

Male College Soccer Coaches Perceptions of Gender Similarities and Differences in
Coach–Athlete and Teammate Relationships:
Introducing the Construct of Relationship–Performance Orientation

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to all those interested in researching the areas of coaching, coach–athlete and teammate relationships, and leadership. I also dedicate this study to all coaches who seek to ‘do right’ by their players and seek to continually learn and master their craft. Coaching is a rewarding and inspiring profession. I hope this study contributes to the knowledge of all those who read it with an open mind and heart.

Abstract

The following study involved qualitative interviews with 15 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III male soccer coaches, who concurrently served as head men's and women's soccer coaches, in order to assess their perceptions of gender similarities and differences in coach-athlete and teammate relationships. Male coaches were asked to assess the qualities of successful coach-athlete relationships and compare the impact of coach-athlete and teammate relationships upon male and female athletic performance. Additionally, coaches compared the importance of athletic performance and coach-athlete and teammate relationships to males and females orientation to sport and reflected on whether or not they coached and led their male and female athletes similarly or differently. After a qualitative analysis of the transcripts, the relationship-performance orientation construct was developed to explain the perceptions of the male coaches interviewed, and it serves as a unique perspective to viewing male and female athletes' orientations to sport. Results revealed that coaches perceived their male athletes to be more performance oriented and their female athletes to be more relationship oriented. Coaches identified the same attributes for successful coach-athlete relationships with males and females and reported coaching their male and female athletes similarly despite noting differences in communication and leadership. Coaches perceived females to be more coachable and less competitive than males. Coaches also perceived females to be more interested in decentralized leadership environments compared to males who were perceived to favor hierarchical leadership structures. Coaches also reported that the women's game is undergoing an evolution through which female athletes are becoming

more competitive and starting to adopt orientations to sport that resemble male athletes. The strengths and limitations of the study are noted as well as implications of the results and suggestions for future research.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Despite anecdotal reports of differences associated with coaching male and female athletes, research to date has yet to examine whether or not experienced coaches coach male and female athletes similarly or differently. Specifically, research has not investigated college or professional coaches who coach *both* male and female athletes to determine if they perceive significant similarities or differences between males and females and how these beliefs impact their coach–athlete relationships and coaching behaviors. Research with male and female athletes has identified the components of successful coach–athlete relationships (Davis & Jowett; 2010 LaVoi, 2007; Rhind & Jowett, 2010). However, research has not assessed what dual-role coaches (coaches coaching both male and female teams) believe are the qualities of successful coach–athlete relationships and whether or not coach–athlete and teammate relationships impact athletic performance similarly for male and female athletes. Additionally research has not considered if dual-role coaches coach, lead, and communicate with male and female athletes similarly or differently based on their perceptions of gender. The present study attempted to fill these gaps in research by assessing dual-role college soccer coaches’ perceptions of coaching males and females and how they impact their coaching strategies and behavior. The study specifically assessed coaches’ perceptions of successful coach–athlete relationships and the relative impact of athletic performance and coach–athlete and teammate relationships upon male and female athletes’ competitive orientation. The

study also focused on coaches perceptions of the leadership styles that are most effective when coaching male and female athletes.

Competitive orientation refers to a tendency for individuals to strive toward achieving a certain type of goal in sport (Vealey, 2001). Vealey (2001) applied the competitive orientation construct to two inherent goals in sport: performing well and winning. Vealey notes:

The competitive orientation construct is dispositional, meaning that over time, athletes develop a tendency to strive for a certain type of goal (either performance or outcome) and use this goal to define competence and success for themselves (p.551).

Unlike Vealey, who identified performance and outcome objectives, the present study used competitive orientation to describe relationship (goal of building effective coach–athlete and teammate relationships) and performance (successful athletic performance for both the individual and team) objectives. The study enabled National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III dual-role male soccer coaches to describe, through semi-structured in-depth interviews, their perceptions of the relative importance and balance that male and female athletes place on performing well and being socially accepted by their teammates and coaches. In addition to prompting coaches to speak freely regarding gender similarities and differences in coach–athlete and teammate relationships coaches responded to two specific positions regarding competitive orientation and leadership strategies associated with coaching male and female athletes.

To initiate a discussion of competitive orientation the study used a position established by Kathleen DeBoer (2004). DeBoer’s (2004) book *Gender and Competition, How Men and Women Approach Work and Play Differently*, is an insightful account from

a former athletic administrator and successful NCAA Division I women's volleyball coach of her perceptions of gender differences in the relationship between interpersonal acceptance and athletic performance. Although DeBoer did not coach men's teams, she suggests that men feel they must perform well in order to be socially accepted by their coaches and teammates while females must feel socially accepted *first* before they are convinced to put in the requisite amount of work and dedication needed to perform well and achieve successful outcomes. DeBoer states:

To excel, whether in athletics or other challenging endeavors, people must be convinced to struggle. Where gender enters the equation is in the relationship of acceptance to struggle and, therefore, transitively to performance. Females need to feel acceptance before they will commit to struggle. Males will struggle first, expecting acceptance only after they perform (p.33–34).

To gather insight on competitive orientation and initiate a discussion on leadership strategies in coaching male and female athletes' coaches were asked to discuss a position held by Anson Dorrance. Dorrance is the head women's soccer coach at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). Dorrance has won 21 NCAA Division I National Championships and also coached both the men's and women's teams at UNC-CH for 12 years. Dorrance's position is: "you drive men, you lead women" (quote was adapted from a similar quote by Dorrance (1996, p. 64). Dorrance has emphasized the importance of developing relationships when coaching women and how it impacts the ability to effectively lead female teams:

... with women, your effectiveness is through your ability to relate. They have to feel that you care about them personally or have some kind of connection with them beyond the game... To be an effective leader of a men's team, you don't need a personal rapport as long as there is respect. That's the extent of the relationship. That's all that's really required. But

in a women's team, respect is only a part of it, and it is derived from a personal relationship. Women have to have a sense that you care for them above and beyond their soccer capabilities (Dorrance, 1996, p.65).

Therefore, according to DeBoer (2004) and Dorrance (1996) males and females have different competitive orientations as they relate to relationships and athletic performance. If DeBoer and Dorrance's assertions reflect actual differences between the majority of male and female athletes, or if coaches *believe* in these positions, they represent obvious ramifications for how males and females experience sport, and are coached and treated within the context of sport. The coaches in the study were able to discuss in detail their feelings regarding these positions and explain how they elected to coach, lead, and relate to their male and female athletes.

Background

Coaching continues to be a male dominated profession, lagging behind most areas of society in which women have become more integrated and achieved more equality. According to recent statistics, 42.6% of female NCAA teams and less than 3% of male NCAA teams are led by a female head coach (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). Soccer is a unique sport because, in an effort to save money and create a full-time coaching position, some smaller colleges have hired one person to coach both their men's and women's soccer programs. In 2006, there were 47 NCAA Division III soccer coaches who coached both men's and women's teams at their school, and all coaches were male (Cleary, 2006). It is important to compare male coaches' perceptions and experiences coaching men and women to better understand how these perceptions affect the experience of male and female athletes. Since there are no female coaches coaching both men's and women's

college soccer teams on record (Cleary, 2006), we are not able to compare female coaches' perceptions of coaching both male and female teams with the perceptions of male dual-role coaches.

The majority of early research involving coach–athlete interactions focused on coaching behavior and leadership styles, and their affect on athlete satisfaction (Chelladurai, Haggerty, & Baxter, 1989; Goudas, Biddle, Fox, & Underwood, 1995; Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979). This initial research was useful in portraying various coaching styles, such as authoritarian and participatory, but failed to identify the affective qualities associated with successful and unsuccessful coach–athlete relationships. More recently studies have examined self-reports of experienced athletes and coaches and actually identified what athletes *want* from their coach–athlete relationships (Antonini Philippe, & Seiler, 2006; Davis & Jowett, 2010; Gould, Guinan, Greenleaf, Medberry, & Peterson, 1999; Jackson & Beauchamp, 2010; Jowett, 2006; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; LaVoi, 2007; Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002). Both male and female athletes and coaches have reported that qualities, such as *trust, respect, commitment* and *care*, characterize a successful relationship—one that positively affects both performance and overall satisfaction (Gould et al., 1999; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; LaVoi, 2007; Potrac et al., 2002). However research still has not illustrated *how* coaches coach, communicate, and lead their male and female athletes in order to achieve productive coach–athlete relationships and enhance athletic performance.

Unfortunately, coaches may lack the requisite education or relational ability to build relationships on pedagogical, developmental, and social levels. An indirect benefit

of this study is that incorporating the knowledge and skills of experienced male dual-role college soccer coaches with educational and developmental psychology could assist in the development of empirically based education curriculums or guidelines for coaches.

Need for the Study

While the qualities of successful coach–athlete relationships have been identified by both college coaches and athletes (Davis & Jowett, 2010; LaVoi, 2007; Rhind & Jowett, 2010) research has not queried dual-role college coaches to establish whether or not they perceive similar qualities to characterize effective coach–athlete relationships in males and females and this research helped fill that gap. Some research with male and female athletes (Gill, 2004; Holmes, McNeil, Adorna, & Procaccino, 2008) has demonstrated that men value winning and performance more than women and women value relational aspects, such as encouragement and communication, more than men. However, when it comes to coaching males and females we do not know if dual-role coaches perceive orientation differences and if so, how this impacts their coaching strategies. Despite the assertions of DeBoer (2004) and Dorrance (1996) among others, investigations have not been conducted to lend empirical support to their claims of gender differences. This study established whether or not dual-role soccer coaches perceive primarily similarities or differences in the competitive orientation of male and female athletes as it relates to relationships and athletic performance. Consequently this study helped establish the perceived validity (or lack thereof) of traditional gender framing (women are more relationship oriented than men for example) and explored in

greater detail (through semi-structured in-depth interviews of dual-role coaches) how constructions of gender impact coaching behaviors.

Research has identified performance benefits associated with productive coach–athlete (Gould, Guinan, Greenleaf, & Chung, 2002; Gould et al., 1999) and teammate relationships (Carron, Colman, Wheeler, & Stevens, 2002) for both males and females. However, more recent studies have not been conducted and no research to date has assessed dual-role coaches’ perceptions of possible gender differences in how coach–athlete and teammate relationships impact the athletic performance of men’s and women’s teams. By analyzing coaches’ perceptions of how coach–athlete and teammate relationships impact athletic performance in males and females this study expanded beyond traditional coach–athlete research and offers additional insight into the impact of a coach–athlete relationship.

Theoretical Perspective

The study used symbolic interaction (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934) as the theoretical perspective in which to interpret and review the coaches’ unique experiences and perceptions of coaching and relating to male and female athletes. *Symbolic interactionism* is a social psychological approach that is closely aligned with qualitative inquiry and has been successfully applied to previous research assessing the coach–athlete relationship (Poczwardowski, Barott, & Henschen, 2003; Poczwardowski, Barott, & Jowett, 2006; Poczwardowski, Barott, & Peregoy, 2003; Potrac et al., 2002). Symbolic interactionism is built upon the premise that through social interaction people develop their own ‘meanings’ and these meanings are filtered through an interpretative process

(Blumer, 1969). Peoples' meanings represent their unique understanding of people and phenomena (Blumer, 1969). This study explored the various meanings that coaches have toward their relationships with athletes and drew upon the tenets of symbolic interactionism to help explain how the coaches interpreted their interactions with the athletes they coach. Symbolic interactionism holds that the development of various meanings and interpretations is a dynamic process in which the individual is constantly reshaping and adjusting the various meanings they attach to social interactions (Blumer, 1969). Therefore, coaches and athletes are seen to be in a shared experience that continues to evolve as each continues to inform the other.

Research Questions

An absence of needed research devoted to assessing dual-role coaches perceptions of coaching males and females provided the basic rationale for the research questions supporting the study. Consequently, the research questions employed by this study filled in gaps in research involving male and female athletes. The research questions of the study were: (a) What do male dual-role college soccer coaches perceive to be the qualities of successful coach–athlete relationships with male and female college soccer players? (b) What do male dual-role college soccer coaches perceive to be the similarities and differences in how athletic performance and coach–athlete and teammate relationships impact male and female athletes' competitive orientation? (c) What do male dual-role soccer coaches perceive to be the impact of coach–athlete and teammate relationships upon the athletic performance of male and female athletes? (d) Do male dual-role college soccer coaches lead their male and female athletes similarly or

differently? Specifically, do coaches perceive they need to drive men versus lead women in order to successfully coach their men's and women's teams? (e) What are the perceived similarities and differences held by dual-role college soccer coaches regarding coaching and communicating with male and female college athletes?

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

This chapter reviews research specific to coaches, coach–athlete and teammate relationships, and analyzes similarities and differences between male and female athletes. Since research has not used competitive orientation with coach–athlete and teammate relationships and performance there is no research available to review in this regard. Additionally, research has not examined male dual-role college coaches to assess their perceptions of the similarities and differences in coaching males and females. As a result the literature review consists of research involving coaching, leadership, coach–athlete and teammate relationships and research comparing male and female athletes. The chapter reviews research regarding important constructs associated with coaching, and coach–athlete and teammate relationships including motivational climate, collective efficacy, and cohesion, and compares results across male and female athletes. The chapter discusses qualitative research as well as considerations to studying gender and research involving gender and sport. Additionally, the chapter provides an introduction to the developing field of relationship science, bringing the coach–athlete relationship into a modern focus.

The coaching and coach–athlete relationship literature can be separated into two parts: initial research and current directions. Initial work was primarily quantitative and can be characterized by three lines of research: (a) the mediational model of the coach–player relationship (Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1978); (b) coach–athlete compatibility (Carron & Bennett, 1977); and (c) the multidimensional model of leadership in sport

(Chelladurai & Haggerty, 1978). Current research illustrates a wave of qualitative studies (Davis & Jowett, 2010; Jackson & Beauchamp, 2010; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; LaVoi, 2007; Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002; Rhind & Jowett, 2010; Young, 2005) that offer insightful perspectives on the qualities associated with successful and ideal coach–athlete relationships, and how coaches and athletes are experiencing and affected by their relationships. Additionally, this chapter reviews more recent research that has used quantitative approaches to assess coach–athlete and teammate relationships (Heuzé, Bosselut, & Thomas, 2007; Heuzé, Sarrazin, Masiero, Raimbault, & Thomas, 2006; Hollembeak & Amorose, 2005; Lorimer, 2009; Smith, Fry, Ethington, & Yuhua, 2005).

Providing a background of previous research and incorporating it into current approaches facilitates our understanding of the coach–athlete dyad and illustrates the importance of analyzing the experiences of coaches coaching both men’s and women’s teams. The majority of this review is dedicated to research involving experienced athletes and coaches (primarily college and professional) and therefore covers a specific population in sport.

Initial Research on Coaching and the Coach–Athlete Relationship

Initial research aimed at understanding effective coach–athlete interaction focused on identifying various leadership styles of coaches and their impact on athletes. Three lines of research emerged from investigators’ attempts to analyze leadership of coaches and the coach–athlete relationship: (a) the mediational model of leadership and the Coaching Behavior Assessment System (Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977; Smoll, Smith, Curtis, & Hunt, 1978); (b) coach–athlete compatibility (Carron & Bennett, 1977); and (c)

the multidimensional model of leadership and the Leadership Scale for Sports (Chelladurai, 1993; Chelladurai & Arnott, 1985; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978). Each of these research lines used quantitative approaches to study effective dimensions of coach–athlete interactions. This research was useful for measuring specific qualities of coach–athlete relationships such as reward versus punishment and positive versus negative feedback, but failed to address how coaches attempt to develop productive and meaningful relationships with their athletes.

The Mediational Model of Leadership

Smith et al. (1978) used a cognitive–behavioral approach that delineated between individual and situation variables, and cognitive factors that mediated overt coaching behaviors. Out of the mediational model of leadership, Smith et al. (1978) developed a Coach Behavior Assessment System (CBAS) that allowed for direct observation and coding of coaches’ leadership behaviors in practice sessions. Coach behavior was divided into spontaneous and reactive dimensions. The model attempts to measure what coaches do, how these behaviors are perceived and recalled by their players, and players’ attitudinal responses to the total situation. The CBAS records overt behavior with the following dimensions: (a) supportiveness—reinforcement and mistake-contingent encouragement; (b) instructiveness—general technical instruction and mistake-contingent technical instruction versus general communication and general encouragement; and (c) punitiveness—punishment and punitive technical instruction versus organizational behaviors.

Smith et al. (1978) were trying to determine both the degree to which youth baseball coaches elicited specific coaching behaviors (the aforementioned dimensions), and the degree to which boys' perceptions of the frequency of these behaviors matched the coaches' self-reports. In a 1978 study that included 51 male little league baseball coaches and 542 youth male baseball players (which preceded their training program), Smoll et al. (1978) found that correlations between CBAS observed behaviors and the coaches' ratings of how frequently they performed the behaviors were generally low and non-significant. The only significant correlation occurred for punishment. The boys' ratings correlated much more highly with the CBAS measures. These results suggest that boys' perceptions were more accurate than coaches' self-reports, and consequently, aside from their perceived levels of punishment, coaches were not necessarily accurate in their perceptions of how much support and instruction they gave.

After establishing the CBAS, Smith, Smoll, and Curtis (1979) later developed a Coach Effectiveness Training (CET) program to train coaches to give more positive feedback to their athletes and create a more nurturing climate where the contributions and unique qualities of each player were noted. Research found that boys who played for trained coaches evaluated their coach and the interpersonal climate of their teams more positively. Smith et al. found that boys low in self-esteem reported the greatest differences in attitudes between trained and untrained coaches, and were more sensitive to the use of encouragement, punishment, and technical instruction. These results suggested that youth coaches could increase their effectiveness by simply increasing their levels of support and encouragement. The work by Smith et al. was important in

identifying the need for coaches to be positive and the effect that researched-based coach education can have on the experience of young athletes. However, these studies are not current, involve youth sport, do not compare male and female athletes and coaches, and cannot account for the developmental and experiential differences associated with older or more skilled athletes.

Coach–Athlete Compatibility

Leadership behavior and athlete satisfaction have also been analyzed in terms of coach–athlete compatibility. Carron was largely responsible for this line of research and used Schutz’s theory of interpersonal behavior (Schutz, 1966), which indicates that people have interpersonal needs that are mediated within three primary dimensions of behavior: inclusion, control, and affection (Carron & Bennett, 1977; Carron & Garvie, 1978). Schutz (1967) developed the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO) questionnaire to assess these qualities and Carron adapted it to sport. Carron and Bennett (1977) had 12 collegiate coaches (authors do not identify the sex of the coaches studied) identify both coachable and “problem athletes”—athletes who were not receptive to instruction, had difficulty with coach–athlete communication, and withdrew from the coach or the team—and administered the FIRO questionnaire to them. A total of 36 athletes, 16 females and 20 males were included in the compatible (coachable) sample and a total of 18 athletes, 6 females and 12 males, were included in the incompatible sample. In compatible dyads, coaches exchanged control with their athletes and athletes demonstrated a greater tendency to elicit affectionate behaviors. The greatest indicator of both compatible and incompatible dyads was inclusion behavior. In compatible dyads

both the athlete and the coach reported eliciting inclusion behaviors, while in incompatible dyads both the coach and athlete reported a low tendency to initiate inclusion behavior. Carron and Bennett (1977) note that “unfortunately, it was not possible to examine for sex differences in coach–athlete compatibility because of the small number of dyads” (p.676). These results corroborate other leadership studies, indicating that athletes want to feel included in their coach’s decisions (Beam, Serwatka, & Wilson, 2004; Salminen & Liukkonen, 1996). Unfortunately, research has not been done to assess how coaches foster and develop inclusion.

Horne and Carron (1985) tried to go beyond the initial work in coach–athlete compatibility by assessing both coach–athlete compatibility and satisfaction, and the effect of the relationship on the athlete’s performance. Female college athletes were asked to rate their perceptions of their current performance relative to their expectations and satisfaction with the coach’s leadership on a 9-point scale. Results of the study found a discrepancy between the coach’s perceptions of their leadership behavior and the athlete’s perceptions of their behavior. Mean discrepancies were significant for the training, democratic, social support, and reward dimensions, meaning that the coaches perceived themselves as exhibiting more of each of these behaviors than was perceived by the athletes. Only the autocratic dimension did not yield significant discrepancies.

