness, two major findings stood out; the ability to take advantage of leadership opportunities outside of NCAA Division I women's

soccer and my participants having been their own critic. The research site provided leadership meetings to student-athletes outside of their sport. I saw these leadership meetings as great opportunities for participants of my study to hone their leadership skills. My participants who did participate in the leadership meetings outside of soccer shared they learned to be more self-reflective by taking personality inventories during leadership meetings. I saw the experience as one where participants became more self-aware. Molly shared her experience with leadership meetings, noting from the personal inventories she was able to work better in a collaborative, team environment. She explained understanding how different people lead and follow was beneficial for working with others.

According to participants in my study, the leadership meetings offered to student-athletes had grown at the research site over the past four years. What had started as just being a leadership meeting for starting players on the women's soccer team transformed into a series of leadership meetings. These leadership meetings were written about on the athletic department Website. Many of the women who were interviewed were taking part in the leadership meetings and had gained leadership skills and self-awareness from their participation in the meeting series. The meetings included student-athletes from other sports, which allowed for conversations about how other teams were handling situations. Ultimately, the women were able to decide what ideas they were taking back to their team.

For student-athletes to succeed on and off the field, self-awareness is critical. With both academic and athletic requirements, my participants had to know where to

focus their time, and what to focus on. Motivation was necessary for soccer practice and academic performance. Being self-aware meant knowing what work had to be put in to succeed in both areas. Mikaela shared she put in the time at the gym and focused on being as fit as possible for the pre-season. Mikaela also noted no one ran workouts for her. She had to be aware of where she needed to focus her time and energy to be the most prepared. Mikaela was both self-aware and her own critic as she made decisions.

At the research site, there was an expectation of balancing academics and athletics, which is not always the case for student-athletes (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). The leadership meetings helped participants in my study develop more self-awareness. While Galante and Ward (2016) noted participation in college athletics at the undergraduate level was linked to leadership development, the leadership development was not necessarily occurring on the field, but through opportunities like research site leadership meetings. Only student-athletes were afforded the leadership meetings. The literature has shown that coaches do not always have time to focus on leadership development in practices, as coaches need to have a winning record for job security (Weaver & Simet, 2015). The outside of soccer leadership meetings supported Weaver and Simet's (2015) finding of needing to develop student-athletes as leaders outside of their sport. Further, the findings of my study support Gayles and Hu's (2009) work that leadership skills are developed through student engagement.

Team Roles

Team roles was another theme that surfaced from my data. The major findings within team roles surrounded support staff as well as participants' understanding of

seniority within the team. The support staff involved with the NCAA Division I women's soccer team at the research site was extensive, including a licensed psychologist and a sports psychologist. Support staff members worked directly with the team, as well as with players one-on-one, to further leadership development. Through interactions with the support staff, my participants were able to challenge and better themselves individually. Participants shared work they did with Dr. Britt, the licensed psychologist, noting the experiences they had with her helped them manage emotions and anxiety. Managing emotions allowed participants to better their leadership skills and interaction with teammates.

Participants in my study also relied on older and more experienced teammates to assist them in learning leadership skills. Younger teammates were influenced by older women on the team as they were seen as leaders due to experience. The younger women on the team relied on the shared experiences from more senior players to get through difficult situations. Resi shared how Alice [senior teammate] spent time working on her soccer skills outside of practices. Younger participants noted the support they received from older teammates, and older participants noted giving advice to newer players. Kara noted as an older member of the team she was constantly giving advice to younger team members, as were other older members of the team.

I saw a connection between the theme of team roles and how influence was utilized within leadership. Both Maxwell (2018) and Northouse (2019) included influence in their definitions of leadership. The role of players influenced the direction of

the team. These influences can be formal, as seen with support staff, or informal, such as older players giving younger players advice.

Differences in Coaching Strategy

From examining the theme of team roles, the next theme emerged: differences in coaching strategy. The need for strong communication was one of the major findings within the differences in coaching strategy. Communication was an area where many of my participants noted improvement was needed. A member of the coaching staff would communicate differently depending on the player they were working with, or the situation the team faced. Participants who spoke about differences in coaching strategy noted they understood why coaches approached players, or the team as a whole, differently depending on the situation. Resi shared how coaches often communicated differently depending on the player. Resi explained sometimes coaches would be harsh, while other times, they tried to build up the player.

There is no one way to lead. Northouse's (2019) definition of leadership included how leadership is a process. Specifically, Northouse (2019) stated "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 5). There is no prescribed way to lead a group. The way a leader influenced their group depended on the common goal of the group. I found Northouse's (2019) definition of leadership to link nicely to the theme of differences in coaching strategy. The situation or player influenced the way a coach did their job. With many student-athletes being classified as Millennials, described as anxious and "hyper-focused on achievement", the way a player responded to a coach varied greatly (Munch, Wagener,

Breitkreutz, & Hellenbrand, 2014, p. 38). To build a team where coaches are able to influence their players towards a common goal took time and effort for coaching staff (Aoyagic, Cox, & McGuire, 2008). My participants understood the differences in coaching strategy, despite the need for more leadership training and communication development at the coaching level.

Acknowledging Family Roles

Another theme where differences were acknowledged was surrounding family roles. All participants shared about their family and the involvement their family had with soccer. The roles of families changed over time. Beginning with coaching teams, to helping with the college recruitment process, to attending games when they were able. Through stories my participants shared, I gained an understanding of the change in family role over time. What stood out to me the most in this theme was the role of fathers. Participants spoke about soccer being a special time with their fathers. Mikaela shared a lot about the time she spent traveling with her father for soccer. For Mikaela, and other participants, the time spent with their father was special to them. The fathers of participants in my study were heavily involved with girls' soccer. The involvement changed as my participants began attending college. Fathers were no longer coaches and distance made attending games for some families challenging.

Sokolove (2008) noted the involvement of families in women's soccer. Sokolove stated, "Fathers, perhaps even more than mothers, crowd the sidelines of girls' athletic events in communities all across America" (p. 5). He continued, "Men don't always easily share interests with their daughters, but sports we get" (Sokolove, 2008, p. 5).

While it may not be necessary to have an involved father to be successful in NCAA Division I women's soccer, my participants all had involved fathers. The involvement changed as participants got older, but families remained as involved as they were able.

Acknowledging the Complexity of Leadership and Leadership Development

The final theme I found through my analysis was acknowledging the complexity of leadership and leadership development. Leadership has many definitions. Studies have shown that college is a time where leadership skills are developed (Astin, 1993; Wren, 1995). The complexity of leadership and leadership development was acknowledged by my participants through responses about who influenced leadership on the team, and what skills participants looked for in a leader. Responses from participants varied, but ideas of leading by example, respect, and having both verbal and quieter leaders emerged. Tory shared about leading by example on-and-off-the-field, and how the coaches had trust in the captains and players on the team. Kara noted the team worked toward an overall goal each year, and there had to be buy-in from the team to work towards their goal.

I shared with my participants the definition of leadership for my study by Northouse (2019), "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 5). Participants were asked if they agreed with the definition or had their own definition of leadership. What emerged from the data showed understanding and acknowledgment the complexity of leadership and leadership development. The way coaches led varied, who was viewed on the team as a leader varied, and how each participant saw themselves as a leader varied. Mikaela saw all

members of the soccer team as leaders, where Amy shared that younger team members were not leaders due to lack of experience.