Interestingly, the variable that best discriminated between compatible and incompatible dyads was the athlete’s perceptions and preferences for reward behavior. Horne and Carron noted that if female athletes perceived their coach as providing the desired amount of positive feedback, they regarded the relationship as compatible. The

only other variable predicting compatibility was autocratic behavior. Athletes were more likely to rate the relationship as compatible if they did not perceive too much autocratic behavior—implying that while athletes may respect a coach’s power to ultimately make decisions, they want to feel that their input or opinions are at least considered.

In regards to satisfaction with the coach’s leadership, the greatest predictor was the discrepancy between the athletes perceived and desired level of training, with athletes being more satisfied if there was less discrepancy between perceived and desired levels of training. With respect to performance, reward behavior was the only variable Horne and Carron used in their final regression analysis, accounting for 9.8% of the variance. While reward behavior may facilitate performance, Horne and Carron only used a single item, multi-level question to measure performance. The findings and simplistic methods used by Horne and Carron did little to advance our understanding of the impact of the coach–athlete relationship on athletic performance.

Horne and Carron’s research suggests that female college athletes view their coach more favorably if they perceive their coach provides positive feedback and engages them rather than dictates to them. In addition to improving coach–athlete compatibility and athlete satisfaction, having these characteristics present in the coach–athlete relationship may also lead to better individual athletic performance. While this is logical, research has yet to adequately identify how the interpersonal dynamics associated with coach–athlete relationships actually affect an athlete’s performance.

The Multidimensional Model of Leadership

While Smith et al. (1978) established the mediational model of leadership, Chelladurai and Haggerty (1978) developed the multidimensional model of leadership, which focused on decision-making styles of coaches. The original model had three styles of decision-making: autocratic, consultative, and delegative (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978) while later studies acknowledged that the delegative style was not tenable in the context of team sports, and used a continuum of decision styles ranging from autocratic to consultative to group decision making (Chelladurai, Haggerty, & Baxter, 1989). Chelladurai and Haggerty (1978) identified three different states of coaching behavior: a) actual leader behaviors, b) required leader behaviors, and c) leader behaviors preferred by the athlete. The model proposes that outcomes such as enjoyment and satisfaction are the result of congruency between the behavior of coaches and the behavior preferred and perceived by athletes.

Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) developed the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) to test the multidimensional model of leadership. The LSS identified five dimensions of leadership behavior in sport: training and instruction, democratic behavior, autocratic behavior, social support, and positive feedback. Chelladurai et al. (1989) state that Gordon was the first to test the model, noting a paper presented at the World University Games in Edmonton in 1983. According to Chelladurai et al., Gordon (1983) found that coaches most preferred the autocratic style—a style in which coaches make final decisions without necessarily consulting their athletes—while athletes liked the consultative style—a style in which the opinions of the athletes are sought by coaches—

the most. Since the coach makes the final decision in the consultative style, Gordon believed (according to Chelladurai et al., 1989) that the environment should still be regarded as being autocratic.

Chelladurai and Arnott (1985) investigated leadership preferences of male and female college basketball players (77 females and 67 males). They found that males and females shared similar perceptions of desired coaching behaviors with the exception of participation, as females desired greater levels of participation in leadership decisions, suggesting that females wanted to feel as though they had some participation in decisions made by their coaches. Chelladurai et al. (1989) found similar results in another study with college basketball players (53 females and 46 males). Finally, athletes in team sports have reported expecting more training and instruction, a preference for autocratic and rewarding behavior, and a desire for less democratic and social support behavior than athletes in individual sports (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Terry, 1984).

Salminen and Liukkonen (1996) administered the LSS to 61 Finnish coaches and their athletes (400 athletes ranging from 9 to 18 years old) to compare athletes' perceptions of coaching behavior with coaches' perceived and actual behavior. Salminen and Liukkonen also observed these coaches in practice to see if their actual behavior in training sessions resembled their perceived leadership style. Athletes felt female coaches exhibited less autocratic and greater democratic behaviors than male coaches. Female coaches were also found to exhibit slightly greater levels of instruction, social support, and reward behavior. The disparity between self and athlete ratings was greater for male coaches, causing the authors to note that female coaches seemed to have a more realistic

view of themselves as leaders than males. Overall, coaches evaluated themselves as more training and instruction-oriented, socially supportive, and reward-oriented than their athletes did. The observed coaching behavior correlated most significantly with the leadership style perceived by coaches suggesting that self-reports of coaches were accurate. In conclusion, Salminen and Liukkonen noted, “The coach who considers the opinions and feelings of athletes seems to have the best relationship with athletes” (p.65).

In 1990, Chelladurai developed the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS), (Chelladurai, 1990; Zhang, Jensen, & Mann, 1997). Unlike the LSS, the RLSS includes situational consideration, which measures the ability to adjust coaching style to the ability and maturity of athletes and the demands of the situation (Beam et al., 2004; Jambor & Zhang, 1997). In addition to situational consideration, the RLSS (like the LSS) measures behaviors along the following dimensions: autocratic, democratic, positive feedback, social support, and training and instruction. Jambor and Zhang (1997) had male and female junior high, high school, and college coaches rate themselves on the RLSS in order to identify possible gender differences or differences between coaching level. Results indicated that the only behavior that differed significantly between male and female coaches was social support behavior. The female coaches reported that they provided a higher amount of support in the athletes’ personal lives and attempted to make the sport experience more enjoyable for the athletes. Despite this difference, the authors assert that the similarity in reported behaviors of female and male coaches were more striking and significant than the differences, noting that “to say a male is a different leader than a female is an outdated method of leadership evaluation” (p.313). Finally,

differences were found between coaching levels: junior high school coaches offered less social support than high school and college coaches, and high school coaches indicated a higher degree of democratic behaviors compared to college coaches.

In regards to possible differences between athletes, Beam et al. (2004) used the RLSS to compare male and female NCAA Division I and II athletes. Beam et al. found that males held greater preferences for autocratic and social support behaviors while females had greater preferences for situational consideration and training and instruction behaviors. There was also a significant gender by task variability interaction for democratic leader behavior, with females wanting more participation in decision-making. Interestingly, the study suggests that male athletes prefer a more autocratic leader who provides more social encouragement, while females value more participation in decision making than males.

A more recent study by Hoigaard, Jones and Peters (2008) using professional, male soccer players attempted to identify whether or not athletes' leadership style preferences changed based on whether or not the team and athlete were playing well or poorly. The authors gave players a hypothetical situation (one in which both the team and player were playing poorly, having lost ten games in a row, and one in which the team and player were playing well, having won ten games in a row). The results revealed that positive feedback, instruction and training behavior, and democratic behavior were the most preferred behaviors in both situations suggesting that athletes prefer their coaches' leadership behavior to be consistent regardless if they are playing well or not.

Another recent and insightful study by Holmes, McNeill, Adorna, and Procaccino (2008) administered the RLSS to NCAA Division I male (n=33) and female (n=46) athletes from team sports to compare their perceptions of peer leadership. Holmes et al. substituted the word “coach” with “peer leader” in order to have athletes assess their team leaders. Additionally, subjects were asked open-ended questions in which they nominated three players they believed were leaders on the field and explained why they were nominated, and nominated three players they believed were leaders off the field and explained why they were nominated. Results of the RLSS revealed that men preferred more autocratic behaviors in their peer leaders than women did. Meanwhile, results to the open-ended question for leadership on the field showed that men placed more emphasis upon work ethic and performance than women who placed more emphasis upon being vocal and encouraging the team. Differences were found for leadership off the field, too, as personality traits and being a good student were more important to women compared to men. Additionally, women also reported the importance of being vocal off the field while men did not report this attribute.

In conclusion, research using the LSS and RLSS has yielded helpful information regarding the leadership preferences of athletes. However, despite the utility of the LSS and RLSS, one limitation is that the researchers only focus on frequency (or perceived frequency) of behaviors and do not adequately measure or account for more nuanced behavior, such as the intensity and tone that encompass a coach’s communication or behavior.

Conclusion of Initial Coach–Athlete Research

The original research concerning coach–athlete relationships focused on coaching behavior/leadership styles and yielded a broad understanding of how coaches make decisions and athlete’s preferences of leadership styles. Research concerning leadership behavior and coach–athlete compatibility demonstrated that athletes were more satisfied with their coaches if they received a lot of positive feedback, trusted the coaches’ ability to provide sound instruction, and felt some degree of autonomy and input in the training and playing environment, even if the coaches had autocratic leadership styles. Additionally, the success of the relationship seemed to be somewhat dependent on the willingness of both the coach and the athlete to engage each other in communication and make an effort to understand and work with each other effectively.

This beginning research improved our understanding of leadership and communication styles in sport, and how they influenced an athlete’s perceived level of satisfaction. However, this line of research was incomplete in several areas. First, the research lacks a sophisticated investigation into the interpersonal and affective qualities of the coach–athlete relationship. Little is known about how coaches relate and attempt to relate to their athletes. Second, while these studies offer conclusions of athletes preferred leadership behaviors, they do not reveal how athletes’ perceptions of their current coaches compare to their ideal levels. Therefore, we are still lacking a true sense of harmony within coach–athlete dyads. Lastly, little is known about how leadership styles are related to athletic performance. Fortunately, research has recently gone beyond these

initial approaches to study coach–athlete relationships and more thoroughly explored the affective components involved in the coach–athlete relationship.

Coach–Athlete Relationship—Current Direction

The dearth of research devoted to investigating affective qualities within the coach–athlete relationship has been noted (Wylleman, 2000). However, during the past 10 years in particular, researchers have employed qualitative approaches to improve our understanding of the interpersonal dynamics in coach–athlete relationships (Davis & Jowett, 2010; Lorimer, 2009; Poczwadowski, Barott, & Jowett, 2006). Researchers have expressed the importance for research that is sport-specific and uses sport-specific measures, expands beyond recorded coaching behavior, and recognizes more substantive qualities of the relationship itself, such as communication, care, and closeness (Bloom, Durant-Bush, & Salmela, 1997; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Poczwadowski, 2007; Lafreniere, Jowett, Vallerand, Donahue, & Lorimer, 2008; LaVoi, 2007; Lyle, 1999; Rhind & Jowett, 2010).

More recently, studies have employed alternative methods (both qualitative and quantitative) to examine leadership behaviors. Unlike the earlier studies, Baker, Yardley, and Côté (2003) used a sport-specific measure, the Coaching Behavior Scale for Sport (CBS-S), to investigate coaching behaviors and satisfaction ratings across sport-type and gender. The CBS-S evolved from the coaching model proposed by Côté and colleagues (Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell, 1995) as a more inclusive model to assess coach–athlete relationships. The coaching model originated from qualitative data gained from expert coaches and athletes. The seven behaviors addressed in the CBS-S are

physical training and planning, goal setting, mental preparation, technical skills, competition strategies, personal rapport, and negative personal rapport. Baker et al. (2003) examined the relationship between CBS-S scores and athletes' satisfaction using a 7-item Likert scale to assess coach satisfaction, among college and club level athletes from both team and individual sports. Results indicated that males and individual sport athletes were more satisfied with their coaches than females and team sport athletes.

In an effort to generate a deeper understanding of the coach–athlete relationship and gather data that can be incorporated into the development of sport specific measures, researchers have also employed interviews as an important method to assess expert coaches' and athletes' experiences in sport (Gould, Guinan, Greenleaf, & Chung, 2002; Gould, Guinan, Greenleaf, Medberry, Peterson, 1999; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000; Potrac et al. 2002; Rhind & Jowett, 2010). Gould et al. (1999) interviewed 11 male and 12 female Olympians and found that the athletes' preparation and performance during the 1996 Olympics was negatively affected by a lack of trust, communication, support, and respect between athletes and coaches. Gould et al. (1999) did not report any differences between male and female athletes. Meanwhile, Gould et al. (2002) interviewed 35 male coaches and 10 female coaches regarding the factors that impacted their athletes' Olympic performances. Results indicated that coaches felt a variety of factors influenced performances, such as confidence, ability to maintain composure and make tactical adjustments, having a plan, and being able to deal with distractions. Coaches also believed that specific team-related variables influenced performance such as: having a strong team leader, strong team chemistry and cohesion,

and having a positive coach–athlete relationship. Finally, coaches also listed the importance of having positive support from family and friends.

Jowett and Cockerill (2003) interviewed three female and nine male Olympic athletes and found that the majority of the athletes “explained the significance of the coach in affective terms such as liking, trust, intimacy, respect, belief in one another and commitment” (p.320). It was also important for athletes to feel a sense of co-orientation (having common goals) and have complementary roles and tasks with their coach. Although most of the athletes reported positive experiences with their coaches, the few negative experiences reported were marked by a lack of emotional closeness and mutual cooperation. In structuring their responses, Jowett and Cockerill reviewed the interpersonal relationship and behavior literatures and selected the following constructs: complementarity, closeness, and co-orientation. *Complementarity* involves how well the strengths and skills of the athlete and coach balance each other, and consequently the degree to which the coach and athlete are able to cooperate. *Closeness* is regarded as the “emotional tone” of the relationship and involves such concepts as interpersonal liking, trust, and respect. *Co-orientation* involves shared goals, beliefs, values, and expectations. Organizing and describing the coach–athlete relationship with these constructs elucidates our understanding of the affective dynamics involved and how they interact with the leadership behaviors of the coach. As Jowett and Cockerill note, “the associations between the three C’s provide evidence of the interdependent nature of coaches and athletes’ closeness (feelings), co-orientation (cognitions), and complementarity (behaviors)” (p.327).

Rhind and Jowett (2010) recently extended the three C's approach to investigate the use of maintenance strategies in the coach–athlete relationship noting that no research has focused on *how* coaches and athletes maintain the quality of their athletic relationships. Rhind and Jowett interviewed six coaches and six athletes ranging from international, national, collegiate, and youth levels. Data analysis revealed that seven higher-order themes emerged: conflict management, openness, motivation, positivity, advice, support, and social networks. Rhind and Jowett denoted these attributes to represent a COMPASS model of maintenance strategies used by coaches and athletes to maintain the quality of their relationships. Based on the findings of the study, Rhind and Jowett note that the use of these seven strategies would have a positive effect on the coach–athlete relationship, while their absence would have a negative impact. Despite the small sample size, the study is helpful in identifying an initial framework as the authors note that “it begins to develop our knowledge of interpersonal communication within the coach–athlete relationship”, p. 118).

Poczwardowski, Barott, and Henschen (2003) observed and interviewed three college gymnastic coaches and six of their female athletes to develop a profile of the coach–athlete relationship that brings together the results of Jowett's et al. (2003) study and the research by Gould et al. (1999). After compiling the results of their qualitative analysis, Poczwardowski et al. describe the coach–athlete relationship as a recurring pattern of mutual care, relationship oriented activities and interactions, and meanings that athletes and coaches make about their relationship. Additionally, Poczwardowski et al. classified the relationship as either positive or negative with each dimension containing

either strong or weak intensity levels. This classification may help to elucidate the divergent relationships identified in previous studies. As one athlete noted, “I think the coach has to know the athlete well enough to know what kind of relationship they can establish with them” (Poczwardowski et al., 2003, p. 126). Therefore, while seemingly all athletes would like a positive relationship with their coaches, they may vary on the level of intensity (in terms of sharing personal information and feelings with each other) they would like to have. Alternatively, regardless of individual preferences, coaches and athletes may have a positive relationship with limited levels of engagement or intensity. This dynamic may be actualized by athletes who simply have limited exposure to specific coaches, or as previously suggested, by athletes or coaches who desire specific levels of engagement. Poczwardowski et al. utilized a symbolic interactionism paradigm in their attempt to introduce and explain the concept of meaning in coach–athlete relationships. The authors purport that “through negotiating meaning, via their relationship (i.e. activity, interaction, and care), both the athlete and coach experienced growth on both task and interpersonal levels” (p.134).

Jackson, Knapp, and Beauchamp (2009) recently conducted semi-structured interviews with six international-level coach–athlete partnerships to identify the antecedents and consequences associated with self-efficacy, other efficacy, and relation-inferred self-efficacy in the coach–athlete dyad. Jackson et al. note that researchers have yet to explore the tripartite model of efficacy beliefs within the context of coach–athlete relationships. Dyads were one male coach–male athlete, one female coach–male athlete, and four male coach–female athlete partnerships. Their study is unique because in

addition to collecting individual efficacy perceptions of the athlete and coach, and their efficacy beliefs towards each other, it also assessed how each person felt his or her abilities were perceived by the other. Results revealed that coaches and athletes reported that favorable self-efficacy perceptions developed from positive perceptions of each other and positive perceptions of what each person (coach and athlete) *perceived* each other felt about each other. As one athlete noted, “to help get that self-confidence I think you need your coach believing in you” (p.215). Meanwhile, one coach noted regarding her athlete: “I think her confidence in you gives you the confidence in your own ability... and you just see it spiraling when that happens” (p.215). Jackson et al. noted that compatible coaching style (feeling at ease with their coaches), verbal persuasion (encouragement), and athletes’ successful past performances fostered improvements in efficacy perceptions. Meanwhile the lack of these qualities would decrease confidence that athletes and coaches had with themselves and with each other.

Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004) built on their previous research to develop the Coach–Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q) to assess an athletes’ direct perspective and meta-perspective. The direct perspective refers to how athletes perceive their relationship with their coach while the meta-perspective refers to how athletes believe their coach perceives their relationship. Each perspective is composed of three subscales: commitment, closeness, and complementarity (replaces co-orientation) known as the three Cs. In a recent study involving 73 male college athletes and 119 female college athletes, Jowett (2009) confirmed the factorial structure of the direct and meta-

perspective versions of the CART-Q. Confirmatory factor analysis supported the validity of a model with separate yet correlated factors for the three C's.

Lafrenière et al. (2008) analyzed the coach–athlete relationships of British male and female college athletes using the CART-Q and a dualistic model of passion, the Passion Scale, (Vallerand et al., 2003), that consisted of harmonious and obsessive passion. Harmonious passion involves participation in an activity that one enjoys but does not conflict with other life domains, while obsessive passion involves an uncontrollable urge to participate in the activity (sport) which could enable conflict with other life domains. Results indicated that when controlling for obsessive passion, harmonious passion was significantly and positively correlated with all dimensions of the CART-Q. Meanwhile, when controlling for harmonious passion, obsessive passion was significantly and positively correlated only with commitment and negatively correlated with meta-complementarity. To compare these responses with coaches, Lafrenière et al. administered the passion scale to a variety of French–Canadian coaches (95 males and 9 females) with varying levels of coaching expertise and found similar results for coaches. Therefore, it seems that harmonious passion is associated with higher quality coach–athlete relationships than obsessive passion which Lafrenière et al. note may lead to a rigid commitment and persistence which can inhibit the overall health of the coach–athlete relationship.

While studies have surveyed coach and athlete leadership styles and preferences, few studies have interviewed and observed expert coaches to gain a better understanding of *how* experienced coaches coach. In order for coach–athlete research to advance,

research must do a better job of connecting coaches to the social context in which they coach and interact with their athletes. Potrac et al. (2002) observed and interviewed one male professional men's soccer coach to examine instructional behaviors and investigate the experiential, situational, and contextual factors that mediated his behavior in training sessions. Unlike previous studies based on leadership models or behavioral and interpersonal constructs, Potrac et al. used the concepts of social role, power, and presentation of the self. Despite the unique design, the findings provided an amalgamation of both the leadership and relationship studies in which the teaching skills of the coach combined with his/her ability to relate to players contributed to form a successful dyad. As the authors note, "the subject's coaching practice was influenced by his perceived need to establish a strong social bond between himself and his players; a bond founded on the players' respect for his professional knowledge and personal manner" (p.183). The interviewee noted that if he were to succeed as a coach, he needed to be regarded as easily approachable and must be able to relate to his players both as athletes and, more importantly, as people. Potrac et al. found that the majority of behaviors elicited were instruction behaviors. The coach felt it was critical that he portray his 'knowledge of the game,' noting that professional players will 'test' coaches. As the coach stated... "So, you've got to know your subject; it is the most important thing" (p.192). Although the coach interviewed felt that coaches gain players' respect by their ability to communicate their knowledge of the game, Potrac et al. note, "perhaps the most significant issue that arose in [the coach's] discussion of his instructional behavior was the nature of the relationship that he wished to develop between himself and his players"

(p.194). The coach's behaviors and responses regarding his high praise to scold ratio resonate with research indicating that athletes' rate positive feedback as extremely important when assessing a coach. As the coach noted:

I'm trying to boost the players' egos a little bit, trying to make them feel good about themselves. I think its all part of coaching. Plenty of encouragement always, whether you're a professional football player or a young kid, you need plenty of encouragement (p.196).

Therefore, Potrac et al's study suggests that effective coaching involves the ability to both communicate knowledge of the game and encourage players.

The results of Pensgaard and Roberts' (2002) interviews with elite male and female downhill skiers support the finding that successful coaches take responsibility for creating an environment that fosters confidence and support. Pensgaard and Roberts found that athletes perceived their environment to be more mastery than performance oriented, valued a supportive and caring climate, and believed that the coach was the "creator of the climate." Future research needs to further explore how other experienced coaches perceive the art of coaching, as this will shed further light on how they attempt to build their relationships with their athletes and ultimately improve the success of their teams.

These recent qualitative approaches have demonstrated the importance of affective qualities in coach-athlete relationships, as athletes and coaches are indicating the necessity of understanding each other and developing a positive relationship. In addition to having the fundamental skills associated with coaching, such as the ability to effectively instruct and train athletes, recent studies have demonstrated the importance of coaches' abilities to relate to their players and communicate effectively on an

interpersonal level. It appears that although players need to have knowledgeable coaches, athletes may not care how much coaches know until they know how much their coaches care about them. In light of the findings regarding the importance of forming a tight coach–athlete bond, it seems critical that future research focuses on better understanding the dynamics of interpersonal relationships for both male and female athletes because our current understanding is limited.

Teammate Relationships

In addition to studying how leadership and interpersonal behavior of coaches impact athletes' experiences and performances in sport, research has also considered how the behavior of coaches impacts the overall achievement orientation within a team. Research has also considered how relationships between teammates impact athletic performance. Researchers have specifically identified and investigated: motivational orientation, collective efficacy, and cohesion as group constructs that affect both performance and experience in sport.

Motivational Climate

Motivational climate is assumed to be a function of the goals that a group aspires to achieve, the evaluation and reward process, and how individuals are expected to relate to each other (Ames & Archer, 1988). As leaders of teams coaches are thought to have a significant impact on the motivational climate within a team. The goal perspective theory (Nicholls, 1984) has stated that there are primarily two major goal states operating in achievement situations: task and ego involvement. Walling, Duda, and Chi (1993) developed the Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire (PMCSQ) to assess

the perceived motivational climate of teams. Climates that emphasize learning and development (task oriented) are referred to as *mastery oriented*, while climates that emphasize outcomes (ego orientation) are referred to as *performance oriented*. Research using the PMCSQ was initially completed with young athletes in order to determine how children were affected by perceptions of either performance or mastery environments. Research found that perceptions of a mastery climate were positively related to satisfaction with being a member on the team and negatively associated with performance worry. Meanwhile, perceptions of a performance climate were associated with concerns about failing and the adequacy of one's performance and negatively related with team satisfaction (Walling et al. 1993).

Seifriz, Duda, and Chi (1992) administered the PMCSQ to male varsity high school basketball players and also found that perceptions of a mastery environment related positively to enjoyment. A study by Smith, Fry, Ethington, and Yuhua (2005) compared female high school athletes' perceptions of their coaches' behaviors with their perceptions of motivational climate. Perceptions of task-involving environments were associated with positive feedback while ego involving climates were negatively correlated with positive feedback and positively related to punishment feedback. Results of the motivational climate research on youth athletes suggest that coaches should emphasize more mastery-oriented environments as they are associated with greater levels of satisfaction and enjoyment.

Since research using the PMCSQ had focused on youth sport and had not compared experienced male and female athletes, Navarre (1999) administered the

PMCSQ to four NCAA Division I soccer teams (two men's teams and two women's teams who were each coached by different people) in an effort to determine the degree to which older, more competitive athletes perceived their environments to be mastery or performance oriented, and whether or not males and females perceived their environments similarly. Despite being in more competitive environments than youth sports the results indicated that both males and females perceived the motivational climate of their teams to be more mastery than performance oriented. Pensgaard and Roberts (2002) also found elite athletes to perceive their environment to be more mastery than performance oriented, but this study was limited by a small sample size (five males and two females). While these studies did not compare perceptions of motivational climate with overall enjoyment and satisfaction the results indicate that experienced male and female athletes have similar perceptions of the motivational climate of their teams.

These results are interesting when you consider (as will be discussed later) that *individual* differences have been found between males and females with males consistently reporting themselves to be more win-oriented compared to females who report being more goal-oriented (Gill, 2004). However research determining the actual impact of gender differences is difficult because of the myriad of factors one must attempt to control for. Additionally, there are both similarities and differences within males and females that add to the difficulty of identifying meaningful gender differences. Finally, as in the case of individual achievement orientation independent variables may not be mutually exclusive; athletes and coaches can be both ego and task oriented. For example, a recent study involving undergraduate students participating in leisure activity

courses found that while women scored higher on task orientation and men scored higher on ego orientation, both males and females overall had a high task orientation (Anderson & Dixon, 2009).

In regard to athletes, one may find it odd that Division I athletes perceive their environments to be more mastery oriented than performance oriented. However, coaches must place a significant amount of attention to training and development (mastery) in order for their teams to be successful. Coaches may individually have an outcome orientation but feel compelled to create more mastery oriented climates in order for their athletes to succeed. Future research should query coaches to determine the type of motivational climate they want to foster with their teams.

A study by Olympiou, Jowett, and Duda (2008) analyzed the interface between the coach-created motivational climate and the coach–athlete relationship in team sports. Specifically, 591 British athletes (414 men and 177 women) ranging from 16 to 36 years old with varying levels of athletic ability were administered both the CART-Q and the PMCSQ to assess the motivational significance of the coach–athlete relationship in team sports. Results revealed that scores on the subscales of the CART-Q were positively associated with the task-involving subscales and negatively associated with the ego-involving subscales of the PMSCQ. These results represent an important contribution to coach–athlete and motivational climate research because they empirically show that a perceived task-involving coach climate (cooperative learning and effort, and improvement orientations) was associated with athletes’ perceptions of feeling close, being committed, and interacting in a complementary fashion with their coach. This study

did not include the gender of the coach as a variable and did not differentiate between ability levels of athletes in the analysis; however it illustrates that how athletes perceive their coaches motivational climate orientation directly relates to the degree of interpersonal connection they *feel* toward their coach.

Another study by Martin, Rocca, Cayanus, and Weber (2009) looked at the relationship between coaches' use of behavior alteration techniques (BATs) and verbal aggression on athletes' motivation and affect, and did compare sex of coach and sex of athlete. Martin et al.'s sample consisted of 143 male and 146 female undergraduate students who played competitive high school sports and asked participants to recall their experiences with one particular coach in one sport. As expected, positive BATs were positively related to motivation and affect, while negative BATs were negatively related to motivation and affect, and verbal aggression was negatively related to motivation and affect. Results also showed that male coaches used more punishment strategies with male players than female players. Specifically, male players were more likely to be on the receiving end of the BATs of guilt, negative relationship, legitimate-coach authority and peer modeling than female players. Additionally, athletes in the male player–male coach relationship reported their coaches being more verbally aggressive than players in the female player–male coach or female player–female coach relationships.

In conclusion, when investigating competitive and motivational orientation, there are a variety of factors that must be considered, such as level of competition, perceived ability levels, and individual and collective goal orientations, as well as environmental factors such as coach expectations, coach efficacy, collective efficacy and coach–athlete

relationships. Behavior in sport seems to be dynamic, as it simultaneously impacts and is impacted by, the social context.

Collective Efficacy

In addition to considering achievement orientations athletes perceive within their teams, researchers have noted the importance of investigating the beliefs that athletes have about the likelihood of their teams' success. While athletes need strong beliefs in their individual ability to perform well, successful performances by teams are usually achieved through athletes' beliefs in their *team's* ability to be successful. Bandura (1986; 1997) recognized the importance of people in groups believing in each other, and developed the construct of collective efficacy to better understand how efficacy theory can be applied to groups. *Collective efficacy* refers to a group's belief in its conjoint capabilities to produce given levels of attainments (Bandura, 1986; 1997). Bandura denotes the construct of collective efficacy as a group level construct that emerges or is composed of individual perceptions. Bandura's self-efficacy theory makes no reference to group unity as a source of efficacy expectations, and research has suggested that a conceptual distinction is necessary between collective and individual efficacies (Hardy, Jones, & Gould, 1996). Collective or team efficacy is not simply the aggregate of individual efficacy levels. While individuals with a strong sense of self-efficacy may increase the likelihood of the team being efficacious, the relationship is not purely causal (Feltz & Lirgg, 1998). According to Bandura (1986), a team that has a strong sense of collective efficacy may lead to enhanced individual efficacy beliefs of its members, yet a team that has a weak sense of collective efficacy may not totally undermine the perceived

self-efficacy of its more resilient members. Nevertheless, teams comprised of individuals with weak perceptions of self-efficacy are not easily transformed into a strong collective force (Bandura, 1997). Navarre (1999) compared perceptions of both individual and collective efficacy across males and females in four college soccer teams. Interestingly, male athletes had significantly higher perceptions of individual efficacy than females despite being on teams that were less successful (as measured by wins and losses).

Bandura (1997) has suggested that predictiveness of individual and collective efficacy may depend upon the degree of interdependence associated with successful execution of sport tasks. Sports in which success is dependent on individuals cooperating and working together, such as soccer, basketball, and hockey, may depend more heavily on collective efficacy than sports such as tennis, wrestling, and gymnastics, where individual performance is not directly related to the performance of other team members.

Research has analyzed the relationship between collective efficacy and a variety of constructs related to performance, including pre-competitive anxiety and affect, effort and persistence, cohesion, and motivational climate (Greenlees, Graydon, & Maynard, 1999; Heuzé, Bosselut, & Thomas, 2007; Kozub & McDonnell, 2000; Magyar, Feltz, & Simpson, 2004; Pensgaard & Roberts, 2000). Additionally, research has compared collective efficacy to actual performance in both laboratory and sport settings. Hodges and Carron (1992) manipulated experiences of failure in male and female college students performing a muscle endurance task and found that high efficacy groups improved their performance after failure while low efficacy groups experienced reductions in performance. Additionally, in a similar task, Greenlees et al. (1999) found

that college males who were placed in a high collective efficacy group exerted more effort. However, unlike Hodges and Carron, the authors did not find significant differences in persistence after failure between the low and high collective efficacy groups. In a follow-up study, Greenlees, Graydon, and Maynard (2000) found that high collective efficacy groups maintained their goals while low collective efficacy groups reduced their goals after false performance feedback.

Other studies have analyzed the impact of collective efficacy beliefs in actual sport settings. Heuzé et al. (2007) compared elite female handball players' perceptions of both collective efficacy and group cohesion, and found that early-season collective efficacy predicted mid-season cohesion. Additionally, Kozub and McDonnell (2000) explored the relationship between cohesion and collective efficacy in male adult rugby players, and found that cohesion dimensions accounted for a significant proportion of the variance (32%) in the collective efficacy scores, with task cohesion contributing more than social cohesion. The authors note that because of the importance of task cohesion to perceptions of collective efficacy, coaches would be wise to establish motivational climates that emphasize more of a mastery approach that involves greater emphasis on task cohesion, skill development, improvement, etc. Finally, in a season-long in-depth study of an elite women's handball team involving building and communicating collective efficacy, Ronglan (2007) noted:

... production of collective efficacy was an interpersonal process, brought about by perceptions of previous performances, interpretations of team history, preparations for the upcoming contest, common rituals, and persuasive actions. When the team was confronted with failures, however, team-efficacy beliefs were vulnerable and needed constant reinforcement (p.78).

In another study involving male rugby players, Greenlees et al. (1999) found a small but significant relationship between cognitive anxiety, positive pre-competitive affect, and collective efficacy regarding match outcome. The higher the perception of collective efficacy, the lower the anxiety regarding match outcome and the greater the feelings of positive affect. The obvious implication for coaches is that if coaches are able to instill greater feelings of collective efficacy in their players, they may reduce some anxiety regarding the outcome and increase feelings of positive affect. Interestingly, Pensgaard and Roberts (2000) studied male and female Olympic athletes and found that a perception of a mastery climate was negatively associated with the coach as a source of distress, while perceptions of a performance climate were a significant predictor of high total distress. The authors note that “it is a paradox that often the most detrimental performance disturbances emanate from the athlete’s own coach and teammates” (p.197). In order to reduce the effect of the coach as a source of distress, Pensgaard and Roberts state that coaches and athletes need to have effective two-way communication.

Magyar et al. (2004) compared task self-efficacy, motivational climate, and collective efficacy in elite youth rowing teams and found that task self-efficacy predicted perceptions of collective efficacy. Additionally, perceptions of a mastery climate predicted average collective efficacy scores for teams. It is important to understand that the impact of individual efficacy perceptions on collective efficacy is probably mediated by sport type and group size. In sports such as rowing, where individual performances have an additive effect on team performance, the relationship between self-efficacy and collective efficacy may be stronger compared to more interactive and dynamic sports,

like hockey, basketball, and soccer, where an individual's performance may have less of an impact on the performance of the team.

Fewer studies have examined the collective efficacy of interactive sport teams competing against other interactive sport teams. Feltz and Lirgg (1998) compared self-efficacy and team efficacy with performance predictions of six men's collegiate hockey teams across a 32-game season. In addition to a three-item questionnaire that measured personal efficacy, researchers developed a team efficacy measure based on eight items that asked participants to assess the degree of confidence they had in their team's ability to perform well in critical components of hockey associated with successful outcomes. Results revealed that aggregated team efficacy beliefs were a stronger predictor of team performance than aggregated perceptions of player efficacy, and that past performances affected team efficacy beliefs to a greater degree than player efficacy beliefs.

Research has measured the personal efficacy beliefs coaches have in their teams' capability to perform well (Chase, Lirgg, & Feltz, 1997) and the extent to which coaches believe they have the capacity to affect the performance of their athletes (Feltz, Chase, Moritz, & Sullivan, 1999). For example, Feltz et al. (1999) defined coaching efficacy as the extent to which coaches believe they have the capacity to affect the learning and performance of their athletes. Feltz et al. (1999) found that coaching efficacy was predicted by a coach's past success, coaching experience, perceived player talent, and social support, and that coaching efficacy predicted coaching behavior, player satisfaction, and current success. While the relationship between a coach's expectations

of his or her team and the team's performance is not well researched, research outside of sport has looked at how expectations of leaders can influence performance.

Reports of leader expectations influencing the performance of others have been well documented in a variety of areas ranging from the military (Eden & Shani, 1982) to business (Eden & Ravid, 1982) to education (Brophy, 1983). Individuals who perform in accordance with a leader's expectations are adhering to the *Pygmalion effect* (Rejeski, Darcott, & Hutslar, 1979). In the Pygmalion effect, a leader's actions are consistent with the expectations that he or she has formulated for the team members. The Pygmalion effect occurs when subordinates perceive and interpret the actions of their leader and respond accordingly. For example, Eden and Shani (1982) found that trainees of military instructors who were induced to expect better performance scored higher on achievement tests and that instructor expectancy accounted for more than 70% of the variance in performance. Interestingly, Eden (1990) reported that the effect leaders have on the self-expectations of their subordinates' performance is the most critical element in the manifestation of the Pygmalion effect. In the context of sport, the Pygmalion effect may illustrate that players of successful coaches may encourage their coaches to expect high performance and model successful behavior. The behavior, beliefs, and expectations of coaches can be manifested, both positively and negatively, in the efficacy beliefs held by players. The degree to which coaches can engender positive self and collective efficacy beliefs into the members of the team may be a discriminating factor between successful and unsuccessful coaches.

Gould, Hodge, Peterson, and Giannini (1989) provided some initial insight into the strategies used by elite coaches to enhance self-efficacy beliefs in athletes. Gould et al. studied 124 national team coaches representing 30 Olympic-family sports and found that the strategies most often used by these coaches to enhance efficacy beliefs were instruction-drilling, liberal use of reward statements, modeling confidence oneself, encouraging positive talk, and emphasizing technical improvements while downplaying outcome. Of the strategies used, instruction-drilling, encouraging positive talk, modeling confidence oneself, and liberal use of reward statements were deemed to be the most effective. In addition to these techniques, research with undergraduates has also shown that peer modeling enhances the efficacy beliefs of others (McAuley, 1985).

While coaching efficacy research has typically analyzed the confidence and degree of control perceived by coaches, the confidence that players have in their coaches is another dimension that is important in efficacy beliefs associated with both coaches and players. Team performance is partly a function of the degree to which athletes believe in the strategies and techniques developed by their coaches, and the degree to which coaches are able to encourage their athletes to perform well and adhere to their decisions. If athletes do not trust or believe in their coaches' abilities to successfully guide and direct them, performance is likely to suffer. Although research is still limited, it appears that successful coaches are able to engender efficacious beliefs in their players and create a sense among the players that the team will be successful.

Cohesion

Similar to collective efficacy, the construct of cohesion has been incorporated into sport psychology literature. Carron, Brawley, and Widmeyer, (1998) defined cohesion in sport as:

...a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs (p.213).

Carron, Widmeyer, and Brawley (1985) proposed a conceptual model to investigate cohesion and developed the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ) to measure both task cohesion (instrumental objectives) and social cohesion (affective dimensions). Research with cohesion suggests that the size of the team influences cohesion, and that cohesion decreases as squad size increases (Widmeyer, Brawley, & Carron, 1990). Cohesion is a correlate of collective efficacy (Paskevich, Brawley, Dorsch, & Widmeyer, 1999). Like collective efficacy, cohesion is a dynamic process considered to both influence and be influenced by performance, and the actual effect that cohesion has on performance has been difficult to document. Mullen and Copper (1994) conducted a meta-analysis on performance and cohesion and found a significant but small positive effect for cohesion on performance. Unfortunately, Mullen and Copper's analysis was not sport specific as it incorporated groups from a variety of settings. Carron, Colman, Wheeler, and Stevens (2002) performed a sport specific meta-analysis and found a significant moderate-to-large effect size (.655) for the cohesion–performance relationship. Differences were not found across sport type, but between males and females, and ability level. A large relationship was found in female athletes/teams (effect

size = .949) compared to only a moderate relationship in males (effect size = .556).

Therefore, according to Carron et al. cohesion is a more powerful indicator of performance for females than males:

In short, from a performance perspective, it would seem especially important for coaches and applied sport psychologists to strive to maintain high cohesiveness and prevent team conflict in female teams (p.183).

Interestingly, Carron's et al. meta-analysis did not distinguish task cohesion as being more important to successful performance than social cohesion suggesting that how well teammates get along may be even more impactful than how well they understand each others roles and responsibilities. However, Carron et al. also note that the magnitude of the cohesion–performance relationship diminished as the skill level and experience of teams increased.

Comparing Cohesion and Collective Efficacy

Both cohesion and collective efficacy are useful constructs for investigating the degree to which players are committed to the team, work well together, and believe in the ability and ultimate success of the team. Perhaps a better understanding of these constructs would be developed through research that observes the social environment of teams, and interviews both coaches and athletes to determine how they create perceptions of efficacy and cohesion within their teams.

Heuzé, Sarrazin, Masiero, Raimbault, and Thomas (2006) explored the relationship of perceived motivational climate to cohesion and collective efficacy in elite female handball and basketball teams. Results showed that at the beginning of the season, a combination of high perceptions of an ego-involving climate but low perceptions of a

task-involving climate correlated with low perceptions of task cohesion. In the middle of the season, higher perceptions of both task cohesion and collective efficacy were related to high perceptions of task-involving climates and low perceptions of ego-involving climates. Additionally, an ego-involving climate negatively predicted changes in athletes' perceptions of social cohesion and group integration-task. The authors note that if athletes perceive that their coaches emphasize cooperation amongst teammates, then the overall group's task integration and collective efficacy will improve.

A study by Marcos, Miguel, Oliva, and Calvo (2010) examined the relationships among cohesion, self-efficacy, coaches' perceptions of their players' efficacy and athletes' perceptions of their teammates' efficacy among male semi-professional soccer and basketball players. Marcos et al. note:

The findings supported the hypothesis that a positive and significant relationship existed between group cohesion and individual players' own self-efficacy beliefs, efficacy evaluations of them provided by teammates, and perceptions of efficacy provided by the coach (p.323).