The variations in responses showed differing perspectives of my participants. Even with differences, participants overall agreed with Northouse's (2019) definition of leadership. Participants agreed leadership skills developed as a result of participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer would be beneficial for upcoming seasons, as well as their futures. Sokolove (2008) noted the large number (82%) of high-ranking women in the business world who had participated in team athletics.

The literature has also shown the lack of opportunities for women within athletics (Sokolove, 2008; Fasting & Pfister, 2000). Many participants in this study noted that there would be a time to hang up their cleats. As a result, participants focused on picking majors, or finding opportunities to further leadership development to assist with their future endeavors. Finding a way to help student-athletes work towards goals after graduation is necessary for the future success of these students.

Summary of Major Findings

Though there are leadership skills developed through participation in collegiate athletics, many of these leadership developmental activities were not happening on the field due to coaches focusing on winning to keep their jobs (Weaver & Simet, 2015). What was interesting about the research site was the number of leadership development opportunities participants had outside of soccer being offered to student-athletes through the athletic department. The opportunities still differed from experiences and activities of traditional college students with participation in clubs and activity planning, but the

participants were still able to gain leadership skills through student-athlete specific activities.

From the findings of my study it was apparent the research site had taken a proactive approach to developing leadership skills within NCAA Division I student-athletes and had worked specifically with the women's soccer team to develop leaders. The leadership skills from within the women's soccer team was very strong; in part due to the players on the team, as well as their participation in the leadership development opportunities the athletic department offered.

The self-awareness gained from the leadership meetings influenced the women both on and off the field. They realized leadership development was more than just learning how to lead while playing soccer. Participants gave examples as to how they had developed skills that would help them in the future. These skills were also used in mitigating issues within the team regarding social influences, and how to lead from within. The research site had made leadership development a priority within athletics.

Despite the athletic department at the research site having a focus on developing leadership skills within athletics, in regard to the NCAA Division I women's soccer team, more can be done on the field and in meetings led by coaches.

Significant Findings: Case Specific

The findings from this study are case specific, as the study was bound by the research site, and being a member of the NCAA Division I women's soccer team during the 2018 season. Due to the bounds of the case, the study is specific to the research site and case study criteria (Merriam, 1998). If the study was completed at a different

institution, the results could illuminate different experiences around leadership skills developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer. Furthermore, the requirements of the athletic department and the staffing of the athletic department likely would be different. Because my study was a qualitative case study, the results are not generalizable, as they are specific to the study (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Instead, researchers should be able to replicate my study in a new case setting and bounded system (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018).

The unique leadership development opportunities offered to student-athletes at my research site were within the bounds of the case. The leadership meetings were only offered to student-athletes. Additionally, the way coaches interacted with players supported the existing literature (Galante & Ward, 2016; Weaver & Simet, 2015). There was a focus on winning and sport development. While leadership skills were developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer, the focus on leadership skill development primarily came from outside of practices.

The experiences shared by my participants were unique to the research site. Due to the characteristics of my study, the case was the research site and team membership. With a different team, and/or a different research site, the themes which emerged through the data may be different depending on the research site, and the team.

Results Linked to Theoretical Framework

For this study I examined at two different ways leadership skills were developed. Specifically, I looked at experiences and relationships, both formal and informal. Figure

5.1 shows how themes emerged through data analysis and these themes linked to my theoretical framework.

Figure 5.1: Themes to Theoretical Framework

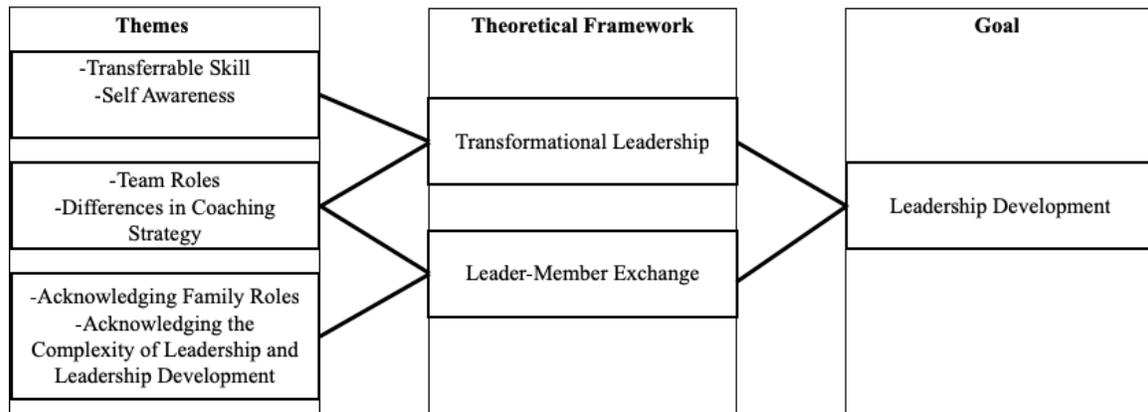


Figure 5.1. Final themes as a result of analysis. Each group of themes is linked to one, or both, of the theoretical frameworks. The theoretical frameworks then linked to the goal of leadership development, supporting the goal explained by the research question guiding this study.

The two theoretical frameworks and the link to significant findings are explained in more detail below.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership theory looks at an individual within an organization. Specifically, the theory looks at individual’s charisma, change agency, trust, and how the individual influences the greater group (Weber, 1947; Selznick, 1957; Marion & Gonzalez, 2014). Bass (1985) stated: “In social science and political science, charisma has been used to describe leaders who by the power of their person have profound and extraordinary effects on their followers” (p. 35). Transformational leaders have confidence, vision, and drive to create change, even if it is not popular (Bass, 1985). The

themes from my study that linked to this theory were transferable skills, self-awareness, team roles, and differences in coaching strategy. These themes dealt with experiences participants had from participating in NCAA Division I women's soccer. Additionally, the themes linked to Transformational Leadership show how the trust and change agency of leaders allowed leaders to understand the needs, goals, and values of the followers (Bass, 1985).

Each participant's experience was impacted by the trust and charisma of individuals they interacted with, as well as those who influenced leadership development. My participants shared experiences where teammates stepped in to assist them on the field, or shared support regarding academics. Additionally, several participants shared the influence they felt from the quieter leaders on the team. There was a connection between leading by example and from one-on-one relationships between players. Leaders were confident in their followers (Bass, 1985).

Participation in the leadership meetings offered to the women's soccer team and other student-athletes allowed my participants to grow in a variety of ways. The leadership meetings experience allowed players to become more self-aware and acknowledge the difference in coaching strategy. Additionally, for some participants, these meetings encouraged them to seek help from support staff and older, more experienced players on the team. The opportunities my participants had were a result of being a member of the NCAA Division I women's soccer team. Having gone through the experience of being on the NCAA Division I soccer team transformed the leadership skills of participants.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory looks at dyadic relationships (Graen, 1976; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; Marion & Gonzalez, 2014). Relationships can be both formal and informal. There are many relationships on a soccer team, including between coaches and players, as well as players with players. The themes of team roles, differences in coaching strategy, acknowledging family role, and acknowledging the complexity of leadership and leadership development are relationship based, and grounded in LMX theory. Participants' relationships changed and matured through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer.