The results also demonstrated that correlations between athlete efficacy and task cohesion were higher than social cohesion and athlete efficacy. Marcos et al. note that coaches deemed their players to have greater efficacy if they perceived them to have greater task-related behaviors. These results are consistent with previous research which has shown collective efficacy to be more strongly related to task cohesion than social cohesion (Kozub & McDonnell, 2000).

Team Culture

Schroeder (2010) recently conducted a study that incorporated elements of motivational climate, cohesion, and efficacy within the context of team culture.

Schroeder interviewed 10 NCAA Division I coaches (seven male and three female) who guided previously losing teams to a championship level within 5 years in order to identify the leadership behaviors used to change team culture. Drawing upon an organizational culture perspective Schroeder found that coaches primarily used cognitive restructuring in order to create a shift in the values that characterized their teams. The core values the coaches established were relationship, strategic, and behavioral. Coaches continually focused on developing solid trust, respect, and communication within their programs. Additionally, coaches consistently connected rewards and punishments to their program's values in explicit and symbolic ways. Finally coaches stressed the importance of imploring the necessary strategies to winning and recruited athletes who would uphold the values established within their programs. By improving the culture within their programs these coaches enhanced the cohesion and efficacy within their teams through a motivational climate that was positive, supportive, and honest.

Therefore, based on research involving motivational climate, cohesion, and collective efficacy, coaches would be wise to promote mastery-oriented environments within their teams as they may improve the overall satisfaction and enjoyment of their players, and foster stronger feelings of efficacy and cohesion within the team.

Additionally, while the relationship between these constructs and performance is still unclear, particularly at higher levels of competition, it is logical to conclude that mastery environments, cohesion, and collective efficacy will improve athletic performance.

Finally, how these constructs interact to create a specific culture within a team is another factor to be considered when investigating the interpersonal dynamics within a team.

Gender: Similarities Versus Differences

A primary objective of this study was to compare coaches' perceptions of coaching both males and females. Original research comparing males and females was focused on identifying differences between the sexes. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) reviewed research on sex differences and found that few conclusions could be drawn from the variety of research devoted to identifying sex differences. Maccoby and Jacklin noted that possible sex differences existed in the areas of math ability, visual-spatial ability, verbal ability, and aggressive behavior. Although more recent research has largely refuted differences in these areas (Hyde, 2005), stereotypes surrounding differences in these areas persist.

Masculine Versus Feminine

After the sex differences approach failed to shed light on meaningful differences (even biological differences between the sexes are primarily not divided dichotomously but normally distributed within both males and females) and fell out of favor, research turned to exploring gender roles and personality differences. *Gender* has been regarded as the appearance, actions, thoughts, and feelings that society deems as masculine or feminine (Birrell, 2000). Masculinity and femininity denote a person's gender identity and refer to the degree to which individuals distinguish themselves as masculine or feminine given what it means to be a man or woman in society (Spence, 1985). Following Bem's (1974, 1978) research on masculinity, femininity, and androgyny, psychologists began investigating gender role orientation using the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) which, unlike previous work, contained separate scales for masculinity

and femininity and enabled individuals to be both masculine and feminine, known as androgynous. Examples of masculine characteristics from the BSRI are: self reliant, athletic, competitive, and independent while examples of feminine characteristics include: yielding, cheerful, affectionate, and gentle (Bem, 1978). Bem (1993) believed that gender roles were developed through culture and encouraged people to look *at* the culture's gender lenses rather than *through* them.

Since organized and competitive sport was primarily limited to males it primarily became identified with masculinity. In reviewing the literature, Koivula (2001) noted four themes that identified a sport as masculine: 1) attempts to physically overpower the opponent(s) by body contact, 2) direct use of bodily force, 3) projection of body into or through space over distances, and 4) face-to-face competitive situations in which physical contact may happen. Meanwhile sports labeled as feminine consisted of sports where players were graceful and non-aggressive such as gymnastics and figure skating. Early research found female athletes to be more masculine than non-female athletes (Helmreich & Spence, 1977). For example, using the Personality Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ), Helmreich and Spence (1977) compared college female athletes with female non-athletes and found athletes to be primarily androgynous or masculine compared with non-athletes who were classified as feminine. Several studies followed with similar findings (Colker & Widom, 1980; Myers & Lips, 1978; Sheppard, 1981). These results have also been replicated for fans of sport. A more recent study (Wann, Waddill, & Dunham, 2005) assessing sex and gender role orientation to predict level of sport fandom found that anatomical sex did not significantly predict level of fandom. Wann et al. (2005) note, "In

short, regardless of sex, the greater degree of masculine characteristics a man or woman possesses, the stronger the sport fandom” (p.371). Therefore, for both athletes and fans, sport resonates with individuals who simply possess masculine characteristics.

In recent years, masculine and feminine dimensions and measures have been criticized because they are subjective, arbitrary, and may not render any substantive information (Ackerly, & True, 2010; Gill, 2004). In the case of sport, determining that female athletes are more masculine is not insightful. For example both the BSRI and PAQ include competitive as a masculine characteristic. Obviously sport requires athletes to be competitive among other attributes associated with masculinity, such as assertiveness. It seems the personality approach subjectively, and perhaps mistakenly, assigns attributes to men or women, a classification that may only serve to perpetuate gender stereotypes (women are not competitive, men are not caring, etc.) that limit both men and women. Currently, most researchers recognize the limitations of both sex difference approaches and masculine–feminine dichotomies, and seek understanding within social development and social cognitive approaches.

Researchers in the 1980s began shifting away from sex differences to perceptions of gender differences, noting that the stereotypes themselves were more pervasive and influential than actual differences between the sexes (Deaux, 1984; Kane & Synder, 1989). The emphasis on social perspectives still dominates research. Currently, researchers primarily view gender as socially constructed (Gill, 2004) acknowledging that the environment, and specifically the behavioral expectations perceived to operate within particular contexts, is more meaningful and important when attempting to

understand gender differences. Nevertheless, gender stereotypes and beliefs about sex differences are strong, and researchers still find it difficult to transcend an ideology of sex differences. Hyde (2005) has offered a theoretical perspective that challenges traditional paradigms and argues for a similarities and contextual approach when considering gender.

Similarities Versus Differences Hypothesis

Despite the maturation of scientific inquiry, a belief that males and females are significantly different dominates the popular media. John Gray's (1992) book *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*, which purports significant psychological differences between men and women, is an example of how a sex differences ideology informs society. Gray's book has sold over 30 million copies and been translated into 40 languages (Hyde, 2005). However, a 'differences' model is not supported by scientific evidence. Hyde (2005) proposed the 'gender similarities hypothesis,' arguing that men and women are similar on most, but not all, psychological variables. Hyde's proposal is supported by a review of 46 meta-analyses illustrating that males and females are predominantly more similar than different. Results of Hyde's work show that gender differences are small or non-existent in the areas in which males and females have often been perceived to be different, such as mathematical problem solving, verbal and nonverbal communication, leadership effectiveness, sexual satisfaction, self-esteem, and moral reasoning. Hyde identified some differences: men masturbate more frequently, are more approving of casual sex, and elicit more aggression. Additionally, differences are found in motor behavior, with men being able to throw farther, for example. The

differences found in motor behavior are not enlightening as they simply note physical differences between males and females.

Hyde also notes the importance of context when investigating and considering gender. Studies have shown that when traditional gender norms and/or roles are removed, sex differences can be omitted. For example, Spencer, Steele, and Quinn, (1999) found that women performed equal to men on math problems if they removed the stereotype threat (the threat of performing poorly) by describing the test as not producing gender differences. If women did not receive this information or were informed beforehand that the test had produced gender differences they performed more poorly than men. In another study, Lightdale and Prentice (1994) showed that males dropped more bombs when playing an interactive video game when their identity was presented publicly (wearing name tags, sitting next to an experimenter, and answering personal questions). Conversely, when de-individuated (a state in which a person's identity remains anonymous), females dropped more bombs than men. These studies suggest that differences (at least within the contexts of these studies) between men and women are a function of the socialization of gender roles rather than genetically rooted sex differences.

In the athletic environment it is important to consider the context because behavior could be a function of perceived gender roles. Consequently, a researcher must ask, what are the gender roles perceived by males and females in sport and how do these perceptions influence behavior?

As athletics become more competitive, it seems that women's sport is taking on more of the aspects traditionally associated with men's sport. Research might consider

potential costs of this transformation. For example, research in sport has noted that, when compared to females, males report higher ego orientation, lower task orientation, lower levels of moral functioning, greater approval of unsportsmanlike behaviors, and are more likely to judge injurious acts as legitimate (Kavussanu & Roberts, 2001). As women's sport becomes more aligned with a masculine paradigm it could have deleterious effects on women if they feel they need to adopt behaviors that are selfish and unsportsmanlike. Current studies that compare men's and women's perceptions of what is expected and acceptable behavior in sport and observe behavior of athletes would provide insight into whether or not males and females are adjusting their behavior based on perceived gender roles and/or perceived sport roles.

Hyde (2005) notes that there are important ramifications associated with inflated claims of gender differences. For example, promoting women as significantly more nurturing than men (a common stereotype) could influence men to perceive themselves as inadequate or inferior caregivers. Alternatively, women who do not fit the stereotypical nurturer role could be disadvantaged at home and in the workplace. Eagly, Makjijani, and Klonsky's (1992) meta-analysis of leadership found that while female leaders were evaluated similarly to males, they were evaluated significantly worse if they were perceived as uncaring autocrats than were males with similar portrayals. Inflating stereotypes could have ramifications in sport for both males and females. For example, could women be seen negatively by teammates, competitors, and fans if they play aggressively compared to men? Alternatively, are male coaches and athletes at a disadvantage if they exhibit nurturing behaviors to their players or teammates?

Although Hyde's (2005) work provides a necessary reframing of gender ideology, the breadth and depth of her review is limited in scope. One important point to note is that Hyde's review of meta-analyses did not contain any research in a sport setting. Although I support a similarities approach, I contend that sport is a unique environment that requires its own study. Therefore, results outside of sport may or may not be confirmed in the sporting environment. Additionally, there are other social and psychological constructs that are not necessarily covered in Hyde's meta-analysis. While Hyde's review covered much of the work comparing the sexes, it only minimally covered interpersonal relationships, which may contain potentially important differences between males and females. For example, research has demonstrated that from adolescence male relationships are established through hierarchy and dominance, while females tend to establish relationships based on affiliation, mutuality, intimacy, esteem enhancement and affection (Cross & Madson, 1997; Maccoby, 1990). Hyde's meta-analysis refutes the stereotype that women are more social than men. However, it does not adequately explore more nuanced elements of social interaction such as interdependence and forming and maintaining social relationships, constructs that research has shown to be critical for girls' socialization (Garbriel & Gardner, 2003). As Hyde acknowledges, gender and contextual variables can yield a tremendous influence in social interactions. Sport offers a unique environment to study contextual factors associated with gender, particularly with respect to affective qualities in coach-athlete relationships. But unfortunately, as LaVoi (2007) noted, "Little is known about the intersection of gender and closeness in the coach-athlete relationship" (p.508).

The Culture of Sport and Interpersonal Relationships

Sport has traditionally been a male dominated arena. The advent of Title IX in 1972 marked a historic change in sport as women were gradually given more participation opportunities that once were exclusive to men. As women's participation in sport has increased, the issue of gender has come to the forefront. Competitive sport has emphasized the masculine attributes of power, individualism, and winning over feminine qualities of care and collaboration. It is difficult to read the sport section of the newspaper without reading a quote from a famous coach or athlete stating that winning is the ultimate objective, placed above the processes through which winning is achieved, such as teamwork, effort, improvement, and playing well. For example, when Jody Conradt resigned as the head women's basketball coach at the University of Texas after a season in which the team finished with 18 wins and 14 losses, she was quoted as saying: "The easiest thing to change is the leadership...It's a winning business. Losing is not acceptable" (Texas, 2007). Conradt coached at the University of Texas for 31 years and amassed 900 wins in her career.

Research in sport has traditionally overlooked the importance of relational qualities and how relationships are perceived and developed. Research has looked at attributes of leaders and competitive athletes rather than the processes by which people become successful in sport. Investigating interpersonal relationships is incongruent with the male paradigm that dominates sport because affective qualities are deemed feminine. Understanding the context in which men and women function in sport is critical to advancing our understanding of how males and females experience sport. Therefore,

studying gender expectations of men and women is paramount to advancing our understanding of how males and females interact in the sporting world. Analyzing the culture of sport and bringing it into the current landscape of competitive sport is helpful to our understanding of how gender is incorporated into sport.

In addition to reflecting the direction and tradition of psychological inquiry, interpersonal research in sport has been slowed by the sport ethic. Competitive sport in Western society is largely characterized by a sport ethic that values outcome over process, and emphasizes strength, power, aggression, and individual accomplishments over more affective and interpersonal qualities such as care, communication, and teamwork (Coakley, 2004). The sport ethic associates sport with men and has been linked to a hegemonic paradigm that is gender biased, considering males to be superior to females. Since the sport ethic rebukes feminine characteristics, affective dimensions that are deemed 'feminine' are subjugated and devalued within the sport ethic. Sport sociologists state that research focusing on interpersonal relationships in both women's and men's sports is devalued or marginalized due to homophobia, heterosexism, sexism, and the reliance of masculine paradigms (Anderson, 2005; Griffin, 1998; Kane & Lenskyi, 1998).

In conclusion, research in the area of interpersonal relationships in sport maybe mitigated by the following: (a) traditionally focusing on individual behaviors without incorporating them into a social context, (b) a hegemonic ideology that largely supports masculine perspectives that devalue affective dimensions of behavior; and (c) the difficulty involved in developing interdisciplinary research. The traditional methods and

theoretical frameworks that have dominated research have not been amenable to incorporating and investigating interpersonal relationships. Nevertheless, more recent approaches employing qualitative methods have found that both male and female coaches and athletes believe that developing and maintaining positive relationships encompassing trust, care, and respect is critical to success in sport (Davis & Jowett; 2010; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000; LaVoi, 2007; Lorimer, 2009; Potrac et al., 2002; Rhind & Jowett, 2010).

Comparing Male and Female Athletes

Generally speaking, research in sport has reflected other psychological research in that findings show male and female athletes are more similar than different (Davis & Jowett, 2010; Gill, 2004). As in the broader social world, the stereotypes associated with males and females in sport are more pervasive and influential than actual differences between male and female athletes. Nevertheless, some significant differences between male and female athletes have been found. The purpose of this discussion is not to review all the studies finding differences, but rather to concentrate more on those that relate to the coach–athlete relationship and focus on experienced athletes.

Athletes' Perceptions and Preferences in Coach–Athlete Relationships

While similarities are more evident than differences, research has determined that males and females can differ on their perceptions and preferences for leadership behavior of coaches (LaVoi, 2007; Smoll & Smith, 1989). However, findings have been inconclusive. Early research with college and elite athletes found that males expected more autocratic and social supportive leader behavior (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Terry,

1984), while females expected to be more involved in decision-making (Chelladurai & Arnott, 1985; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978). Meanwhile, other studies with college athletes have reported similar preferences for males and females (Chelladurai et al., 1989; Terry & Howe, 1984). Beam et al. (2004) administered the RLSS to a variety of NCAA Division I and II athletes and found similar findings with male athletes showing greater preferences for autocratic and social support behaviors and females reporting greater preferences for situational consideration and training and instruction behaviors.

In addition to leadership-style preferences, research has investigated other constructs such as satisfaction, humor, and coach–athlete closeness (Baker et al., 2003; Grisaffe, Blom, & Burke, 2005; LaVoi, 2007). Baker et al. (2003) found male university and club athletes to be more satisfied with the leadership of their coaches than females. Meanwhile, Davis and Jowett (2010) administered the Athlete Satisfaction Questionnaire (Reimer & Chelladurai, 1998) to 150 male and 159 female British athletes (18 to 28 years old) ranging from regional, national and international to club and university levels and found that all athletes were relatively satisfied with their coach–athlete relationship.

Grisaffe et al. (2005) investigated the relationship between perceptions of the use of humor and overall liking of coaches amongst male and female college soccer players. For females, there was a perfect correlation between use of humor and overall liking, while men had a moderate relationship ($r = .603$). Although the study was limited by a small sample size ($n = 33$), it suggests the possibility that females value affective interpersonal qualities more than men when establishing overall likeability perceptions of their coaches. Perhaps the most illuminating study involving perceptions of what college

athletes want from an ideal coach–athlete relationship was conducted by LaVoi (2007). LaVoi asked a variety of NCAA Division I and III male and female athletes to describe their ideal coach–athlete close relationship. Nineteen different dimensions of closeness emerged from the data, with the most frequently cited being communication (44.6%), trustworthy (21.0%), mutuality (16.6%), respectful (15.7%), and comfortable (15.2%). Communication was the most frequently cited dimension across all demographic categories (gender, sport type, and level of competition). Females described more closeness dimensions compared to males, and individual sport athletes cited more dimensions than team sport athletes. With communication being of central importance to athletes LaVoi notes that it may be “an antecedent to closeness: (i.e., we communicate, therefore I feel close), a behavioral process to achieve closeness (i.e., if we communicate, closeness is more likely to develop) or an outcome of closeness (i.e., if I feel close, I am more likely to communicate more frequently or with more quality)” (p.507). In regards to the gender differences, LaVoi states that they should be taken with caution:

The result may indicate that collegiate female athletes compared to males, regardless of sport type or competitive level, may have more complex relational schemas and language skills to express closeness within interpersonal (and particularly coach–athlete) relationships. However, one should not assume that males value closeness with their coaches to a lesser degree. Rather the process may look, sound, and be constructed in different ways due to gender role socialization (p.508).

Expressing care and concern for others may not be commensurate with how males are socialized to interact in relationships in sport. Nevertheless, males may still need but perceive care and concern differently within the coach–athlete relationship. As the former head men’s coach of a college soccer team, I remember some of my players informing

me that they “liked to be yelled at” because it motivated them and made them feel that I was committed to helping them play better. Alternatively, as a college coach of women, my female players have told me that they do not respond well and lose respect for coaches who “yell” at them. It is possible that male athletes expect and desire criticism more often than females, perceiving it both as a sign of strength and affection.

Interestingly, as previously noted, some research assessing leadership behavior using the RLSS has shown males to report greater preferences for social support (Beam et al., 2004). When looking at the RLSS, social support contains such items as “helping athletes with their personal problems” (Beam et al., 2004, p. 7). Women may be less inclined or interested to go to their coach for support with personal problems (particularly if their coach is a male), but value general everyday positive support more highly than males. Additionally, women may have more outlets for social support compared to men. Therefore, a distinction should be made between expectations of leadership behavior and interpersonal interaction between coaches and athletes. This phenomenon may also account for the relationship between use of humor and likeability found by Grisaffe et al. (2005), as women placed a greater value on their coach’s ability to incorporate humor into the relationship. The results of Beam et al. (2004) and Grisaffe et al. (2005) may be a function of women valuing everyday connection with their coach more than men, who may expect less from daily interactions but view their coach highly for overall social support in light of having fewer sources from which to draw upon.

Hollebeak and Amorose (2005) studied one interesting dynamic of the coach–athlete interaction: the relationship between coaching behaviors and male and female

Division I college athletes' intrinsic motivation using the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) and the Sport Motivation Scale (SMS). Results showed that athlete's feelings of perceived competence, autonomy, and feelings of relatedness (connection with their coaches) had a positive effect on the athletes' intrinsic motivation. Autonomy related positively with democratic coaching styles and was negatively related with autocratic behavior. Additionally, positive feedback from coaches had a positive effect on feelings of relatedness. Hollembeak and Amorose noted that the perceptions of relatedness, while a potential determinant of intrinsic motivation, "has generally been ignored in the coaching literature" (p.21). The authors did not find any gender differences or differences between team and individual sports, noting that the pattern of relationships was similar across these independent variables.

These results suggest that the substantive qualities of coach–athlete relationships may not be significantly different between males and females, or between sports. Coach–athlete relationships may look different but not feel different for male and female athletes and coaches. Nevertheless, the coach–athlete relationship remains complex. For example, some unexpected findings from Hollembeak and Amorose (2005) were that social support was not found to predict athletes' feelings of relatedness, and training and instruction behaviors had a negative effect on autonomy. Hollembeak and Amorose note that social support is a multidimensional concept that may need to be separated further by its various components (esteem support, emotional support, comfort, etc.). They also reason that coaches who utilize a great deal of training and instruction behaviors may not be allowing for much input from their athletes, leaving the athletes to feel as though they

don't have much choice. Therefore, the coach–athlete relationship is still a difficult dyad to measure and ultimately understand. As in previous research, the decision-making styles (autocratic vs. democratic) had the strongest relationship with intrinsic motivation, suggesting at the very least that athletes want to feel as though they are empowered and included in the relationship.

Research needs to evaluate other constructs, such as communication and criticism, more specifically in order to improve our understanding of how males and females assess and interact within ideal coach–athlete relationships. Interpersonal communication between a coach and an athlete may be the ultimate construct mediating positive coach–athlete relationships, and may offer more insight than global measures assessing preferred leadership styles or singular assessments of coach–athlete closeness. Finally, it is important to note that while there are differences between male and female athletes, differences have also been found among male and female athletes.

Differences between Sport-type and Level of Collegiate Competition

Research has demonstrated that differences in coaching preferences exist across both level of competition and sport type. Early research found that team sport athletes preferred greater levels of autocratic behavior and less democratic behaviors from their coaches (Terry, 1984; Terry & Howe, 1984). More recently, research has focused on examining differences between sport types. Athletes in co-acting or independent sports such as tennis, golf, and cross country, generally prefer more social support and a democratic style compared to athletes in interacting or dependent sports such as basketball and soccer (Horn, 2002). Beam et al. (2004) found that athletes surveyed from

independent sports showed greater preferences for democratic, positive feedback, situational consideration, and social support behaviors compared to athletes from dependent sports. These results may be a function of the nature of the coach–athlete relationship in independent sports. In independent sports, athletes receive more personal instruction as they are largely competing as individuals whose performance is separated from their team members. Since athletes in independent sports receive more personal instruction from their coaches, it is understandable that they desire more of a democratic relationship that includes support, feedback, and situational consideration. Meanwhile athletes in dependent sports perform with their team members, so coaches must coach them with their teammates. Athletes in dependent sports are ‘buffered’ to some degree by their teammates as their performance occurs with them. Additionally, LaVoi (2007) found that when asking athletes to describe their ideal close coach–athlete relationship, individual sport athletes cited closeness dimensions more often than team sport athletes suggesting that the coach–athlete relationship may have a more pronounced effect on individual sport athletes.

Lorimer and Jowett (2009) compared the empathic accuracy (the capacity to perceive the thoughts, feelings, moods, motivation and reasoning of another person) of coaches and athletes in team and individual sports competing at regional, national, and international levels. Coaches and athletes watched film of their interaction in practice sessions and were asked to assess to remember their thoughts and feelings and infer the thoughts and feelings of the other person. Results indicated that coaches of individual sports had greater empathic accuracy compared to coaches of team sports suggesting that

coaches of individual sports may have a greater cognitive understanding of their athletes than coaches of team sports. Interestingly, no differences were found between athletes in the study.

There are only a few studies that have compared college athletes' perceptions of leadership across levels of competition. Beam et al. (2004) found no differences in leadership preferences across NCAA Division I and II athletes. When comparing perceptions of closeness across Division I and III athletes, LaVoi (2007) found that Division I athletes reported respect and trust more frequently while Division III athletes cited off the field comfort more often. Having coached both Division I and III athletes, I understand why these differences could have been reported. Division III athletes attend smaller schools, have shorter seasons, and interact with the coach on more levels (such as in the classroom, in on-campus activities, and as a part of on-campus jobs). Division III coaches often have responsibilities beyond coaching such as teaching, which provide alternative contexts in which to interact with athletes socially. Since Division III athletes interact with their coaches more outside of sport, it could be more important for Division III athletes to 'connect' and feel comfortable with their coaches off the field. Meanwhile, for the Division I athlete, the relationship can be more centered on sport. Division I and II athletes spend more time in their sport and are competing for athletic scholarships, which may cause them to be more invested in their sport and increase their desire to respect and trust their coaches.

Male and Female Athletes' Preferences for Male or Female Coaches

Results of studies assessing whether or not male and female athletes prefer male or female coaches have been equivocal. Early research using college, high school, and junior high school basketball players indicated that male athletes held more negative attitudes toward female coaches, while females did not differ in their preferences for either a male or female coach (Weinberg, Reeves, & Jackson, 1984). However, unlike the basketball players in Weinberg et al.'s study, both male and female high school swimmers preferred a same sex coach in a study conducted by Medwechuk and Crossman (1994). A limitation of both of these studies is that all male athletes were coached by males and all female athletes were coached by females.

Frankl and Babbitt (1998) employed a similar measurement from Weinberg et al. (1984), but gave the measure to male and female athletes who had male and female head coaches. They found that female high school track athletes did hold a gender bias toward female track and field coaches. Specifically, female athletes held the most negative feelings about being yelled at by a female coach and the least negative feelings about being yelled at by a male coach compared to male athletes. Nevertheless, the males and females did not report any biases toward a hypothetical female track and field coach, causing Frankl and Babbitt to note the following:

Within this 10-year span, some of the accepted norms about the perceptions and ability of female coaches have changed. It is quite likely that the increased female participation may have facilitated a change in attitudes toward the acceptability of females taking a leadership position in sports (p.405).

Unfortunately, little research is specific to soccer players. However, a survey conducted by Dawson (2007) did focus solely on elite level female soccer players. Dawson surveyed 50 female players who either played for the United States National Team, NCAA Division I programs, or youth national teams. Players reported that it made no difference whether they were coached by a male or female. Rather, players focused on the personal characteristics of the coach, noting that they responded best to coaches who “earned the right” to push them hard and encouraged two-way communication. Dawson notes that females “want to ask questions and understand why something should be done” (p.60). Dawson explains:

If you yell at female athletes most won't listen. The traditional aggressive coach sits on the sidelines and screams at players. The female athlete's motivation is different. She wants buy-in and she wants good communication. Male athletes just do what the coach demands of them; females want to know the “why” behind the directive. They want their ideas listened to. And they want coaches who show devotion to their team (p.60).

However, it is worth noting that Dawson did not survey male athletes to support his claim about their blind adherence to a coach.

Young (2005) looked at females who coached both male and female college athletes. Young interviewed 10 female Division III college coaches who simultaneously coached both men's and women's teams in swimming and diving, track and field, cross country, tennis, and golf to assess their experiences. Although Young did not assess the athletes' preferences for coaches, he did focus on the perceived experiences the female coaches had coaching male athletes. Young found that female coaches primarily had a positive experience coaching male athletes, shared a mutual respect with their male

athletes, and that gaining the respect of the male athletes was not difficult. The coaches stated that a primary factor in establishing and maintaining respect with their male athletes was developing a positive coach–athlete relationship. As one coach noted,

I finally decided through my coaching experiences, and my own experiences as an athlete, that the bottom line is that kids want a coach that they respect and that cares about them and helps them develop (p.112).

Young initially thought that the coaches may have felt disrespected by their male athletes because they were female. However, the coaches felt positively influenced by their male athletes and also discussed a variety of positive influences they had on their male athletes such as building self-esteem and influencing their perspectives and treatment of women. However, Young did not report on the coaches' experiences coaching their female athletes and whether or not the coaches perceived there to be differences in the coach–athlete relationships between their male and female athletes.

A recent study with male and female college athletes by Kavussanu, Boardley, Jutkiewicz, Vincent, and Ring (2008) compared athletes' perceptions of coach effectiveness. Although the study did not focus on athletes preferences for having either a male or female coach results illustrated that athletes reported male and female coaches to be similarly effective. However, only four of the male athletes were coached by females compared to 111 male athletes who were coached by males. Meanwhile, the study had 72 female athletes being coached by females and 104 being coached by males. Nevertheless, as more female coaches enter the profession and gain experience and expertise it seems that Frankl and Babbitt's assertion that females are equally adept at coaching is valid.

Competitive Orientation

Gill and Deeter (1988) developed a sport-specific multi-dimensional measure, the Sport Orientation Questionnaire (SOQ), that assesses three dimensions: competitiveness (desire to strive for success in competitive sport), win orientation (a desire to win and avoid losing), and goal orientation (an emphasis on achieving personal goals). In reviewing her research, Gill (2004) noted that males consistently scored higher on SOQ competitiveness and win orientation, while females were similar and sometimes higher on goal orientation and general achievement (Gill & Dzewaltowski, 1988; Gill, Kelley, Martin, & Caruso, 1991; Gill et al., 1996; Kang, Gill, Acevedo, & Deeter, 1990; Martin & Gill, 1995). These results were found across age groups (youth, college, and middle-aged adults) and different levels of sport participation (high school, college, and recreational). However, it is worth noting that research has also compared female athletes to male and female non-athletes and found female athletes to report higher win and competitiveness orientations (Finkenbergh, Moode, & Dinucci, 1998).

Vealey (1986) developed another measure of competitive orientation, the Competitive Orientation Inventory (COI), which assesses the relative importance of performance versus outcome. In comparing the measures, Gill et al. (1991) found these inventories to measure different competitive orientation constructs, with the SOQ more clearly assessing competitive orientation as a multi-dimensional, sport-specific achievement construct with greater psychometric strength. Gill et al. administered the COI to university and small college athletes and found no gender differences. However, Flood and Hellstedt (1991) adapted Gill's work to studying the importance of affiliation

to the university community, and female college athletes valued affiliation, making friends, learning new skills, and exercise more than males who valued winning, competition, and the challenge of sport participation.

The gender differences Gill found with college athletes when using the SOQ may reflect DeBoer's (2004) contention that, for women, the desire to win is not an ultimate objective but rather an important variable imbedded within a constellation of factors that include support, goal setting, affiliation, acceptance, and mutual respect with coaches and teammates. These different orientations to competition may also be reflected in general differences regarding how males and females manage stress.

Hammermeister and Burton (2005) examined how experienced athletes coped with endurance sport stress and found that men and women did not differ on types of threat perceived or on overall cognitive and somatic anxiety levels. However, differences were found in how athletes cope with stressors, with women using more emotion-focused coping and males using more problem-focused coping strategies. Previous research with competitive athletes (athletes competing in college, regional, and national teams) has also shown that females use more emotion-focused coping strategies and social support than males (Crocker & Graham, 1995). The differences found in coping strategies are consistent with socialization models stating that sex role stereotypes predispose males and females to respond to stress differently (Ptacek, Smith, & Zanas, 1992). Therefore, it seems that females' overall experience in sport is more closely tied to their ability to make positive connections with their teammates and possibly coaches, as they seem more inclined to draw on their support and connection when handling the demands of sport.

While studies have compared males with females and competitive orientation, research has not analyzed if there are gender differences with respect to the need to feel accepted by and connected with coaches and teammates.

Gill (2004) noted that males consistently reported more competitive sport activity and experience. For my undergraduate honors thesis I compared male and female high school students' interest and experience with sport and found that while boys had participated in sport more often, boys and girls had similar *interest* in participating in sport (Navarre, 1996). Therefore, differences found in competitiveness and win orientation may also be a function of discrepant experiences and opportunities to participate in sport.

Not all studies have yielded gender differences in competitive orientation. For example, in their sample of high school distance runners, Martin and Gill (1995) found no differences in competitive orientations among the athletes sampled. Additionally, research suggests that differences in competitive orientations may also be a function of the athletic environment rather than gender. Kang et al. (1990) found strong differences between athletes but remote differences between non-athletes. Finally, although little work has been devoted to the topic, differences may exist between athletes' and coaches' perceptions of competitiveness. Huddleston, Ahrabi-Ford, and Garvin (1995) administered the SOQ to six Division I teams (three male and three female) and found that athletes perceived themselves to be significantly more competitive than the ratings their coaches gave them. However, both coaches' and athletes' perceptions of goal and win orientation were similar, suggesting that coaches were in touch with their athletes'

motivational strategies. The study did not report whether or not the males and females differed in their SOQ scores, or if the coaches perceived a difference between male and female athletes.

Although research regarding males and females competitive orientation is somewhat equivocal, the common stereotype in our culture is that men value winning more than women. As DeBoer (2004) noted:

In females, winning is only one among several options. Women will evaluate the costs of winning in relation to the other options. If the costs are too high, particularly in the area of interpersonal relationships, then winning will lose significance (p.40).

This study provided expert coaches the opportunity to discuss their perceptions of males and females competitive orientations as they relate to both coach–athlete and teammate relationships and athletic performance.

Similarities and Differences Between Male and Female Coaches

While some differences have been found, the majority of research indicates that male and female coaches are more similar than they are different. For example, Frederick and Morrison (1999) queried 139 male and female NCAA Division I and II coaches from eight sports to determine what motivates them to coach. No gender differences were found, as both males and females, listed intrinsic motivation the most followed by personal growth and education, social motives, professional relations and extrinsic motives (Frederick & Morrison, 1999). This research is important in that it offers insight into the fundamental question of *why* male and female college coaches coach.

While men and women appear to share similar motives for coaching and view the coach–athlete relationship similarly, research has indicated some differences with the

fundamental issue of *how* men and women coach. Lacy and Goldston (1990) observed male and female high school basketball coaches and found that females displayed slightly more praise behaviors, used first names more frequently, and utilized more pre-instruction, post-instruction, and management behaviors than men. Meanwhile, male coaches showed slightly more scolding behaviors and more concurrent instruction.

This research is consistent with later research employing the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) and the Coach Behavior Assessment System (CBAS), which found female coaches to exhibit greater degrees of social support than males (Jambor & Zhang, 1997; Millard, 1996). Millard (1996) employed the CBAS to assess differences in the coaching behavior of male and female high school soccer coaches. Males coached either male or female teams, while females coached only females. Male coaches spent more time keeping control and providing general technical instruction, and less time providing general encouragement than female coaches. Millard believed the differences could be attributed to gender role socialization, noting that females are socialized to exhibit expressive qualities while men are encouraged to exhibit instrumental qualities.

Marback, Short, Short, and Sullivan (2005) compared National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) coaches' and NCAA Division I, II, and III coaches' perceptions of coaching confidence and competence. Confidence was measured using the Coaching Efficacy Scale (CES). The CES assesses coaching confidence along four dimensions: game strategy, motivation, teaching technique, and character building (Feltz et al., 1999). *Game strategy* efficacy involves confidence in coaching during competition and guiding teams to successful performances. *Motivation efficacy* involves the ability to

affect the psychological skills and states of players. *Technique efficacy* assesses confidence in instructional and diagnostic skills. Finally, *character building* assesses coaches' belief in their ability to help players develop a positive attitude toward their sport. Marback et al. found that among the colleges coaches surveyed, females had lower motivation and game strategy efficacy than males. In regards to coaching competence, Marback et al. administered the Perceived Coaching Competence Questionnaire (Barber, 1998), which consists of seven areas: communication, teaching sport skills, motivation, training and conditioning, sport-specific knowledge of strategies and tactics, coaching during competition, and practice and seasonal planning. Results showed that male coaches held greater perceptions of competence for coaching during competition, knowledge of skills and tactics, and ability to motivate athletes.

Kavussanu et al. 2008 also administered the CES to male and female college coaches and found that males reported greater efficacy levels on only one of the four dimensions: game strategy efficacy. In another study comparing male and female college coaches, Cunningham, Sagas, and Ashley (2003) queried assistant coaches and found males to possess greater coaching efficacy and desire to become a head coach, while females had greater occupational turnover intentions.

The results of these studies should be placed within the current context of collegiate athletics in which there are fewer female coaches who have less coaching experience (Marback et al., 2005). As women's athletics continue to grow and develop, the gap between confidence levels of coaches should become smaller. Finally, it is

important to note that male coaches' confidence and competence perceptions may be aggrandized and not reflect actual ability levels and opinions of their athletes.

Differences in Coaching Males and Females

Research has examined differences between and among athletes and coaches, but little research has investigated whether or not coaches coach males and females differently. As previously mentioned, one recent study assessing perceptions of undergraduate students who played in competitive high school sports found that male coaches used more punishment strategies and verbal abuse to male athletes than female athletes (Martin et al., 2009). However, a limitation of this study is that it relies on the recalled experiences of male and female athletes, and did not actually measure or observe the coaches who coached them. Despite the lack of research comparing how male and female athletes are coached, there are several anecdotal reports from coaches describing how male and female athletes are different. It is reasonable to assume that, based on perceived differences, coaches make it a point of coaching men and women differently, at least with respect to the areas in which they perceive men and women to differ. Nevertheless, we lack the research to support this assumption and understand whether or not coaches actually *coach* men and women differently. Despite the anecdotal reports of significant differences in coaching males and females textbooks devoted entirely to coaching do not address whether or not coaches coach males and females differently (Martens, 2004; Vealey, 2005). Perhaps research has not explored this area because researchers believe that males and females *are* coached or *should be* coached the same.

As a previous head men's and women's college soccer coach, I know I coached my male and female athletes differently. I perceived my men's team to require more discipline and my women's team to require more support, and my behaviors reflected my beliefs. I felt my men's players overestimated their ability while my women's players underestimated their ability. I felt that my women's team cared more for each other while the men's team had fun but was not necessarily motivated to invest in each other. A fellow grad student once observed me coaching my men's and women's teams as part of a class project, and noted that I 'yelled' more at my male players and was 'nicer' to my female players. Perhaps this was a function of the individuals in my program rather than differences between males and females. Perhaps this was a function of how I felt men's and women's teams should be coached.

When I was coaching both men's and women's college soccer, I was young and still developing my coaching philosophy and the principles by which I direct a college program. Currently, I believe that principles transcend gender and that coaches should not significantly alter their coaching methods when coaching male or female athletes but rather, act through their principles and give each athlete what they feel he or she needs and deserves. I believe and hope that if I were still coaching male and female athletes (I am currently only coaching women's soccer) and people observed me, my behavior would be consistent overtime because it would be a manifestation of principles of interpersonal behavior (such as respect, trust, etc.) that should apply equally to both male and female athletes. Nevertheless, each team is a unique collection of individuals and has different needs and abilities. While I do not believe coaches should ever sacrifice their

principles, I have no doubt that coaches' coach their teams differently based on what they determine each team needs. This study was an opportunity to analyze expert coaches to see if they believe their behavior to be a function of principles they felt applied to all athletes or if they believe there are significant gender differences that necessitate coaching males and females differently.

While research has not addressed this question, a recent issue of the *Soccer Journal* (Martin, 2005) was devoted to interviewing the top coaches in the country. Although coaches were not asked to directly compare coaching males and females, one difference was specifically noted by Tony DiCicco, former U.S. Women's National Team head coach and winner of the both the 1996 Olympics and 1999 World Cup. When asked, "When offering criticism, do you speak to the team as a whole or privately to the player(s) involved?" Tony stated:

Both. But let me say now that there are more similarities in coaching men and women than there are differences. But with women it's important to criticize one on one. It is not that critical with boys. Sometimes you can make a statement like "our fitness is not what it should be." The girls' players will internalize that comment and they will think you are talking to them individually. However, with a boy's team the players will think, "coach is right, all the other guys need to work on fitness." (p.12)

Regardless of the similarities or differences in coaching males and females, both coaches and athletes want a positive and effective relationship. Since this study explored the qualities of positive and negative coach-athlete and teammate relationships, it serves as a contribution to both sport psychology and the developing field of relationship science.

Relationship Science

“There is nothing people consider more meaningful and essential to their mental and physical well-being than their close relationships with other people” (Berscheid, 1999, p. 260). While interpersonal relationships are of fundamental importance to human development, scholars have been slow to study them. Scholars have often assumed the need for people to have positive and caring relationships, yet psychology has not provided much empirical support for these contentions or dedicated research to understand the impact interpersonal relationships have on critical individual dimensions such as self-concept, motivation, or happiness. Traditionally, psychology has focused on pathology rather than explaining how healthy individuals function effectively within a psychosocial world—one in which the individual is not an island.