For participants in my study, one of the biggest changes seen through a LMX theory lens was the change in family roles. In the beginning of participants' soccer careers their families were highly involved. The involvement shifted from coaching, to assisting with college recruiting, to supporting participants by attending collegiate games when able. Most families could not attend every collegiate game. Most participants spoke about their families, or a parent, being at all of their games when they were younger. Once the student-athletes began school at the research site, they had both athletics and academic requirements to balance. The women were responsible for themselves and their schedules. Participants went from having parental involvement in their schedules, to being in control of their own schedules. Recognizing the difference in family roles and relationships was something the women discussed in their interviews. Participants realized those changes allowed them to gain and expand their relationships and leadership

skills. The differences and changes in relationships are further explained in the recommendations for practice.

Recommendations for Practice

While participants developed leadership skills through participating in NCAA Division I women's soccer, there are still areas where improvements need to be made. Learning is never complete, so it is critical for institutions to offer professional development opportunities for formal leaders (coaches, support staff) to learn how to develop their players' leadership skills. Understanding what skills are developed through participation in collegiate athletics will assist coaches and athletic department staff as they continue to develop student-athlete leaders.

I recommend coaches and staff to be exposed to NACE (2019) competencies in continuing education and training sessions. Leadership skills developed from participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer are transferable skills which help with career development. In addition, coaches and staff should learn how to further develop leadership skills through team meetings and practices. Coaches need to understand the importance of leadership development for student-athletes in college. Coaches understand the time commitment required of student-athletes, but they need to better understand how the way they lead the team impacts team members' development.

Conversations within team meetings and one-on-one discussions need to include reflective questions about how leadership skills can link to coursework and post-graduation plans. I would encourage athletic departments to work with coaches on how to include leadership development in formal and informal conversations. Team captains

need to also understand how to be a productive link between the team and coaching staff. Learning how to hold peers accountable will further leadership development skills. Furthermore, encouraging conversations about how NCAA Division I women's soccer can help prepare women for the workforce upon graduation is important.

Overall, the research site was developing student-athletes in these areas, but more intentional programming would further leadership development. At the research site, leadership skills were developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study yielded results that answered the research question of what leadership skills were developed from participation on a NCAA Division I women's soccer team, there are other studies that could further the literature in this area. A similar study could be replicated and completed as a longitudinal study. A longitudinal study would allow the researcher to follow players to see what leadership skills are developed after each year of participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer. By interviewing players after each season, researchers could see how leadership skills developed as a result of each season of participating in NCAA Division I women's soccer. Additionally, following players through a longitudinal study could show how growth in academic classes can help overall leadership skill development. I noticed a difference in how many years my participants had been on the soccer team, as well as where they were in their program of study. Following participants through a four-year study would provide more

information on what leadership skills are developed and at what point in a NCAA Division I women's soccer player's collegiate career.

Another area that could be examined is looking at *how* leadership skills are developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer. Results from this study revealed that leadership skills are developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer. The findings of this study do not explain how leadership skills are developed. The results of a study looking at how leadership skills are developed could shift the way coaches and leaders within athletic departments work on developing leadership skills for student-athletes.

Finally, a similar study with other NCAA sports teams, at the Division I or other level could be completed. Depending on the time commitment and number of student-athletes on the team, there could be a variety of experiences for student-athletes. This would allow researchers to have an understanding of the leadership development experiences through participation on different collegiate athletic teams. Results could be compared between different sports, as well as men and women's teams. Understanding what leadership skills are developed based on the varied experiences would further build the literature on how to support this group of students.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the significant findings of the study. Through my data analysis, it was determined leadership skills were developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer. The limitations of the study were discussed. The major findings were explained within the bounds of the case. Additionally, the significant

findings were linked to the literature and to the theoretical frameworks of Transformational Leadership theory, and Leader-Member Exchange theory. Recommendations and implications for practice, as well as future research were discussed.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Recruitment Email

Hello,

My name is Beth Solomon, and I am a doctoral student at Clemson University. I am conducting research about leadership development within NCAA Division I Women's Soccer, and I am interested in your experience. Your participation will involve one interview that will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Participating in this research has no known risks. Any notes and audio recordings of the interview will be kept in a secure location only accessible by the researcher.

If you would like to participate, please respond to this email with your preferred contact mode and information. I will follow up with you to schedule the interview.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Beth D. Solomon

Hello,

My name is Beth Solomon, and I am a doctoral student at Clemson University. You may know me from working at the front desk or EEE at the Nieri Center. I am conducting research about leadership development within NCAA Division I Women's Soccer, and I am interested in your experience. Your participation will involve one interview that will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes. After completing the interview, you will be given a \$20.00 gift card. Participating in this research has no known risks. Any notes and audio recordings of the interview will be kept in a secure location only accessible by the researcher.

If you would like to participate, please respond to this email with your preferred contact mode and information. I will follow up with you to schedule the interview.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Beth D. Solomon

Appendix B

IRB Approval

Dear Dr. Havice,

The Clemson University Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the protocol “Leadership Development within NCAA Division I Women’s Soccer: A Case Study” using exempt review procedures and a **determination was made on April 26, 2018** that the proposed activities involving human participants qualify as **Exempt under category B2** in accordance with federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101.

No further action, amendments, or IRB oversight of the protocol is required except in the following situations:

1. Substantial changes made to the protocol that could potentially change the review level. Researchers who modify the study purpose, study sample, or research methods and instruments in ways not covered by the exempt categories will need to submit an expedited or full board review application.
2. Occurrence of unanticipated problem or adverse event; any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects, complications, and/or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Research Compliance immediately.
3. Change in Principal Investigator (PI)

All research involving human participants must maintain an ethically appropriate standard, which serves to protect the rights and welfare of the participants. This involves obtaining informed consent and maintaining confidentiality of data. Research related records should be retained for a minimum of three (3) years after completion of the study.

The Clemson University IRB is committed to facilitating ethical research and protecting the rights of human subjects. Please contact us if you have any questions and use the IRB number and title when referencing the study in future correspondence.

Good luck with your study.

Best,

Amy Smitherman

IRB Coordinator

OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

Clemson University, Division of Research

[391 College Avenue, Suite 406K-1., Clemson, SC 29631, USA](http://www.clemson.edu/research/compliance/irb/)

P: 864-656-6460

<http://www.clemson.edu/research/compliance/irb/>

Confidentiality Notice: This message and any attachments contain information which may be confidential and privileged. Unless you are the addressee (or authorized to receive for the addressee), you may not use, copy or disclose to anyone the message or any information contained in the message. If you have received the message in error, please advise the sender by reply e-mail and delete the message.

Dear Dr. Havice,

The proposed changes to the protocol will not change the Exempt category B2 determination. You may implement the changes without further IRB oversight.

No further action, amendments, or IRB oversight of the protocol is required except in the following situations:

1. Substantial changes made to the protocol that could potentially change the review level. Researchers who modify the study purpose, study sample, or research methods and instruments in ways not covered by the exempt categories will need to submit an expedited or full board review application.
2. Occurrence of unanticipated problem or adverse event; any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects, complications, and/or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Research Compliance immediately.
3. Change in Principal Investigator (PI)

The Clemson University IRB is committed to facilitating ethical research and protecting the rights of human subjects. Please contact us if you have any questions and use the IRB number and title when referencing the study in future correspondence.

All the best,
Nalinee

Nalinee Patin, CIP

IRB Administrator

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www.clemson.edu/research

This message and any attachments contain information which may be confidential and privileged. Unless you are the addressee (or authorized to receive for the addressee), you may not use, copy or disclose to anyone the message or any information contained in the message. If you have received the message in error, please advise the sender by reply e-mail and delete the message.

Appendix C

Athletic Department Approval

Beth,

It was a pleasure speaking with you! As discussed, Athletics approves the study examining leadership among Division I Women's Soccer student-athletes. Please feel free to share with IRB as our approval.

Let me know if you have any questions!

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Associate Director of Athletics, Student Services and Performance

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX | Office: XXXXXXXXXXXX

Mailing Address: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Beth,

You can move forward with the IRB approved study. Once you determine who will participate in the study, we will need a list to document within the compliance office.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Associate Director of Athletics, Student Services and Performance

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX | Office: XXXXXXXXXXXX

Mailing Address: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Appendix D

Pilot Study

While there has been research about leadership, and leadership within athletics, there are noted gaps in the literature. Gaps include how student-athletes gain leadership skills through participation in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I athletics. Additionally, research studies surrounding leadership skills and athletics tends to focus on revenue generating sports, specifically men's football. This study looks to add to the literature in two ways. First, explain how leadership is developed with women who participate in NCAA Division I women's soccer. Second, the results of this study adds to the literature about women's collegiate athletics. This study aims to demonstrate how women grow and develop as leaders through participation in athletics.

Significance of Study

Leadership development is important because leaders are influential and create positive change (Maxwell, 2018). Leadership development for traditional college students in the United States (U.S.) is often completed by participation in co-curricular activities. Traditional co-curricular activities can include activity boards, Greek Life, and other student organizations (Weaver & Simet, 2015). Practice and travel schedules for student-athletes at the collegiate level, especially at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I level, is time consuming (Gayles & Hu 2009). As a result, student-athletes are not typically able to participate in the same traditional co-curricular activities as their peers. Therefore, student-athlete leadership development

needs to happen as a part of participation in athletics. Leadership development is not always included in practices that are run by coaches (Weaver & Simet, 2015).

NCAA Division I student-athletes need to balance their classes, physical conditioning, team practices, team meetings, and travel for competitions. Traditional co-curricular leadership activities do not fit the schedules of student-athletes (Weaver & Simet, 2015). Further, leadership development is not always a coach's priority, as they need focus on winning to keep their jobs. With winning being a priority, leadership development opportunities are not integrated into practices. Captains, or student-athlete leaders of the team, are often selected based on tenure on the team or their athletic abilities rather than their ability to lead the team (Weaver & Simet, 2015).

Leadership skills are not necessarily taught or supported as student-athletes take on these formal leadership positions (Weaver & Simet, 2015). More can be done to help student-athletes learn leadership skills that non-student-athletes are gaining from participation in other campus activities. Knowing what coaches are doing with their teams regarding leadership will help the researcher understand leadership skills being developed for collegiate student-athletes, and how these skills are valued (Weaver & Simet, 2015).

RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research question guided this study: How is leadership developed by participating in a season of NCAA Division I women's soccer? Player perspectives were explored through a case study. This pilot study looked through the lens of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) leadership theory and transformational leadership theory.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Leadership in College

Leadership development is a part of most collegiate co-curricular activities. Leadership on college campuses has been studied since the early part of the 20th century (Hunter & Jordan, 1939). Leadership development continues to be studied today in many different student populations (Dugan & Komives, 2007; Owen, 2015; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008; Rosch, Collier, & Thompson, 2015). While the literature points to a myriad of opportunities to develop leadership on college campuses, one group that may not get to take advantage of these leadership development opportunities in traditional ways is student-athletes. NCAA Division I student-athletes have very busy schedules. Student-athletes need to balance classes, practices, and travel for competitions. As a result, many student-athletes competing at the collegiate level are not able to participate in traditional leadership activities put on by departments in student affairs (Weaver & Simet, 2015).

Astin (1993) argued that men and women need to develop leadership skills in college because they will become leaders in the future. Likewise, Wren (1995) asserted leadership should be considered a human condition because regardless of the time-period or circumstance, the world needs leaders. The foundational work of Astin (1993) and Wren (1995) demonstrated leadership development is an important part of the college experience. Practitioners argue that leadership development in student-athletes today is vitally important as on playing field experience and having social capital. Student-athletes are both informal leaders on their teams and on their campuses (Galante & Ward,

2015; Weaver & Simet, 2015). This suggests their potential to lead others after their college athletic careers. Despite the lack of participation in “traditional” leadership activities, student-athletes are still viewed as student leaders on campus based on their participation in intercollegiate athletics.

The Student Athlete Population

The majority of student-athletes in 2018, are categorized as millennials. Millennials are categorized as having a birth year starting in 1982 (Baker Rosa and Hastings, 2018; Howe & Strauss, 2000). Howe and Strauss (2000) note that the millennial generation is the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in the U. S. There are distinct characteristics that the millennial group has including being high pressured, anxious, and “hyper-focused on achievement” (Munch, Wagener, Breikreutz, & Hellenbrand, 2014, p.38). According to Baker Rosa and Hastings (2018), millennials have strong computer skills, but weaker communication skills. Additionally, Millennials have grown up with interactive television, music streaming and digital music players, DVDs (digital video discs), microchips, and personal computers (Howe & Strauss, 2000). When looking specifically at leadership, Fuller, Harrison, Lawrence, Eyanson, and McArdle (2017) found millennial male student-athletes looked at leadership as a social responsibility. They found male student-athletes want to use their leadership skills to create positive social change. These student-athletes were found to be optimistic, and favor collaboration, modeling, and mentorship. All the qualities of a great leader (Fuller, Harrison, Lawrence, Eyanson, & McArdle, 2017). These results signify the importance of building leadership skills in college athletes: their belief in the ability to make change

signifies their willingness to lead others. However, without building their leadership skills, student-athletes' desire to change may not translate into effective leadership strategies.

The Rise of Women's Soccer

The rise of women's sports in the U. S. began with the passing of Title IX in 1972 (Grainey, 2012). While Title IX was passed to incorporate gender equity, athletics was not the main focus. However, with colleges and universities receiving federal funding, budgets within athletics had to be adjusted, and women's athletics benefitted greatly (Grainey, 2012). In 1972 there were 300,000 young women playing high school sports; by 2008, that number had grown to over three million (Sokolove, 2008). The first varsity women's soccer team began at Brown University, in 1977 under coach Phil Pincince. Pincince not only had to start a team but organize games with other colleges and universities. Five years later, in 1982, the NCAA hosted the first women's soccer championship (Grainey, 2012).

The growth of women's soccer continued with development of youth soccer leagues. When Grainey (2012) wrote his book, *Beyond Bend It Like Beckham: The Global Phenomenon of Women's Soccer*, there were three times as many girls playing soccer than there were girls participating in Girl Scouts. Participating in athletics helped shape girls as they developed into women who were collaborative and competitive (Sokolove, 2008). The combination of collaborative and competitive traits are seen as good traits to have. Management experts see the collaboration and competitiveness in some of the best leadership (Sokolove, 2008). The U.S. population was recognizing the

benefits of girls and women participating in athletics. By 2007, there were approximately 18 million soccer players, half of them female, with an average age of 15 (Grainey, 2012). During the 1990s, NCAA Division I women's programs saw the most growth. The number of colleges with teams tripled, while the men's programs remained relatively unchanged (Grainey, 2012). The growth of women's soccer not only changed participation in co-curricular activities for young girls, the sport opened pathways for college scholarships. Soccer also allowed women to remain involved with soccer through coaching after they finished playing competitively.