Researchers have challenged the traditional paradigm of psychological theory and research, noting that psychology “concentrates on repairing damage within a disease model of human functioning” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). Researchers such as Berscheid (1999) and Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi have called for psychologists to adopt more of a “positive” approach that acknowledges the importance of relationships when studying and practicing psychology, rather than traditional approaches that focus only on the individual and may be locked in paradigms of psychopathology. By focusing more on what makes people happy and fulfilled, practitioners may offer more to the ultimate objective of improving people’s lives. Additionally, by actively studying interpersonal relationships, relationship science could provide a needed bridge between psychological scholars and practitioners (Berscheid,

1999). Fortunately, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's call for "Positive Psychology" quickly gathered support among researchers and even found its way into the mainstream media. *TIME* magazine devoted a special issue to this positive approach; the cover page was entitled "The Science of Happiness" (Wallis, 2005). In the issue, Seligman is quoted as saying:

I realized that my profession was half-baked. It wasn't enough for us to nullify disabling conditions and get to zero. We needed to ask, "What are the enabling conditions that make human beings flourish? How do we get from zero to plus 5?" (Wallis, 2005, p. A3)

The study of human relationships is at the core of this positive approach. As Berschied (1999) notes, "virtually every study of human happiness reveals that satisfying close relationships constitute the very best thing in life" (p.260). In addition to overall happiness, relationships are linked to other basic necessities for human existence, such as the acquisition of language, motor skills, and establishing and maintaining mental health, self-efficacy, and cognitive skills (Hartup & Laursen, 1999). Developing successful interpersonal relationships and relationship skills may also prevent behavioral and cognitive problems. Baumeister and Leary (1995) indicate that many emotional problems and maladaptive, neurotic, and destructive behaviors result from people failing to establish or maintain relationships with others.

Despite the importance of human relationships, there has been little research devoted to studying them in the social sciences, including sport psychology. The dearth of research devoted to relationships has a variety of explanations. For example, psychology has focused more on studying the individual and has not studied the individual within the context of relationships. Relationship science is a multidisciplinary

pursuit encompassing, but not limited to, clinical, counseling, developmental, and social psychology, as well as areas outside of psychology such as social work, human performance, and sport psychology. While the multifaceted nature of studying relationships serves to unite various fields, this collaboration may slow the evolution and legitimacy of relationship science. Additionally, as previously mentioned, relationship science has not been a part of the traditional paradigm in which psychological research has been oriented. It may be difficult for some scholars and even practitioners to think about dyads in terms of “recurring interconnections between individuals rather than properties within individuals” (Berscheid, 1999, p. 261). However, if relationship science is to continue to evolve, studying how people attempt to organize their thoughts and behavior within a social context, and how peoples’ thoughts and behavior are influenced by others, must be placed at the forefront.

Sport offers a rich environment for studying relationships and is amenable to the ‘positive approach,’ as sport and recreation often represent one of the most fulfilling and important dimensions of peoples’ lives. In the field of sport psychology, both dyadic and intra-team relationships need to be studied. The field of sport psychology has reflected its parent field, psychology, with most research analyzing properties within individuals and focusing on individual behavior without incorporating it into its social context. Until a few fairly recent studies investigating coach–athlete relationships (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; LaVoi, 2007; Lorimer, 2009; Lorimer & Jowett, 2010; Potrac et al., 2002), the focus on studying properties within individuals characterized the bulk of research devoted to studying coaches and their relationships with athletes. In order to better

establish relationship science and incorporate sport psychology into this burgeoning field, research must focus on what makes individuals and teams work optimally rather than analyzing the individual characteristics coaches and athletes possess. By studying relationships in the context of sport, the field of sport psychology further legitimizes itself as a unique academic discipline. Additionally, since competitive sport can serve as a vehicle for human growth and development, understanding the dynamics of interpersonal relationships in sport has an altruistic objective. Consequently, academic disciplines, practitioners, coaches, and athletes would all benefit from bringing interpersonal relationships in sport into the context of relationship science.

Coach–Athlete Relationship

Interviews with athletes show that athletes regard feeling positively connected with their coaches as an important requisite for their success (Gould et al., 1999; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Rhind & Jowett, 2010). Therefore, it appears that for coaches to be successful, they must be able to relate to their players as people, not simply as athletes. However, research has not investigated *how* coaches attempt to develop their relationships with athletes and how they may or may not construct the culture of their team differently based on specific factors such as age, gender, and level of competition. Research needs to examine the qualitative dimensions of coach–athlete relationships and answer several questions, such as what do coaches believe athletes need from their relationships with coaches and teammates in order to perform well and have a successful experience in sport?, and how do coaches attempt to build positive relationships within

their teams? These questions also need to be considered across a variety of independent variables such as gender, sport type, age, and level of competition.

Perhaps some athletes are predisposed to want or need a positive relationship with their coach. In addition to being a coach, coaches may also serve as a mentor or even a surrogate parent, contributing to the psychosocial development of their players. Research has not been conducted to specifically analyze whether or not athletes are predisposed to developing a positive relationship with their coach and how the qualities of the athlete, coach, and environment work together to enact specific outcomes within the coach–athlete relationship. Nevertheless, anecdotal evidence (in the form of books, interviews, coaching journals, newspaper articles, as well as my personal experience coaching and playing) seems to support the reality that coaches can play a vital role in the personal development of an athlete and effective coach–athlete relationships are those in which an athlete feels connected to his or her coach.

Although it may be important for athletes to have a good relationship with their coaches, it is important to note that serious problems can occur if coaches and athletes become too close. Coaches may take advantage of the power imbalances that exist in the coach–athlete relationship. For example, sexual harassment of female athletes by male coaches has been recognized as an important problem in the culture of sport (Tomlinson & Yorganci, 1997; Young, 2005). Sport continues to be a male-dominated domain. Acosta and Carpenter (2010) note that less than 3% of NCAA men’s teams are coached by females. Therefore, the culture of sport and how it may negatively affect female athletes and coaches needs to be considered. Unfortunately, the sport psychology and

sociology literature has not adequately investigated how social forces such as race, class, sexual orientation, and gender interact may influence the coach–athlete relationship.

Bergmann-Drewe (2002) offered a commentary on the parameters of healthy and potentially unhealthy coach–athlete relationships (she did not delineate by age, sex, or ability). Bergmann-Drewe notes the coach–athlete relationship should not become a deep friendship. Unlike intimate relationships, Bergmann-Drewe contends that the coach–athlete relationship should have a professional distance due to an imbalance of authority, social conventions and expectations, and a potential conflict of interest. If coaches are ‘too close’ with particular athletes, they compromise their ability to treat each athlete fairly and equally. While coaches and athletes should understand each other, Bergmann-Drewe recommends that each party concentrate on sharing professional rather than personal information, and neither the coach nor the athlete should seek benefits from the relationship beyond the context of sport. Despite these guidelines, coaches often do play a vital role in the personal (and athletic) development of athletes. Research has confirmed that, for many athletes, their identity and sense of self is seen through their participation in sport (Lally, 2007). Therefore, coaches must take great care in their coach–athlete relationships and respect the power and effect they can have on the personal development of their players.

Research in sport psychology has not adequately investigated the importance of interpersonal relationships in sport, and the methodology used to study coach–athlete relationships has primarily omitted affective components within coach–athlete relationships. In order for instruments to be developed to analyze the affective

dimensions associated with productive and unproductive relationships, researchers may need to embrace alternative paradigms for studying sport. Sport is a rich environment for studying dyadic and interpersonal relationships. While there are a myriad of relationships and ways to study relationships within sport, the bulk of research, particularly the majority of early research involving the coach–athlete relationship focused on the behavior and leadership style of coaches.

Qualitative Research

Within the past 30 years there has been an explosion of qualitative research and texts devoted to qualitative methodology (Seale, Gobo, Gubrium, & Silverman; 2004). There has also been an increase in qualitative studies in the field of sport psychology. The results of recent qualitative studies in sport psychology provide richer descriptions of the athletic environment than those accomplished through traditional quantitative approaches. Rather than being antithetical to quantitative approaches, results of qualitative studies will better serve researchers as they seek to develop sport specific quantitative measures that can be administered to larger populations and further the advancement of the young field of sport psychology. For the field of sport psychology to continue its growth and development, it must continue to embrace qualitative methods and research that uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

While qualitative methods, such as observation and interviewing, have been used by people throughout history, the term *qualitative research* was not used in the social sciences until the late 1960s (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). *Qualitative research* refers to a variety of different research techniques that share certain characteristics (Bogdan &

Bilken, 1998). Unlike the *hard* data collected by quantitative approaches, the data collected by qualitative approaches has been described as *soft*. *Soft data* refers to data that is rich in description of people, places, and events (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998). Data collected qualitatively is not easily handled by statistical procedures, marking perhaps its greatest distinction from quantitative approaches. Unlike quantitative procedures, variables are not operationalized and hypotheses may not be tested or formulated in advance of data collection. Rather, in qualitative approaches research questions are often formulated to investigate topics with particular attention given to context and meaning (Creswell, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Additionally, qualitative approaches are often used to generate research questions and develop a greater appreciation for the complexity of the environment. This characteristic of qualitative methodology enables researchers to gain a better understanding of more complex issues (such as the coach–athlete relationship) that have not been well researched, or are difficult to articulate or quantify. Qualitative methods often take the perspective of individuals or small groups and tend to collect data in the research setting. Participant observation and in-depth interviewing are the most recognized methods for gaining these perspectives (Creswell, 2009).

A variety of data collection methods are utilized in qualitative research. In addition to observation and interviewing, qualitative researchers also use biographical and historical research, case studies, and focus groups. Each method has multiple variations; for example, interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured (Bogden & Bilken, 1998). Additionally, there are a variety of analytic frameworks and theoretical perspectives that guide qualitative research, such as phenomenology, symbolic

interaction, feministic approaches, grounded theory, and ethnomethodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). While there are a variety of methods and perspectives, qualitative methodology is supported and guided by similar characteristics. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) identified five characteristics of qualitative research:

1. *Naturalistic.* Qualitative research uses actual settings as the source for data. While methodology and the methods used to obtain data vary, qualitative researchers often make it a point to place themselves in the environment being researched.
2. *Descriptive Data.* Whether it takes the form of pictures, fieldnotes, or interview transcripts, qualitative data take a descriptive rather than a quantitative form.
3. *Concern with Process.* Unlike quantitative research which is concerned with outcomes, qualitative research is also concerned with the process through which outcomes are generated. For example, questions involving how individuals generate meaning and the context through which knowledge is constructed are concerns for the qualitative researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). An example specific to my study is when I asked coaches, “How do you build successful coach–athlete relationships?”
4. *Inductive.* Qualitative researchers do not start out to prove or disprove hypotheses; they take the data that is collected and identify the patterns that emerge, gathering the evidence to support the theory grounded in the

data. As Bogdan and Biklen stated, “You are not putting together a puzzle whose picture you already know. You are constructing a picture that takes shape as you collect and examine the parts” (p.6–7).

5. *Meaning.* Meaning is critical to qualitative perspectives. Qualitative researchers are intent on obtaining “participant perspectives” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) and attempt to determine how people make sense of their lives and experiences. Qualitative researchers seek to illustrate the perspective and experience of the individual and place it within the context of the social world in which the individual functions.

Qualitative researchers claim that qualitative methods are better able to uncover the point of view of the individual and bring to life the social context in which individuals live (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). Qualitative researchers have argued that because quantitative approaches focus on facts and use numbers as a central way to understand the world, they are too sterile and lack the ability to accurately portray the richness of human interaction (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Quantitative approaches were originally utilized to gather or compare the characteristics of coach–athlete relationships (Carron & Bennett, 1977; Chelladurai & Arnott, 1985), but this framework lacks the ability to delve deeper into the relationship to explore how it is constructed and what it ‘looks’ and ‘feels’ like for both coaches and athletes.

In the field of sport psychology, Martens (1987) wrote a seminal paper that helped advance the cause of qualitative methodology within the exercise and sport sciences. Martens challenged orthodox science that viewed the social world as hard, external, and

objective and called for alternative approaches to viewing the world and conducting research in order to provide a richer and more meaningful analysis of behavior in sport.

Symbolic Interaction, Gender, and Feminism

Since gender was a critical component of the study, a brief review of gender, feminism, and how symbolic interactionism interprets gender is warranted. As previously mentioned, *gender* is the appearance, actions, thoughts, and feelings that society deems masculine or feminine (Birrell, 2000). *Gender ideology* is “a set of interrelated ideas about masculinity, femininity, and relationships between men and women” (Coakley, 2004, p. 12). There are a multitude of feminist theories, the most common ontological perspectives being liberal, radical, and Marxist/socialist feminism (Ackerly & True, 2010; Maynard, 1995). Despite this variety, feminist theories share the common ontological position that gender is a significant factor in peoples’ lives and that gender inequities and the destructive aspects of gender relations need to be addressed and eradicated (Renzetti & Curran, 2003). Feminist theories primarily differ in their beliefs of the causes of oppression and strategies for change (Costa & Gurthrie, 1994; Eagly, 2009). Feminist approaches are unique in their emphasis on power and privilege (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Peterson & Zurbriggen, 2010; Young, 2005). Feminist scholars are particularly interested in power, believing that social relations are mediated through power imbalances, particularly gender inequities (Young, 2005). Like other theoretical perspectives that are aligned with qualitative approaches, such as phenomenology and symbolic interaction, feminist theories consider reality to be socially constructed. However, feminist perspectives differ in what drives the conceptual paradigms of

individuals, as feminist perspectives primarily view behavior through a cultural lens that emphasizes gender. Finally, feminism can also be viewed as constructionist because feminist scholars view gender as a socially constructed phenomenon (Ackerly & True, 2010; Bogden & Bilken, 1998).

From a symbolic interactionism perspective, people give sex both biological meaning and social significance (Goffman, 1997). Anatomical differences that define an individual's sex as male or female yield specific meanings that are culturally constructed and interpreted (O'Brien, 2006). Something as simple as having separate bathrooms for men and women give varying social contexts in which people interpret what it means to be a man or woman. Gender acts as a display of particular meanings created by others; it acts as a framing mechanism by which people interpret the actions others. Interestingly, symbolic interactionists have argued that there is no actual gender identity, only a "schedule for the portrayal of gender" (Goffman, 1997, p. 224). In this regard, men and women are not acting out of a differential nature but out of a common desire to act in accordance with the societal conventions of gender display. However, the portrait that men and women act together to create is subject to one's own analysis and interpretation, and it evolves and changes as both the individual and society evolve. Just as the athlete and coach are creating a common understanding of sport through their interaction, they are also creating an understanding of gender similarities and differences in sport and each brings his or her own individual characteristics and beliefs to this interaction. Since coaches and athletes 'take society' with them wherever they go, they also take their notions of gender and the meaning it has with them into the context of sport.

While this study involved ascertaining coaches' perceptions of gender similarities and differences, it is worth noting that the study was not conducted out of a specific feministic approach as symbolic interaction focuses more on individual experiences and meaning rather than the more salient aspects of feministic research that emphasize power, privilege, and culture (Ackerly & True, 2010; Peterson & Zurbriggen, 2010). Nevertheless, since coaches were asked to disclose their perceptions regarding similarities and differences in male and female athletes the study involves gender and inevitably evokes gender related issues and discussion.

Commensurate with feminist and symbolic interaction perspectives gender ideology is an element in the 'make-up' of the coaches interviewed. It is assumed that the coaches had preconceived notions regarding relationships with males and females as well as male to male and female to female relationships and that these opinions and perceptions influence and are influenced by their relationships with both males and females. While the study uncovered some of the unique experiences and perspectives the dual-role coaches had in relating to both male and female athletes, their experiences and perceptions were thought to be influenced by their own gender ideology.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

This chapter outlines the study's research design. The research design is qualitative and it involves: philosophical assumptions, strategy of inquiry, research method, and procedures to collect and analyze the data. The philosophical assumptions of the researcher are characterized by a social constructivist worldview (Creswell, 2009). Symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) is the strategy of inquiry used in the study while semi-structured qualitative interviews represent the research method (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Meanwhile, data collection, analysis, and interpretation encompass the procedures employed. This chapter illustrates the aforementioned characteristics of the research design in detail, explaining the philosophical approaches guiding the study and the procedures used to conduct it and analyze the data. Additionally, strengths and weaknesses of the research design are discussed.

Research Design: Qualitative

Qualitative research enables researchers to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups attach to social phenomena (Creswell, 2009). Due to the lack of research devoted to understanding the experiences and perceptions of dual-role coaches it was determined that a qualitative design was needed. A survey or questionnaire (quantitative research methods) could have been administered to assess the specific opinions of college coaches coaching both men's and women's teams. This would have produced data from more coaches which would have been useful for comparative purposes. However, a questionnaire would not accurately illustrate the experiences of

these unique coaches and there are only a limited number (47) of NCAA Division III coaches who coach both male and female teams (Cleary, 2006). A questionnaire would be restricted by the questions asked and would not allow the freedom to probe beyond them to gain a richer description of both experiences and perceptions. By having coaches speak freely about their unique experiences and perceptions coaching males and females, the study incorporated context which is a critical component of qualitative approaches (Creswell, 2009). Incorporating context within this study yielded a deeper understanding of what coaching is like for these unique individuals.

To date, the field of sport psychology does not have valid and reliable questionnaires to quantitatively measure some important elements of coach–athlete and teammate relationships. For example inventories have not been developed to assess the impact that coach and teammate relationships have upon athletic performance. Due to the paucity of research dedicated to dual-role coaches it was deemed that a qualitative approach would more effectively elucidate the experiences and perceptions of coaches coaching both men’s and women’s college teams.

Philosophical Approach: Social Constructivism

Epistemology refers to the philosophical beliefs about what can be known and how knowledge may be acquired (Hatch, 2002). *Social constructivism* best describes the overall epistemological position that guided the study. Social constructivism holds that people develop subjective meanings of their experiences and that these meanings are varied and complex (Creswell, 2009). For a social constructivist meaning is a matter of interpretation with historical, cultural, and social perspectives that play a primary role in

the individual's ability to construct knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Therefore, qualitative researchers with a constructivist perspective seek to communicate how others interpret their world, paying specific attention to the context in which people live, work, and interact with others (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998). The use of open-ended questions allows participants to express their feelings, experiences, and perceptions (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The process of research for the social constructivist is largely inductive, with theory and meaning being generated after data is gathered (Creswell, 2009).

The experiences and perspectives of the coaches interviewed in this study are their unique versions of reality and they may be different from their players' experiences and perspectives. The perceived reality of the coaches interviewed is subjective. A primary purpose of constructivism is to expose and coalesce how others perceive truth, rather than attempting to determine an objective truth (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Illuminating perceived realities of dual-role coaches yields a better understanding of their experiences coaching males and females.

While there are several different theoretical underpinnings within qualitative research, the study focused on uncovering the meaning that coaches developed in coaching both male and female athletes. Since symbolic interaction focuses largely on meaning it served as the primary theoretical lens in which to view and uncover the perceptions and experiences of these dual-role coaches.

Strategy of Inquiry: Symbolic Interaction

Symbolic interactionism is a social psychological approach closely aligned with qualitative inquiry and is primarily associated with the work of George Herbert Mead

(1934) and Hubert Blumer (1969). The term “symbolic interactionism” was first coined by Blumer in 1937 and he is credited with developing a specific methodological position in his seminal book *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (1969). According to Blumer (1969) symbolic interactionism rests on three simple premises: (a) human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that things have for them; (b) the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that a person has with other people; (c) these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he or she encounters.

Consequently Blumer notes that, “symbolic interactionism sees meanings as social products, as creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact” (p.5). The perceptions and “meanings” reported by these dual-role coaches arise from the interactions they have with their male and female athletes as well as reflect past interactions both inside and outside of their role as coaches. By using symbolic interactionism the coach–athlete interaction is regarded as a process that *forms* the behavior of coaches and athletes instead of simply acting as a setting for the expression of their behavior. The coach–athlete relationship then becomes a social creation and not a manifestation of the coaches’ internal motives, attitudes, or drives. Within this strategy of inquiry the actions of athletes force coaches to adjust, revise, abandon, or strengthen their own individual schemas in order to *fit* the actions of their athletes. Alternatively, the actions of the athletes themselves are influenced and shaped by the actions of their coaches as well as their past interactions with others both in and out of their roles as athletes. Therefore, the coaches and athletes are together shaping the

meanings and experiences they encounter in the social context of sport. Additionally, consistent with the tenets of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Charon, 1979), the coaches and athletes are also interacting with themselves. In essence, the creation of meaning is an internalized social process (Blumer, 1969) whereby both coaches and athletes have to point out to themselves that which has meaning and then organize it within their own individual framework for action (their situation and their own direction of behavior).