Leadership Development

Leadership development is not always a coach's priority. Having a winning record is necessary for many coaches to keep their jobs (Weaver & Simet, 2015). With winning being a priority, leadership development opportunities are not typically integrated into practices (Weaver & Simet, 2015). Captains, or student-athlete leaders of teams, are often selected based on their tenure on the team or their athletic abilities rather than their ability to lead (Weaver & Simet, 2015). Leadership skills are not necessarily taught as student-athletes take on these positions. More can be done to help team captains learn leadership skills that non-student-athletes are gaining from their participation in other campus activities (Weaver & Simet, 2015).

Participation in athletics is linked to leadership at the undergraduate level (Galante & Ward, 2016). While many studies have been conducted on coach leadership style, less is known about how coaches implement leadership development in student-athletes. Many have found longitudinal data that links participation in leadership programs to help

participants grow in civic responsibility, multicultural awareness, and other competencies that can be career-specific (Galante & Ward, 2016; Weaver & Simet, 2015). While these studies were done with traditional collegiate leadership development programs, there was data from athletics showing that leadership development improves skills including satisfaction, communication, motivation, and performance (Galante & Ward, 2016; Weaver & Simet, 2015).

A survey of female executives completed in 2002 showed that 82 percent of participants participated in collegiate team athletics (Sokolove, 2008). The study further exemplified the leadership skills gained through participation in athletics. Though there are not many formal leadership roles on a collegiate athletic team, as there are on student organization executive boards, leadership development is still critical for student-athletes.

Gayles and Hu (2009) studied student engagement in academic related activities. While they did not find a direct relationship between engagement and leadership, they did deduce that student-athletes may serve in formal and informal leadership roles based on their status as an athlete. With large teams (i.e., football, men's and women's soccer, baseball, and others), practices may be held by position, meaning there are smaller groups within the larger team. In these situations, there may not be formal captain roles. Instead there are individuals who stand out as leaders. These leadership positions are informal, but still play a role in the development of the greater team.

Coaches and staff in athletic departments work hard to put together teams for their institutions. Building a team begins with the recruiting process and continues as the new players start at the institution. Aoyagic, Cox, & McGuire (2008) highlighted the

importance of the time spent by coaches and staff in the effort of building effective teams. Team development must be intentional and to do so effectively coaches must set aside time for this endeavor. While there are many ways to lead and develop a team, the literature focuses on the theory of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), and transformational leadership (Galante & Ward, 2016). Understanding how teams develop leadership through relationships and transformational moments is one of the goals of this study. Relationships and interactions are a part of team sports, and understanding what activities are done on and off the field to develop leadership skills will help coaches be more proactive in the future about developing student leaders.

Effects on College Athletics

Participation in NCAA Division I athletics is a time consuming co-curricular activity. For some programs, navigating the demands of being a scholar-athlete are reversed, meaning the focus is on athletics first, and student-athletes are really seen as athlete-students (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). The demands for time are not hidden during the recruiting or onboarding processes. The focus on academics is highlighted, but when athletes get into their season, pressure from their coaches often shifts, and focuses on the demands of the sport (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). Understanding the demands for time, working leadership development into team practices is necessary for student-athletes to get the most out of participation in their sport. These leadership skills will also prepare them for the workforce upon graduation (Sokolove, 2008).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by two leadership theories, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), transformational leadership, and leadership as defined by Northouse (2019). These leadership theories have been linked to success in collegiate athletics. I looked at leadership skills that are explained through the interviews I conducted with participants. I also explored how these leadership theories are utilized within women's soccer.

Leader-Member Exchange

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) is focused on relationships between leaders and followers. Primarily, LMX focuses on the dyadic relationships between the leader and followers (Graen, 1976). Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991) wrote about the many roles of a leader, including directing, transacting, visioning, and self-managing. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991), and Marion and Gonzales (2014) described LMX in three phases of building relationships. First, the leader and follower have a transactional relationship, second, the relationship becomes an acquaintanceship, and lastly, the pair becomes a dyad. In this dyad, there is trust and understanding between the two. This dyad is especially crucial in the relationship between coaches and their athletes. There needs to be a trusting understanding between the two to make decisions. Coaches must have strong leadership skills and positive, trusting relationships with their athletes to develop necessary leadership skills (Weaver & Simet, 2015).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership theory is focused on the individual within an organization. Change is a large component of transformational leadership.

Transformational Leadership utilizes Weber's (1947) theories on charisma impacting others. Selznick (1957), found that individuals with competing interests always impact the attention of leadership, as well as a balance of internal powers within the group.

Transformational leadership suggests success is created through having and using traits, and acting on behalf of the organization, or in the case of athletics, the team.

Transformational leadership is based on how the charisma of an individual is important (Weber, 1947). Marion and Gonzales (2014) listed four elements to transformational leadership: "1. Charisma or idealized influence 2. Inspirational motivation 3. Intellectual stimulation 4. Individualized consideration/attention" (p.158).

Within athletics, utilizing a specific leadership theory can push coaches towards success. McCann, Kohntopp, and Keeling, (2015) noted that transformational coaches are visionary. Additionally, transformational coaches are looking for holistic development (mind, body, and heart) to get full engagement from student-athletes. Coaches who are transformational in their leadership style are looking to develop their student-athletes from followers to leaders (McCann, Kohntopp, & Keeling, 2015).

Leadership

There are many definitions of leadership. For this study, I chose to focus on the definition of leadership by Northouse (2019). Northouse (2019) states "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 5). Northouse's (2019) definition fits well with how collegiate soccer works. The team has a common goal, and there are leaders within the group, both formal (coaches and captains), and informal (players) who will influence the actions of the group

to work toward the goal. The formal leaders according to Northouse (2019) are assigned leaders, and the players who utilize their leadership positions are emergent leaders. Emergent leaders develop as a result of what one does, and how followers support them (Northouse, 2019). These leadership roles are seen through the formal and informal leadership roles that occur on a soccer team throughout the season.

RESEARCH DESIGN

For this study, a case study research design was used. Case studies have thick, rich descriptions, and are appropriate when researchers are looking to get a deeper understanding of how a program works, and what dynamics exist (Merriam, 1998). The case study includes the investigation of the bounded unit (Merriam, 1998). Because the research question for my study is bounded by participation in a season of one women's soccer team, case study is an appropriate methodology to get a deeper understanding of how leadership is developed in a NCAA Division I women's soccer team. To inform the full study, a pilot study was conducted during summer 2018. For the case study, IRB approval, and approval from the athletics department was obtained. For Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, please see Appendix A, for athletic department approval, please see Appendix B.

Participants

Participants for this study were on the roster of a NCAA Division I women's soccer team at a public Southeastern university. Purposeful sampling was used to obtain participants. Purposeful sampling is when participants are selected by the researcher based on specific criteria (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). In this case, that participants were

on the roster of the NCAA Division I Women's Soccer team during Summer 2018. The women were recruited via email from the researcher which will be sent to the women's soccer team by the athletic department. The recruitment email was sent out by a coach, and responses for participation were sent to the researcher through the Associate Athletic Director.