The symbolic interactionist asks, “what common set of symbols and understandings have emerged to give meaning to peoples’ interactions?” (Patton, 1990, p. 75). Symbolic interactionists note that it is not the rules, norms, or societal expectations that are critical to understanding behavior, but how these are defined and used in specific situations (Blumer, 1969). For example, coaches are provided two prevailing anecdotal perspectives in leading and relating to male and female athletes and asked to share their own feelings based on their experiences (see appendix A). With respect to the coaches being interviewed, symbolic interactionism would suggest that coaches interact with their athletes how they *want* to, rather than according to a set of rules or standards of how they *should* act or coach (nevertheless, the actions of the athletes themselves still help determine the actions of coaches). Consequently the way the coaches define their relationships determine their actions. However, symbolic interactionism also posits that individuals are goal oriented and therefore calculations of cost and profit must be considered when explaining behavior (Hewitt, 1994). Coaches and athletes are inclined to seek a harmonious relationship (as it benefits both parties to do so); therefore, both

coaches and athletes are actively engaged in a process of determining each other's expectations and motives. Nevertheless, coaches also bring their internal motives, such as winning or job security, to their relationships and behavior with athletes which may lead them to behave differently with their athletes and therefore inhibit the development of a harmonious relationship with all of their athletes.

The primary methodological assumptions of symbolic interactionism are: (a) methodology embraces the entire scientific quest; (b) methods of study are subservient to the empirical world; and (c) the empirical world and not some model of scientific inquiry provides the ultimate answer (Blumer, 1969, p. 24). Blumer notes that the establishment of connections between the data generates the findings of a study and researchers have to understand how they arrive at these connections. Blumer states:

This is true whether one arrives at the connections through judicious reflection on what one conceives might be significant relations or whether one relies on a mechanical procedure such as factorial analysis or a scheme of computer correlation (p.25).

In regards to social interaction, Blumer (1969) argues for a holistic inductive approach in which a method is selected based on the nature of the social phenomenon to be studied. In studying and analyzing the data in this study, the focus was to uncover and illustrate how male college coaches are experiencing the interactions they have with both their male and female athletes. The decision to use symbolic interactionism as a theoretical lens to guide this project is attributed to the need for including a cognitive agent in the understanding of coach–athlete relationships. Additionally, a symbolic interactionist perspective has been successfully applied to previous research assessing the coach–athlete relationship (Poczwadowski et al., 2003; Potrac et al., 2002).

Qualitative Interviews

Interviewing has long been a fundamental method for data collection. In 1954 Hyman, Cobb, Feldman, Hart, and Stember published *Interviewing in Social Research*, noting at the outset, “interviewing as a method of inquiry is universal in the social sciences” (p.1). Interviewing has evolved and taken on a variety of forms and characteristics. However, regardless of the type of interview employed, by their nature:

Interviews are social encounters where speakers collaborate in producing retrospective (and prospective) *accounts* or *versions* of their past (or future) actions, experiences, feelings, and thoughts (Rapley, 2004, p.16).

Rubin and Rubin (2005) define qualitative interviews as “conversations in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion” (p.4).

While interview methods vary, they are primarily classified along a structured versus unstructured continuum, however, interviews can have both structured and unstructured elements (Bogden & Bilken, 1998). Structured interviews have pre-existing topics and questions while unstructured interviews are more open-ended, allowing the subject to determine more of the content and direction (Bogden & Bilken, 1998). Qualitative interviews are based on a topic or conversational guide which is a list of areas the researcher wants to cover with the interviewee (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Topic guides vary in length and form, being as simple as a checklist or a detailed outline with main questions and pre-existing probing questions. Nevertheless, in qualitative interviews researchers have autonomy over the order of questions, how they are phrased, and are free to expand beyond initial questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The type of qualitative interview employed in the study was semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews offered a sound balance of structure and flexibility (Ritchie, 2003). The semi-structured format contained specific questions and follow-up questions, while providing the freedom to ask unique questions and expand beyond the questions and content areas established in the interview guide.

Interview Guide

The interview guide was developed with the cooperation of two qualitative researchers who served as instructors for an upper-level graduate class on qualitative interviewing (see appendix A). Additionally, feedback was provided from fellow graduate students taking the course. The principal assignment of the course was to identify a specific research question, develop an interview guide, and perform two pilot interviews. The interview guide was developed with the research questions in mind in order to make sure that the primary elements of the research problem were addressed. Questions were developed that enabled coaches to provide both depth and detail in responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). For example, the question “*What is the experience like trying to build successful coach–athlete relationships with your male and female players?*” allowed for depth as coaches were able to cover processes and perspectives. Meanwhile the question “*What does a successful coach–athlete relationship look like with your male and female players?*” generated detail as coaches were able to provide qualities and characteristics. In addition to a specific set of questions that addressed the research problem, potential follow-up questions were developed and included in the

interview guide in order to both continue the guided conversation and gather specific information related to the primary research questions of the study.

After multiple revisions, consultation, and practice sessions with the instructors and fellow students, an initial interview guide was established. Two pilot interviews were then conducted with college soccer coaches who had previously coached both men's and women's programs. After transcribing and reviewing the pilot interviews, additional revisions to the organization of the interview guide were completed. For example, a decision was made to organize the final interview guide in two parts. The first part contained questions regarding coach-athlete and teammate relationships and how they influenced and were influenced by athletic performance. The second part contained questions regarding competitive orientation and leadership. As previously mentioned, coaches were specifically asked to discuss the positions of DeBoer (2004) and Dorrance (1996). The interview guide was developed to work from a global to a specific perspective. The first part of the interview enabled coaches to speak to their coach-athlete relationships. These broader questions promoted a more free-flowing, exploratory dialogue, which stimulated further discussion and allowed for data that was rich and unique in perspective. Meanwhile the second part placed the coaches' relationships and perceptions within the specific contexts of competitive orientation and leadership which targeted specific research questions. The structured questions allowed me to gather specific opinions and perceptions regarding coach-athlete and teammate relationships. Additionally, the more structured questions in the second part also facilitated the ability

to get more direct comparisons across the coaches, which allowed for easier identification and articulation of the similarities and differences between the coaches.

The Researcher's Role

In qualitative inquiry the researcher is the significant instrument of the study (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, I had to engage in a process of self-reflection and acknowledge any potential biases and demographic filters (e.g. gender, age, race, and experience coaching and relating to athletes). My primary bias is that I am currently the head women's soccer coach of an NCAA Division III soccer program and was a former men's and women's head soccer coach of a NCAA Division III program for 5 years. Therefore, I entered the study with pre-existing ideas and opinions regarding coaching and leading male and female college soccer players.

As a youth, high school, and college coach I have experienced similarities as well as differences between coaching males and females. I feel that the differences I have experienced in coaching males and females are primarily a function of socialization rather than biology. I take a position that gender is a socially constructed phenomenon. I believe that researching gender has value because it exposes the similar and differential expectations perceived by males and females. Exposing and understanding perceptions of gender similarities and differences illustrates how varying social expectations might inhibit and enable the freedom of both males and females to express themselves uniquely. My objective was not to help argue for gender similarities or differences but to reveal coaches' perceptions of gender as it relates to coaching male and female college athletes.

Building Rapport

In-depth interviews provide an investigation of participants' personal perspectives and enable the researcher to take an active role in the interview process (Ritchie, 2003). For qualitative interviews to be successful, interviewees must feel uninhibited and free to share their personal thoughts, feelings, and perspectives (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). More importantly, interviewees should feel compelled and want to share their honest opinions and analysis. Gubrium and Holstein (2002) note that if participants feel comfortable and trust the interviewer they are more likely to disclose information that could explain their thoughts and behavior. I was fortunate to have a good rapport with the coaches interviewed. The coaches knew me as a fellow college coach, and when informed that I wanted to talk with them about their experiences coaching men and women, seemed genuinely interested in participating. Additionally, at the risk of generalizing, college coaches love to talk about their sport and also enjoy the opportunity to 'talk shop' with other coaches. I believe that the coaches interviewed perceived the interview as an opportunity to share their perspectives with a colleague.

I was concerned that coaches would be hesitant to share some information that they felt could be used by me as a competitive advantage because I coach against a few of the participants interviewed. Although coaches love to talk about their programs, they are cautious about exposing information that could be used against them in competition. Fortunately, I found all interviewees to be honest and forthright throughout the entire interview. Perhaps it helped that the information they shared was not information that could be utilized by an opposing coach when constructing scouting reports and game-day

strategies. Additionally, I believe participants felt at ease because I made the effort to drive throughout the Midwest to come to their offices in the off-season and set up the interviews during times in which they were not busy.

I believe that my experience coaching male and female college soccer players was an asset to my study because it enabled me to take an active role in connecting and relating to the coaches interviewed. Additionally, I believe my coaching experience increased the credibility the coaches had for me as a researcher. Therefore, an advantage I had as an interviewer was my ability to relate to and understand the perspective of the coaches being interviewed.

Data Collection Procedures

After completing pilot studies and developing the interview guide a research proposal was submitted to the university's Institutional Review Board. Approval to begin the study was received and coaches were contacted via email and telephone and asked to participate in the study. Coaches were identified by reviewing the websites of five different conferences in the Midwest. Coaches were informed of the interest in doing a study that compared the experiences of male coaches who coached both male and female teams. Coaches were also informed that if they agreed to participate I would drive to their school to personally interview them and the interview would last between 1 and 2 hours. Coaches were interviewed at their schools in order to make it easier for them to participate in the study and it was believed that coaches would feel more comfortable and in control if they knew their surroundings.

Every coach that was contacted agreed to participate in the study and the interview dates were established in the order in which coaches responded. Consent forms were delivered at the time of the interview and participants read and signed the consent forms prior to starting the interview (see Appendix B). Interviews were conducted in person and recorded on a digital audio recorder. Following the interview, the audio was played back and transcribed by the researcher into a Microsoft Word document, making note of all pauses and emphasized words or phrases. Individual interviews ranged from 60 to 90 minutes in length, and 20 to 37 pages in text. Once transcriptions were completed they were compared to the audio in order to confirm accuracy.

Participants

NCAA Division III soccer coaches were chosen because it is more common to have coaches coach both males and females at this level compared to Division I and II. In order to qualify for the study the coaches had to have been the head men's and women's coach during the 2005 season, and served as a head men's and women's coach for at least 2 years. This condition ensured that the coaches had just finished coaching both programs as opposed to coaches who had coached men's and women's teams in the past. The coaches in this study were drawn from purposive sampling (Patton, 1990) because these coaches held a unique position (coaching both male and female college soccer players) and were consequently able to improve our understanding of male and female coach-athlete and teammate relationships.

After the 2005 soccer season the researcher identified the total number of NCAA Division III soccer coaches that coached their school's men's and women's teams. There

were 47 Division III coaches in the country who coached both men's and women's soccer teams. Meanwhile, when combining Divisions I and II there were only 22 possible coaches to interview (Cleary, 2006). At the time of the study all of the dual-role college soccer head coaches in the country were male (Cleary, 2006). The rarity of the dual-role soccer coach phenomenon is understood when you compare their numbers to the total number of NCAA Division I, II, and III male and female soccer programs. During the 2005 season there were 301 Division I Women's programs, 213 Division II programs and 406 Division III programs compared to 199, 159, and 383 men's programs respectively (Cleary, 2006).

An additional aspect making these coaches unique is that both men's and women's college soccer teams play their competitive season's in the fall. Therefore, these dual-role college coaches are constantly interacting with both males and females, usually scheduling practices and games in succession so that they coach one team and immediately transition to their other team.

Fifteen NCAA Division III male dual-role head soccer coaches were interviewed. By interviewing 15 male coaches the sample contained almost a third (.319) of all the coaches in the country coaching both men's and women's NCAA Division III soccer programs. Therefore, the sample size (15) yielded a strong representation of the total population of NCAA Division III dual-role soccer coaches. Additionally, the sample was small enough to gain detailed descriptions of the coaches' experiences and perceptions, and large enough to allow for comparison of potential similarities and differences in the responses. Finally the sample size was larger than similar studies involving qualitative

interviews with college coaches (Giacobbi, Roper, Whitney, Butryn, 2002; Miller, Salmela, & Kerr, 2003).

The coaches in the study ranged from 17 years of experience to 2 years as a collegiate coach of both men and women simultaneously, with the average being 6.2 years of experience coaching both teams at the time the interviews were conducted. The average age of the coaches interviewed was 37 years and 6 months. Interviews were completed within an 11 month period from May 2006 to March 2007.

Data Analysis

As Rubin and Rubin (2005) state: “data analysis is the process of moving from raw interviews to evidence-based interpretations” (p.201). The analysis consisted of three parts: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data reduction consisted of reviewing and summarizing interviews, preparing transcripts, and coding data. Data display involved sorting and grouping coded data around particular codes and themes. Meanwhile, conclusion drawing and verification involved a deeper analysis of the themes, searching for patterns and conclusions within them. Finally, the researcher reflected on the broader implications of the findings, assessed how conclusively and under what conditions they were established, and developed visual representations to explain the findings.

After each interview was completed the audio was reviewed and a summary sheet was developed based on Miles and Huberman’s (1994) recommendations. The summary sheet: (a) identified the main issues or themes that struck me in the interview; (b) briefly summarized the information from each of the target questions; (c) noted additional areas

that struck the researcher as salient, interesting, illuminating, or important; and (d) identified new target (or remaining) questions that should be considered before the next interview. The emphasis in this early analysis was on the researcher's own speculation, feelings, ideas, and impressions. The summary sheet was an effective tool for organizing the interviews as it provided a necessary review of each interview and allowed for identification of emerging themes from multiple interviews.

After interviews were transcribed the transcripts, summaries, and notes were reviewed and additional notes were conducted as deemed appropriate. While reading the interviews I followed Creswell's (2003) advice and tried not to focus solely on the substance of the information in the interviews but rather on the underlying meanings that emerged from them.

Coding

The coding of data is the fundamental aspect of data reduction. Coding involves "systematically labeling concepts, themes, events, and topical markers so that you can readily retrieve and examine all of the data units that refer to the same subject across all your interviews" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 207). In order to code the data the transcripts were imported into NVIVO (a software package for qualitative researchers). Coding the data with NVIVO involved highlighting the text and clicking on the corresponding code or codes. Before coding the data the interviews were reviewed again and an initial code list was developed that followed the organization of the interview guide and took into account information provided by the summary sheets. For example, in the first part of the interview coaches discussed the experience building effective relationships and

mentioned characteristics associated with effective coach–athlete relationships. After reading through the interviews several times I had an understanding of these qualities and simply listed the qualities as specific codes in my initial coding structure. For example, some of my initial codes regarding qualities of successful coach–athlete relationships were: *honesty, consistency, communication, trust, and respect*. As I was developing my codes I had to keep my research questions in mind as the codes had to exist in a logical progression and format consistent with how I wanted to organize the data. The process of defining my codes was helpful as it further clarified and distinguished how I would pull apart the data. Definitions needed to be clear and consistent, aligned with the purpose of my research, and able to be applied across all interviews.

Some researchers delineate two or more stages of coding (Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Strauss, 1987). The depth and breadth of the material covered in the interviews was extensive. I decided that a staged approach would enable me to work through the data more efficiently. Therefore, I used Lofland and Lofland’s (1995) stages of analytic coding which consists of two stages: initial and focused.

Initial Coding

In initial coding “researchers look for what they can define and discover in the data” (Charmaz, 1983, p. 113). I randomly selected three interviews and coded them with my initial coding structure. Initial coding structures are distinctive in being numerous and varied (Lofland & Lofland, 1995) and my initial coding revealed a plethora of codes. For example, when initially developing codes that pertained to the coach–athlete relationship, I coded a multitude of relational qualities (previously mentioned) as well as other

characteristics that pertained to the coach–athlete relationship such as *listening to instruction, receptive to ideas, and implementing strategies*. Having numerous and varied codes forced me to review what codes were being used more than others and which themes were emerging more frequently. Additionally, the initial codes were primarily descriptive which was useful in identifying characteristics and qualities associated with coaching and coach–athlete relationships.

Focused Coding

While the initial coding structure was helpful it contained too many codes that were related to each other but not necessarily distinct from each other and codes were needed to tie areas together in a larger and more meaningful context. Therefore I engaged in a process of focused coding which consisted of combining codes that represented larger themes and communicated the information more succinctly (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). For example the code *coachability* was developed after I put together isolated codes that referred to athletes’ ability to listen, trust the coaching decisions, and motivation and ability to implement coaching points and strategies. Meanwhile, the codes *playing the game, coaching the game, and the evolution of the game*, emerged as three independent codes that brought together various ideas within a specific context. Finally, the code *coach–athlete connecting* brought together various efforts and strategies both coaches and athletes made to communicate with each other and make the relationship more effective.

After continuing to collapse, drop, and rename codes, I eventually developed a coding structure that was consistent with the research questions and handled the breadth

and depth of the data with more specificity and sophistication. Another aspect of the focused coding that proved beneficial was the decision to divide codes into similarities and differences between males and females as this allowed immediate retrieval of the similarities and differences within each code.

I also looked for similarities and differences between coded passages, a process known as *constant comparison* (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I compared passages with other passages with the same codes and also continually compared a coded passage with its definition to make sure the text was coded appropriately. This process enabled me to make sure that I was accurately ‘fitting’ the data into their corresponding codes and it helped me to identify and differentiate important themes embedded within the data. With the final coding structure developed, I recoded my initial interviews and made sure that I kept descriptive codes that needed to be independent of each other such as *respect* and *honesty* but had interpretive codes such as *competitive orientation acceptance* and *competitive orientation performance* that isolated themes that emerged from the data. Once I had a sufficient balance between descriptive and interpretive elements categorized and felt that the breadth and depth of coaches’ responses would be coded effectively I proceeded to code all interviews with my final coding structure.

Sorting

After the interviews were coded the data was sorted by grouping all of the coded text into specific computer files (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). By viewing the text from specific codes across all interviews, I was able to get a global sense of how the coaches responded to the specific research questions as well as document additional themes and

connections between the interviews. Additionally, sorting allowed me to better identify discrepant information and understand the amount of agreement and disagreement the coaches had when answering specific questions and talking to specific areas of interest. Sorting the data allowed me to establish a hierarchy of themes. For example, when sorting by similarities and differences associated with the *competitive orientation* codes: *acceptance, individual, collective, performance, and hierarchy* I was able to clearly identify the similarities and differences perceived by the coaches.

Sorting also allowed me to uncover unique variables that impacted specific outcomes, thus allowing for more nuance and depth. For example, after sorting by coaches perceptions of coach–athlete relationships impact on athletic performance I learned that feelings were relatively mixed and that the success of the team, the competitiveness of the athlete, and the relationships within the team all could impact the effect a coach–athlete relationship would have upon athletic performance.

While I reviewed the sorted data I extracted additional concepts and themes which gave further meaning to the data. For example, after reviewing coaches' comments on males and females ability to play well despite having a bad relationship with a teammate I found that while the majority of coaches perceived that men would have an easier time than women, there were several conditions that existed in order for this to happen. After the sorting and additional identification of themes I was prepared to make final interpretations and conclusions.

Conclusion Drawing and Verification

It is important to note that the stages of analysis are iterative and represent a concurrent flow of activity (Mile & Huberman, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Early in the data collection process the qualitative researcher is beginning to identify themes and patterns, holding possible conclusions with openness and skepticism (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As data was sorted and analyzed across all interviews conclusions were established with more confidence and assurance. Conclusions were verified by reviewing their frequency within and between interviews. It was important to continually review all of the text associated with a certain category or theme and identify the similarities and differences across the interviews. Conclusions were made with more confidence if they had the support of several coaches and were noted across different contexts. Diverging and mixed perspectives were also compared across conclusions that had more universal support in an effort to assess the strength of conclusions. Alternatively, unique perspectives were noted as it was important to give a 'voice' to each of the positions established by the coaches.

Unlike quantitative research which depends upon numbers to communicate findings, the meaning of the data in qualitative research is embedded within the text itself and needs to be pulled out and arranged accordingly. Therefore, when identifying and ultimately communicating the findings it was important for me to illustrate a pattern of similarity amongst the coaches' responses and also note diverging perspectives. A significant amount of time was devoted to coding, sorting, comparing, and summarizing the data in order to draw accurate interpretations and findings. The conclusions that

emerged from the data were continually tested for their plausibility and strength by constantly comparing the perspectives of the coaches with each other. Additionally, the study employed various procedures to ensure that the findings that emerged were valid.