Due to the selectiveness of the case study, and the size of Division I women's soccer team, to not saturate the pilot study, one participant was interviewed for the pilot study. Having one participant for the pilot study allows for enough participants for the full study. For this study, Molly, an academic sophomore, a redshirt freshman soccer player, was interviewed. Being a "redshirt" meant that during Molly's first academic year as a full-time student on campus, she did not use a year of her intercollegiate competition eligibility (NCAA, 2018, p. 81). Molly did not play in games or travel with the team during her first year on campus. Participating in practices and team meetings was still required of Molly. At the time of the interview, Molly was 19 years old, and has been playing soccer since she was four. Additionally, Molly is an out-of-state student, meaning she does not live in the state where the institution is located, but has a partial scholarship to keep the cost of attending the university down.

Researcher's Positionality

As the researcher, it is important to note my involvement with soccer, and the athletics department at the institution where the pilot study was conducted. Acknowledging my positionality is an important part of building trustworthiness of my study. Part of my interest on the subject of the case study comes from having previously

played soccer and having had participated in two years of athletics in college. I played soccer from the eighth grade through my junior year in high school. In college, I went through the NCAA paperwork to participate in Division III women's cross-country. I left the team at the beginning of the season (within the first month) due to an injury. I participated in two seasons of U.S. Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association (USCSA) alpine ski racing. Athletics have always been a part of my life. My dad completed in NCAA Division III men's swimming, and my mom benefited from Title IX, and played tennis competitively in high school. As a child I participated in ballet, gymnastics, swimming, skiing, soccer, field hockey, tennis, lacrosse, figure skating, and other athletic activities. I was raised with the notion that women can do anything men can, and that women are equal. I see how the mentality of being a strong woman has shaped the work I do. My involvement in athletics continued after college as I moved into a coaching position. I coached alpine ski racing for at least four seasons. I was the only female head coach on the team, and frequently was the only woman involved in the organization of the races. My interest in studying collegiate women's soccer has to do with the increasing numbers of girls and young women playing soccer, as well as how soccer is an international sport.

Part of my reason for selecting the research site was feasibility. Working in the Athletic Academic Support Center at the research institution I chose as my site allowed me facetime with the women's soccer team. Over the past year working with student-athletes in my role allowed for interactions through study hall monitoring, as well as working at the front desk of the enrichment center, and the bookroom, where scholarship

student-athletes pick up their books each semester. With many of the women's soccer team knowing me, contacting the women allowed for easier recruitment, and being on campus made scheduling interviews feasible.

Data Collection

Interested participants responded to their coach, who then forwarded their information to the Associate Athletic Director, who then sent the names and contact information to the researcher. For the pilot study, there were two responses to the recruitment email. The recruitment email can be found in Appendix C. The first woman to email back was selected as the participant for the pilot study. The other respondent was contacted and told that the spot for the interview had been filled. She was notified that more interviews would be conducted at the conclusion of the soccer season and was asked if she would like to be included in that process.

Semi-structured interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to create an interview protocol that will be asked to all participant, that is flexible and allows the researcher to ask follow-up questions and dig deeper about specific responses given (Given, 2008). As the researcher, I will be keeping notes on the interviews and documents that I analyze. All personally identifiable information (PII) will be removed from documents and transcripts to protect anonymity of participants, and all data will be stored in locked environments, or encrypted digitally per IRB requirements. The pilot study was conducted at the same institution the full study will be conducted at. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix D. The pilot study

was completed as a part of the comprehensive project for candidacy, and to test the interview protocol before completing the full study.

ANALYSIS

An in-person semi-structured interview was conducted with the participant, and the interview was recorded, transcribed, and coded. The transcribed interview was coded using a concept, or analytic coding process (Saldaña, 2016). Concept coding assigns meaning to data, meaning a word or phrase was assigned to the data that suggests a larger meaning (Saldaña, 2016). After the document was coded, a codebook was developed. The codebook contained a complete list of codes that were used when coding the transcript. It contained the code, the word or phrase, as well as a description of what the code was defined as (Saldaña, 2016). After the document was coded, several codes and themes emerged. After the first round of coding, there were 15 codes that were found throughout the interview transcript. The codes were: accountability, areas of improvement, captains, club soccer, coaches, confidence, development outside of soccer, drive, family, for the sake of the team, leadership, perseverance, post-college experience, scholarship, and team dynamics. The codes were grouped into the following themes: self-awareness, athletics, personal development, opportunities, and support.

Overall, after the pilot study interview, it seemed that there were a variety of things that occurred outside of actually playing soccer. It appeared that these activities are where leadership is developed. Molly explained: “Suzanne came in and had freshman leadership meeting with us every two weeks which was really good. I feel like that helped a lot”. These programs and opportunities were a benefit of being a student-athlete. The

player interviewed took advantage of the opportunity, knowing that playing soccer throughout college could help her in her future. Molly shared that "...we do have a lot of leadership meetings outside of soccer".

Analysis showed that the opportunities afforded to the student-athletes at the institution were beneficial, especially to the women's soccer team, which really needs to improve leadership. The improvement needed to come from the captains and from their head coach on the field, and in team meetings. When asked about leadership on the team from formal student leaders, i.e. team captains, Molly responded, "Well, I just feel like it's really underplayed right now. I don't know." According to the one interview completed for the pilot study much of the leadership development is occurring outside of official practices, and from the women within the team.

Molly told me about a situation where the women tried to be proactive to keep the group out of trouble.

On the field last year, Stacey posted a picture with me and my other two roommates or Lyndee and Jennah and obviously we're freshman and Stacey's 21, but Stacey was holding a champagne bottle and everyone on the team was like "Stacey, delete that picture." Trying to prevent things.

Unfortunately, the advice from teammates was not heeded, and the photo was posted.

Molly and her roommates were called into a meeting with their coaches where they were forced to apologizing.

While the results of this study will not be fully founded until after the full study is completed, these codes and themes will provide a structure for analysis with the full

study. The themes have influenced the way the participant has developed as a leader since joining the Division I women's soccer team. The purpose of the pilot study was to test the interview protocol, and to determine if the right questions were being asked to determine how leadership is being developed from participating in a season of NCAA Division I women's soccer. Though the results are not able to be fully determined after completing the pilot interview, these codes and themes will be utilized as a part of the codebook when starting analysis of the full study. Additionally, document analysis from recruiting packets given to student athletes as well as the team website will need to be analyzed looking for other codes and themes allowing for a richer analysis.

Molly noted early in the interview that part of why she wanted to play NCAA Division I Women's Soccer was because:

And then another thing was the fact that I know I'll be set up for after college. I do know that a lot of employers look to hire athletes and I just feel like it would help set me up really well. And it allows me to go to the school of my dreams. If I didn't play soccer, I probably would've never been here.

Molly's knowledge about employers hiring former student-athletes stood out to me as it linked to the literature (Sokolove, 2008), supporting student-athletes as leaders.

Understanding how leadership is developed will further support the transferable skills that are developed as a part of participating in NCAA Division I athletics.

After the interview was transcribed, I redacted it, as many names were used, so I could keep anonymity. I sent the redacted transcript to the participant for her to participate in member checking. Member checking is referred to as respondent validation

by Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013). The purpose of member checking is to ask the participant for confirmation about the conclusions of the researcher. Member checking adds to the trustworthiness of the qualitative study (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). I asked her to review the transcript to see if there was anything that was missed during the transcribing process. I did not hear back from her. This could be because the team was in the midst of their official pre-season, and were also traveling for games, or it got lost in the shuffle of emails.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Reflecting on Pilot Study Process

The pilot study interview I conducted lasted just over 32 minutes. The young woman who participated gave me her heartfelt experiences based on being a team member for the prior year. Her experience may be slightly different, as she was a “redshirt”, meaning she did not use a season of intercollegiate competitions during her first year of being a full-time college student (NCAA, 2018, p. 81) As a “redshirt”, Molly was still required to be at practices and home games.

I found from the work I have done within student-athlete academic services I had already started to build rapport with the team. This experience made conducting the interview much easier, more like a conversation. Despite this, I found my interviewing skills are still developing. There are areas where I can probe more as I complete the interviews for the full study.

Changes Based on Pilot Study

Based on the completion of the pilot study, there are a few minor changes that I would propose. The first is regarding incentives. I would like to thank the participants for participating in my study, and to incentivize them to participate. I would go through the process of getting NCAA approved incentive gifts for participants. These incentives will be given after the member checking stage of the interview process. Please see Appendix E for proposed changes to the timelines of the interviews. In addition to conducting interviews, document analysis of recruiting materials given to athletes on their official visits, as well as the women's soccer website will be analyzed. Document analysis will provide further depth to the case study (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993). The analysis will support the interviews in learning about how leadership is developed through participation in NCAA Division I women's soccer.

This is something I would change for the full study, as I feel that the member checking process is important. I plan to complete the member checking process over the phone, or in person instead of via email. While this might take a bit more time out of the participants' schedules, it would allow me to make sure I did not miss anything, and that they agreed with the themes that were found. To thank participants for their time, I would like to be able to offer them an incentive gift, and I would like to give the incentive to the participants at the member checking meeting.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the pilot study process was beneficial. The pilot study will inform a full dissertation study that will look to understand how leadership skills are developed throughout participation in a season of NCAA Division I Women's Soccer. The changes

outlined in this pilot study and Appendix E will need to be submitted to both IRB, as well as the athletic department to make sure they are approved by both organizations.

Additionally, any incentives purchased will need to be approved by the athletic department. Before anything is purchased for incentives, I will work with IRB and Athletics to make sure the proper protocols are followed.

This study looks to contribute to the literature about leadership development within women's soccer. Women's athletics are not studied as frequently as men's athletics. The studies that exist tend to focus on injuries and physical development instead of the skills employers are looking for upon student-athletes' graduation. Because soccer is played internationally, and is a common women's team on NCAA Division I campuses, this study looks to better understand how being a student-athlete helps women develop as leaders.

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Appendix A
IRB Approval

Dear Dr. Havice,

The Clemson University Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the protocol "Leadership Development within NCAA Division I Women's Soccer: A Case Study" using exempt review procedures and a **determination was made on April 26, 2018** that the proposed activities involving human participants qualify as **Exempt under category B2** in accordance with federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101.

No further action, amendments, or IRB oversight of the protocol is required except in the following situations:

4. Substantial changes made to the protocol that could potentially change the review level. Researchers who modify the study purpose, study sample, or research methods and instruments in ways not covered by the exempt categories will need to submit an expedited or full board review application.
5. Occurrence of unanticipated problem or adverse event; any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects, complications, and/or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Research Compliance immediately.
6. Change in Principal Investigator (PI)

All research involving human participants must maintain an ethically appropriate standard, which serves to protect the rights and welfare of the participants. This involves obtaining informed consent and maintaining confidentiality of data. Research related records should be retained for a minimum of three (3) years after completion of the study.

The Clemson University IRB is committed to facilitating ethical research and protecting the rights of human subjects. Please contact us if you have any questions and use the IRB number and title when referencing the study in future correspondence.

Good luck with your study.

Best,

Amy Smitherman

IRB Coordinator

OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

Clemson University, Division of Research

[391 College Avenue, Suite 406K-1., Clemson, SC 29631, USA](http://www.clemson.edu/research/compliance/irb/)

P: 864-656-6460

<http://www.clemson.edu/research/compliance/irb/>

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Appendix B
Athletics Approval

Beth,

It was a pleasure speaking with you! As discussed, Athletics approves the study examining leadership among Division I Women's Soccer student-athletes. Please feel free to share with IRB as our approval.

Let me know if you have any questions!

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Associate Director of Athletics, Student Services and Performance

XXXXXXXXXXXX | Office: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Mailing Address: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Appendix C
Recruitment Email

Hello,

My name is Beth Solomon, and I am a doctoral student at Clemson University. I am conducting research about leadership development within NCAA Division I Women's Soccer, and I am interested in your experience. Your participation will involve one interview that will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Participating in this research has no known risks. Any notes and audio recordings of the interview will be kept in a secure location only accessible by the researcher.

If you would like to participate, please respond to this email with your preferred contact mode and information. I will follow up with you to schedule the interview.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Beth D. Solomon

Appendix D

Informed Consent Statement and Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Pilot Study

Informed Consent Statement

I am conducting research about leadership and participation in NCAA Women's Soccer and I am interested in your experiences as a student-athlete on the soccer team. The purpose of the research is to understand how leadership is developed through participation in NCAA Division I soccer. Your participation will involve one informal interview that will last between thirty minutes and an hour. This research has no known risks. This research will benefit the academic community because it helps us to understand leadership development within athletics. Please know that I will do everything I can to protect your privacy. Your identity or personal information will not be disclosed in any publication that may result from the study. Notes that are taken during the interview will be stored in a secure location. Would it be all right if I audiotaped our interview? Saying no to audio recording will have no effect on the interview.

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol:

- Can you start by telling me about yourself and how long you have been playing soccer?
- Ideally, what do you hope to get out of playing NCAA Division I soccer?
- How do you define leadership?
- What skills have you gained from being a part of the team?
- Who influences leadership on the team?
- What things are done as a part of practices that promote leadership?
- What does 'captain' mean to you? How are captains selected?
- Are there any questions you think I should have asked?

Appendix E

Proposed Changes to Timeline of Interview Process

1. Email to Athletics
2. Athletics Email to Women's Soccer Team
3. Participants reach back out to Athletics
4. Researcher contact Participant
5. Schedule Interviews
6. Conduct Interviews
7. Member checking – phone call or meetings instead of via email
8. Give participant incentive to thank them for participating at conclusion of member checking meeting

Appendix E

Informed Consent Statement

Information about Being in a Research Study
Clemson University

Leadership Development within NCAA Division I Women's Soccer: A Case Study

Description of the Study and Your Part in It

Dr. Pamela A. Havice and Ms. Beth D. Solomon are inviting you to take part in a research study. Dr. Havice is a Professor at Clemson University. Beth Solomon is a doctoral student at Clemson University, running this study with the help of Dr. Havice. The purpose of this research is to understand how leadership is developed by participating in a NCAA Division I Women's Soccer.

Your part in the study will be to participate in a 60 to 90 minute interview that will be audio recorded. You may also be asked to participate in a follow-up interview. It will take you about 90 to 120 minutes to be in this study.

Risks and Discomforts

We do not know of any risks or discomforts to you in this research study.

Possible Benefits

The potential benefits of this research may help us understand how leadership is developed through participation in women's soccer at an NCAA Division I institution, which may influence coaching approaches to women's athletics.

Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality

Privacy and confidentiality of participants is of the utmost importance. No identifying information will be reported, and pseudonyms will be used with any direct quotes. All records (recordings & researcher notes) will be stored in a locked file cabinet only accessible by researchers. If the records are digital, they will be password encrypted. Only the researchers will have access to the full recorded interviews and transcripts, and

all identifiable materials will be destroyed at the completion of the project. Deidentified data may be retained for use in future studies.

The results of this study may be published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations; however, no individual participant will be identified.

Choosing to Be in the Study

You may choose not to take part and you may choose to stop taking part at any time. You will not be punished in any way if you decide not to be in the study or to stop taking part in the study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-0636 or irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC's toll-free number, 866-297-3071. The Clemson IRB will not be able to answer some study-specific questions. However, you may contact the Clemson IRB if the research staff cannot be reached or if you wish to speak with someone other than the research staff.

If you have any study related questions or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Pamela Havice at Clemson University at 864.656.5121.

Consent

By participating in the study, you indicate that you have read the information written above, are at least 18 years of age, been allowed to ask any questions, and are voluntarily choosing to take part in this research. You do not give up any legal rights by taking part in this research study.

Information about Being in a Research Study
Clemson University

Leadership Development within NCAA Division I Women's Soccer: A Case Study

Description of the Study and Your Part in It

Dr. Pamela A. Havice and Ms. Beth D. Solomon are inviting you to take part in a research study. Dr. Havice is a Professor at Clemson University. Beth Solomon is a graduate student at Clemson University, running this study with the help of Dr. Havice. The purpose of this research is to understand how leadership is developed by participating in a NCAA Division I Women's Soccer.

Your part in the study will be to participate in an interview that will be audio recorded. It will take you about 60 to 90 minutes to be in this study.

Risks and Discomforts

We do not know of any risks or discomforts to you in this research study.

Possible Benefits

The potential benefits of this research may help us understand how leadership is developed through participation in women's soccer at an NCAA Division I institution.

Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality

Privacy and confidentiality of participants is of the utmost importance. Only the research team will know that you are participating in this study. We will not tell anyone outside of the research team that you are participating in the study. No identifying information will be reported, and pseudonyms will be used with any direct quotes. All records (recordings & researcher notes) will be stored in a locked file cabinet only accessible by researchers if hard copy, and if digital they will be password encrypted. Only the researchers will have access to the full recorded interviews and transcripts, and all material will be destroyed at the completion of the project.

The results of this study may be published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations; however, no individual participant will be identified.

Incentives

Upon completion of the interview, you will be given a \$20.00 gift card to thank you for your participation.

Choosing to Be in the Study

You may choose not to take part and you may choose to stop taking part at any time. You will not be punished in any way if you decide not to be in the study or to stop taking part in the study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-0636 or irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC's toll-free number, 866-297-3071. The Clemson IRB will not be able to answer some study-specific questions. However, you may contact the Clemson IRB if the research staff cannot be reached or if you wish to speak with someone other than the research staff.

If you have any study related questions or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Pamela Havice at Clemson University at 864.656.5121.

Consent

By participating in the study, you indicate that you have read the information written above, are at least 18 years of age, been allowed to ask any questions, and are voluntarily choosing to take part in this research. You do not give up any legal rights by taking part in this research study.

Appendix F

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

- Can you start by telling me about yourself and how long you have been playing soccer?
- Ideally, what do you hope to get out of playing NCAA Division I soccer?
- How do you define leadership?
- What skills have you gained from being a part of the team?
- Who influences leadership on the team?
- What things are done as a part of practices that promote leadership?
- What does ‘captain’ mean to you? How are captains selected?
- Are there any questions you think I should have asked?

Appendix G

Coding Process

Original Transcript	First Coding Process	Second Coding Process	Final Theme	Theoretical Framework
Amy: Yeah. Definitely. Time management for sure. And I'm very result oriented now and setting small goals, having overall picture. A plan. All very important. Things like if you don't like your boss, how to bring up conversation with him. Or coworkers you don't like, or situations you have. So many people bring up so many work life examples. Oh I've dealt with that already just with sports and stuff like that.	Accountability Communication Drive Respect Time Management	Soft Skills, skills that need to be developed for the workplace	Transferrable Skills	Transformational Leadership
Kara: Honestly, whenever I ... Influences leadership. A lot of the times, it is the older girls, because coming in as a younger girl, you do look up to them, because they've been through it and you want to know from them how to get through it, and they tell you. They have great advice, and they tell you. I've been giving a lot of advice this year to the younger kids, and I know other juniors and seniors have. I would totally say definitely the upperclassmen, because you learn from them, you watch them, you do what they do. Don't do what they do sometimes.	Coaches Support Staff Teammates Teamwork Club Soccer	Team, support for team, positional roles versus process	Team Roles	Transformational Leadership, Leader-Member Exchange Theory
Sally: Also leadership, especially from last year to this year. I feel like I've been able to lead a lot more. I was scared to assert myself freshman year because I was like, I don't want to be that freshman that thinks they're in charge or whatever, but I've learned what's right and what's not kind of. What to do and what not to do. Seeing it happen amongst my teammates. Yeah. I think also our team chemistry this year has been so much better.	Informal Leaders Captains Quiet Leaders	Leadership, difference in styles	Acknowledging the Complexity of Leadership and Leadership Development	Leader-Member Exchange Theory

Original Transcript	First Coding Process	Second Coding Process	Final Theme	Theoretical Framework
Resi: And I think Jason [head coach] had a very hard time or just our coaches in general, picking whether they wanted a positive domino effect or rip into your player because they need to do better. I understand there needs to be a balance but that's where constructive criticism works a lot better and I don't think he could really pick one and that was really hard because I know a lot of players it affected and he'd be mad at some people for getting mad at others and be like why are you complaining to each other but he wouldn't tell people like how to fix it. He	Needed Improvement	Needed Improvement, Areas of weakness recognized by participants, balancing different communication styles	Differences in Coaching Strategy	Transformational Leadership, Leader-Member Exchange Theory
Tory: I'm part of the Leadership Meetings. The first time we got together was in Spring and then we'll come back again this Spring. That's cool because now you're sharing things, you're hearing things from different teams so I think it's always useful like "well this is what they're doing on that team, can I transfer that to our team?" Which has been valuable.	Development Outside NCAA Division I Women's Soccer	Development Outside Practices, Self discovery, leadership inventories	Self-Awareness	Transformational Leadership
Molly: So like I said, my brother plays football and this is his last year. And the year I left, my freshman year, he transferred home to a school in Texas. So my parents could go to every single one of his games and since we have the same season, my parents were like, "Hey Molly, Steve has two years of football left. And you're not going to play this year." And I completely understood it, but I'm really close to my family. So them never coming out was the hardest thing.	Family	Family, shift in role from helping to make decisions through recruiting process to attending games when able, and supporting from afar.	Acknowledging Family Role	Transformational Leadership, Leader-Member Exchange Theory