Validation Procedures

A primary concern of qualitative research is that the researcher holds biases or assumptions, and these influence how he or she interprets the data and draws conclusions (Krane, Andersen, & Streaan, 1997). Validity in qualitative research represents whether or not the findings are accurate from the point of view of the researcher, participants, and readers of the study (Creswell, 2009). Researchers have encouraged the use of multiple strategies to enhance the accuracy of findings (Creswell, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The study incorporated the following strategies to enhance validity: *triangulation*, *member checking*, *rich description*, *clarification of bias* and the presentation of *discrepant information*.

Triangulation

To enhance validity in a qualitative study, researchers recommend using triangulation methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). Denzin (1978) stated that four different modes of triangulation exist: the use of different sources, methods, investigators, and theories. I chose to use investigator triangulation by corroborating with another researcher who was familiar with the project. In addition to her knowledge of the project and qualitative research, this researcher was an assistant athletic director at an NCAA Division III school and was very familiar with working with coaches and athletes in an athletic setting similar to the environments in which the coaches in this study

worked. In my collaboration with this researcher we verified all themes, definitions, and codes. After reviewing the coding structure together, we independently coded four interviews. After independent coding we discussed our assignment of codes until we came to a consensus, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend. The purpose of enlisting the help of this researcher was to verify that my codes, and how I coded the data, were accurate and reliable. As Lincoln and Guba note, “the fact that any one team member is kept more or less ‘honest’ by other team members adds to the probability that findings will be found to be credible” (p.307).

In addition to verifying codes, I met with this researcher to verify the primary themes that emerged from the data, a practice that has been recommended by researchers (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 1990) and used by other doctoral students using qualitative in-depth interviews in doctoral dissertations (Armentrout, 2007; Young, 2005) as well as published research that conducted semi-structured interviews with college coaches (Frey, 2007). I also consulted with two researchers and several graduate students from a qualitative interviewing class when developing my interview guide. Since the principal assignment of the class was to develop a research proposal using qualitative interviews and conduct two pilot interviews, my interview guide went through multiple revisions and applied testing.

Member Checking

Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that member checking is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility. After the accuracy of transcripts was confirmed by comparing the audio with the text, the transcripts were emailed to the coaches. As a ‘member check,’

(the process of validating that the researchers reconstructions are accurate reflections of participants experiences, beliefs, and opinions, Lincoln & Guba, 1985) I asked each coach to review the transcript and make any necessary deletions, corrections, or additions. I asked the coaches to confirm that the transcript was an accurate reflection of the information they were trying to communicate. I conducted follow-up phone calls to determine that the coaches had reviewed the transcripts and to discuss any questions or concerns. All coaches in the study verified the accuracy of the transcripts and reported that no changes or additions needed to be made.

Allowing the coaches to review the transcripts had several purposes: it allowed the coaches to confirm intentionality (the transcripts revealed what the coaches intended to communicate), it gave the coaches an opportunity to correct errors, it provided the coaches with the opportunity to add additional information, and it enabled the coaches to verify the accuracy of the data. Additionally, I considered meeting with the coaches to have them verify findings, but this would have been logistically cumbersome as coaches were located throughout the country and previous researchers completing dissertations with in-depth interviews either did not do this or found it to be unnecessary (Armentrout, 2007; Young, 2005).

Rich Description

Providing detailed descriptions of the results adds to the validity of the study (Creswell, 2009). A significant effort was made to give the reader an understanding of the coaches' perspectives, both shared and unique. The results are reported as they relate to the research questions and emerging themes are noted that add new depth and

understanding to the questions asked. For example, when coaches discussed the effect a socially disruptive player would have on the performance of men's and women's teams, important variables emerged that would mediate the overall impact. These variables might include performance success of the team, the individual ability of the players involved, whether or not the players received special treatment, athletic trust, and the competitiveness of individual players on the team.

The study did not have quantitative statistical procedures to produce numerical correlations and ascertain statistical significance. However, results are reported by the degree to which coaches agreed or disagreed, and detailed descriptions of coaches' position are provided. Additionally, when reviewing and reporting the data I made sure that I incorporated as many coaches as possible so that the results were not determined and reported through only a subset of the coaches interviewed.

Clarification of Bias

As a constructivist researcher and current college soccer coach I recognize that my own experiences may have influenced my interpretations of the coaches' perceptions. Additionally, since the interviews represented a guided conversation in which I was a participant, it is possible that I could have unduly influenced the coaches' perceptions and opinions of coaching male and female soccer players or somehow inhibited them from speaking openly and freely. While I acknowledge these possibilities, I believe that my account of the coaches' perceptions and experiences reflect an accurate, genuine, and uninhibited disclosure of the unique thoughts and ideas shared at the time in which the coaches were interviewed.

Neutrality refers to the degree to which the findings are determined by the subjects and not the biases, motivations, or interests of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I entered the study without a specific agenda and contend that the findings are an authentic rendering of the data. However, as a college coach with 10 years of experience, I did enter the study with preconceived opinions and beliefs regarding coaching male and female soccer players. My experiences coaching male and female college athletes helped me to understand the unique roles, experiences, and perspectives of the coaches interviewed. I feel that my experience as a coach, while admittedly bringing potential biases to the study, ultimately increased the credibility of the study.

Despite my involvement with male and female college soccer players, it was essential that I did not allow my knowledge and experience to create bias among the categorizations of data and lead me to seek out specific themes. I maintain that the themes, and ultimately the findings, emerged from the data and accurately reflect the feelings of the coaches interviewed.

Presentation of Discrepant Information

Multiple and varied perspectives can emerge within a qualitative study and researchers add to the credibility of a study by discussing information that is contrary to positions held by the majority of participants (Creswell, 2009). When reviewing the data I looked for both consistent and inconsistent perspectives shared by the coaches. I appreciated specific conditions, such as frequency, intensity, and duration that needed to be met in order for an opinion to be considered a pattern. It was my goal to give a 'voice' to each coach and when coaches reported contrary opinions and perspectives I

consistently presented them. For example, despite near unanimous belief amongst coaches that male athletes are more inclined to perceive they need to perform well in order to be accepted compared to females, there were a few diverging positions and these were revealed and discussed.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Twelve higher-order themes emerged from the data: (a) qualities of successful coach–athlete relationships; (b) perceptions of relationship–performance orientation in coach–athlete and teammate relationships; (c) the impact of coach–athlete and teammate relationships on performance; (d) team building practices; (e) coachability; (f) driving versus leading; (g) competitiveness; (h) feedback; (i) coaching comparisons; (j) culture; (k) the logistics of coaching both men’s and women’s college soccer teams; and (l) enjoyment and gratification. The results of the study are reported by reviewing each higher-order theme in detail noting the degree of support offered from the coaches and providing text that substantiate the analytical conclusions. Table 1 summarizes the results of study and illustrates the degree of support amongst the coaches. While Table 1 provides a useful tool to report the findings, one can only gain a deeper understanding of the findings by reviewing the text associated with each higher-order theme. Therefore, a detailed description of perspectives provided by the coaches, consisting of direct quotes from coaches, is included and represents the most complete and accurate way to communicate the perspectives of the coaches and report the findings of the study.

Table 1.

Summary of Results

Higher-order Theme	Result	Support
Qualities of Coach–athlete relationships	Coaches perceived similar qualities across relationships with both male and female players: (a) effective communication; (b) honesty and openness; (c) caring; (d) consistency; (e) respect.	Universal support for qualities being similar across males and females and near universal support for the qualities identified.
Relationship–Performance orientation perceptions in coach–athlete and teammate relationships	In general, coaches perceived females to be more relationship oriented and males to be more performance oriented. Relationship–Performance orientations were divided into competitive orientation individual and collective and competitive orientation performance and acceptance. Coaches perceived male athletes to be more performance and individually oriented and females to be more collective and acceptance oriented.	Universal support for females being more relationship oriented and males being more performance oriented. Near universal support for males being more individually and performance oriented and women being more collective and acceptance oriented.
Impact of coach–athlete relationship and teammate relationship on athletic performance	Coaches perceived that a coach–athlete relationship could influence the performance of females more but noted other variables that could impact this dynamic. Coaches noted that teammate relationships would have a larger influence on the performance of both male and female players. Coaches perceived that teammate relationships would have similar impact for males and female teams if relationships were positive and a greater influence on the performance of females if teammate relationships were negative.	Universal support for teammate relationships being more likely to impact performance and fair support for teammate impacting female performance more if relationships were negative. Mild support for coach–athlete relationships being able to impact performance more for females.
Team Building	Coaches had similar team build strategies for both men’s and women’s teams.	Strong support, some coaches reported differences in strategies.
Coachability	Coaches perceived their female athletes to be more coachable	Near universal

(cont.)

Higher-order Theme	Result	Support
<i>(Table 1. cont.)</i>		
Driving vs. leading	Coaches perceived that overall, men respond better to being driven and women respond more to being led.	Near universal
Competitiveness	Coaches perceived their male athletes to be more competitive than their female athletes.	Near universal
Coaching the game	Coaches reported using similar training, exercises, and instruction but noted communicating with males and females differently.	Strong support for coaching similarly and communicating differently
Culture	Coaches reported cultural differences in how society frames gender.	Strong support
Logistics of coaching both men's and women's teams	Coaches reported time and logistical demands of coaching both concurrently provide difficulties in being as effective as possible.	Universal
Enjoyment and Gratification	Coaches reported not having a preference as they enjoyed aspects of coaching both men's and women's teams.	Strong support. Some coaches preferred coaching their women's teams.

Qualities of Successful Coach–Athlete Relationships

After some initial background questions to start the interview, coaches were asked, “*What does a successful coach–athlete relationship look like with your male and female players?*” The qualities or characteristics of a successful coach–athlete relationship were similar across both males and females as several common themes emerged from the interviews. The most salient qualities that emerged were effective communication, honesty, caring, consistency, and respect.

Effective Communication

While coaches noted a variety of characteristics associated with successful coach–athlete relationships, communication (particularly two-way listening and two-way open communication) was the most salient attribute among all the qualities that emerged. As one coach noted:

They have to listen to me and I have to listen to them. This isn’t a one-way street. I don’t get to just dictate where the program is going. Listening has to go both ways which kind of gets back to trust because if I don’t trust listening to them then they don’t trust listening to me. (005)

It was important for coaches to establish a relationship with their athletes whereby the athletes felt that they had a stake in the program and that their opinions would be taken seriously. One coach noted:

I always tell people I try to create an environment that’s cooperative, that I’m not the one dictating everything that’s happening. We try to create an environment where the players have ownership and have a say in what happens. (012)

Meanwhile, another coach stated:

I’m listening to them and they are telling me, “Coach we need to run more. Work us harder.” I’m like, “O.k.” They’re asking me, “We need

time here to do team bonding.” “O.k., fine, you have your time, go.” You know, so I’ll listen to them. If the captains say, “We need this,” I’ll agree. They come in and say “This guy here needs a little talk,” I’ll bring him in and talk to him. (001)

Coaches noted that this open communication involved establishing a personal connection with their athletes that often extended beyond the playing field in successful coach–athlete relationships:

I think for me it has been a key to just have open communication lines with the players. Where the player is comfortable coming in, in any setting, and just chatting about not only the soccer end of things but their personal lives, things that are going on around the college. (013)

When asked, “How do you try to foster that positive relationship with your players?” another coach noted:

Pull them aside and say, “Hey how are classes? What’s going on with school? What’s going on with your personal life?” You know, just having those individual conversations that I kind of talked about. Having the time to do it. Just finding out and taking interest in things beside the soccer stuff. I think that’s a huge factor in this environment. (006)

Finally, when asked, “How did you go about building successful relationships with your men’s and women’s players?” one coach said:

Well, by far I think the best, the best things to build coach–athlete relationships are conversations about anything but what you’re doing as a coach. Meaning if you coach soccer when I can engage a student–athlete in an environment or in a setting where I am in an authentic, caring conversation with them unrelated to soccer, that’s huge. Whether that is on a bus trip talking about their family or whether that is in the office or on campus. The more ties I can make to a student–athlete outside of the coach–player role the more effective I am later as a coach. (008)

Although coaches noted making an effort to establish a relationship with their players outside of sport, they also noted that another characteristic of a successful coach–athlete relationship is respecting boundaries and giving the athlete the space and freedom

to be him or herself. Although coaches wanted to help and connect with their athletes, they did not want to be overbearing and wanted to respect the type of relationship that the athlete was most comfortable having with them. When asked, “*Are there some differences between the qualities that make up a successful coach–athlete relationship?*” one coach said:

It does change from individual to individual. There are some people I feel really connected with, but I don’t see them everyday. I know that they’re doing what they need to do and they don’t need to report to me every day when they’re doing it. And there are some players that naturally gravitate towards being around you and getting involved with the program in different ways and wanting to be more a part of the program. (003)

Another coach said, “Some athletes just want to be trained. Some of them, they want someone to go to with bad grades or difficult times, so there’s a little bit of a fine line” (005). Meanwhile, coaches also took it upon themselves to establish the boundaries and expectations within their relationships. As one coach noted:

The one thing I always told our kids is, “I’ll never be your best friend but I’ll always be there for you.” You know, I’m not going to be the guy that is buddy–buddy with you and the day you graduate go to the bar with you and hang out with you. But I’ll communicate with you, I’ll talk to you. If I see you in the residence halls or if I see you in the cafeteria or if I see you walking between classes, I’m going to stop, whether you have time to stop and talk to me might be a different story, but I’m going to stop. (003)

Honesty and Openness

Additional qualities that were of primary importance in establishing effective coach–athlete relationships were honesty and openness. Coaches noted that it was often difficult for both the coach and the athlete to be completely honest and open with their feelings. However, in order for the relationship to be solid, coaches felt that they owed it to their athletes to always be honest with them. As one coach noted:

In fact, it all starts with honesty. I do my best to never go behind their backs. I never tell them what they want to hear. And I can tell you that short term there are often strong reactions against that, but long term 100% of those kids will come back and thank me for that. (004)

Another coach stated:

...For them to understand that they can come in and express themselves and whatever their opinion is, there is a place for it. I try to stay open and not close myself to those kinds of things, particularly when I know that it is not always going to be pleasant. And most of the time it is but sometimes when it's not, you just try to stay open to it. (009)

Another coach, when comparing effective relationships between his male and female players, stated:

I think the qualities are the same, honesty and integrity, sometimes brutal honesty. The big picture qualities of how you treat people and how you treat players, I think long term they are the same and they need to be the same. (008)

Caring

The coaches interviewed felt that in order to establish effective coach–athlete relationships, they needed to demonstrate to their athletes that they cared about both personal and athletic development. Interestingly, despite the differences coaches perceived in regards to males and females motivation to connect and develop a relationship with them, coaches noted that it was important that they invested in the life and development of all their players in and out of soccer. Several coaches made comments regarding the efforts they made to care for their athletes as both soccer players and people. When asked, “*What advice would you give to younger coaches that may be coaching both males and females?*” one coach said,

I think the biggest thing that I really need to do is make sure that I spend time with each and every one of my athletes. That I make a personal connection. That they understand where I'm coming from, and I

understand what their goals are, what they want to get out of things. I think that's huge, to really get to know all of my athletes that I have playing for me. (011)

When asked, "What's the experience like trying to build relationships with your men's and women's players?" one coach stated:

It's invigorating and demoralizing at the same time. I mean, every time a kid succeeds, I love it! But every time a kid kind of tunes you out its kind of like, "Am I doing something wrong?" You start guessing yourself. "Am I coaching for the right reasons?" And stuff like that. And when I address my players right away at the beginning of the year I say "I don't care if we win or lose I am here to help you grow and graduate. It's that simple." (005)

Meanwhile, when asked, "*Why do they like you?*" another coach stated:

I care for them. I'm looking out for them. I communicate with them—all the things we've talked about I really do. I'm invested in them and I do care about who they are and I put the time in and I'm not afraid to spend time with them. I'm never too busy for them. (015)

Consistency

Coaches mentioned the importance of being consistent on three different levels: coaching and training, in their persona, and between the men's and women's programs so each program received the same treatment (such as equipment, meals, and meeting time).

One coach stated:

Well I think it [consistency] starts right off the get-go at the way it's perceived the program is run. If I'm treating a JV kid differently than I'm treating a varsity kid, no. As soon as you give the players an inch, they'll take a mile. They know that. And so you treat them all the same. Now they might not all get the same reps on the field because I'm going to play the best [players], but you know off the field, I'll talk to anyone of my kids. They're all part of the family. They're all part of the program. (005)

Additionally, another coach said:

To me it's being yourself, number one, and number two, trying to be yourself consistently day after day. And whether it be through the

recruiting process or whether it be through the training process, or whether it be through the game-day stuff, we try to maintain a level of consistency with our coaching staff from day to day. (007)

Coaches noted the importance of being themselves and holding true to their principles and personalities regardless of whom they were coaching:

The approach I took with women, and really it was the same with guys, I tried to be a coach and be a person that represented a positive man of integrity and really in relation to my family and everything else. (008)

This coach noted that he had a framework through which he sought to coach all his athletes:

There is a framework with the overall belief that you don't coach...I don't coach soccer, I coach people who play. So for me, I start with this is a person, and I'm going to treat them as a person no matter what. I don't care if they are a guy or a girl. (008)

Other coaches made similar comments regarding staying true to their personality and treating each team similarly:

I really make an effort to do things similarly for both teams so that one team doesn't feel like I'm treating them with kid gloves. My personality is such that I tell the teams I'm not a cheerleader. I'm here to be a positive influence, but when things go wrong or somebody doesn't do something that needs to be done, I'm going to say it whether you're a male or female. (013)

When asked, "What are the qualities that come to mind when you think of a successful coach-athlete relationship?" one coach stated:

I think being honest, honesty. I think being fair in your evaluation. I think being fair in the way you handle different circumstances, whether it be playing time, or punishment, or breaking the rules or you know those types of things, and being fair and consistent. (012)

Comments regarding the importance of being consistent also emerged when coaches were asked, “*Do you have any advice to give other coaches that coach both men’s and women’s teams?*” one coach stated:

I’d say treat them both fairly. The one day you start going biased one way or the other the kids are going to read into it, and you’ll lose respect. Know the difference between how and why, and treat them both fairly and equally. Every time one team gets jerseys, the other team gets jerseys. And it’s as superficial as that. (005)

Another coach, when asked the same question, responded:

The biggest piece of advice I would give them is that they have to, regardless of which group they are working with, when you are coaching both you have to maintain who you are. You know, you can’t be person A with this group and person B with this group because somewhere along the line somebody is going to see some phoniness into that. “Why does he treat them like this and why does he treat them like that?” And I always told my women “I might yell at the men today and I might not yell at you, but I might not be frustrated with you and challenge or push you. But there is going to be a day when they have a pretty good practice and you guys aren’t, and you are going to get the same thing.” I mean, you can’t be Dr. Jeckll and Mr. Hyde coaching men and women. I don’t think you could have two personalities because at some point somebody is going to have to question that and wonder which one is really you. (007)

Comments regarding being consistent also appeared in more fundamental ways, as one coach noted simply, “I try and treat both the same. So if I’m gonna do one thing for one team, I gotta do it for the other team” (001).

Respect

Coaches also viewed respect as a quality that is essential in effective coach–athlete relationships. Coaches noted that being liked by their athletes was not nearly as important as being respected. One coach said, “I don’t think the word like is used very much. It’s more respect” (005), while another coach stated:

I think you have to have respect at all levels, not just a soccer level. I think that's more important than liking for sure...I don't think they have to like me, but I think they have to respect me but I hope they like me (015).

When asked, "What does a successful coach-athlete relationship look like?" one coach responded:

I think... it has to start with some level of respect. You can have a successful coach-athlete relationship even if you don't like each other sometimes. You are going to have that in any relationship where you have points that you don't like each other. So as long as there is a level of respect there, that's a foundation that you can build from. (009)

Respect also served as the foundation upon which coaches tried to develop effective relationships with their athletes:

I'm going to treat every person I know with respect, with honor, loyalty, support, with friendship. So I'm going to treat them [his players] that way first. (008)

Additionally, coaches noted that the relationship would suffer once respect was diminished. "It's the moment they don't respect me or respect one of the decisions I did that it [the relationship] starts falling off" (005). Just as coaches noted that effective communication was a two-way street, they also felt that respect had to be reciprocated. "I think the next thing is a feeling of acceptance and then respect, a reciprocating respect: player-coach, coach-player, that I respect what you do, you respect what I do" (001).

While coaches felt that respect was critical for establishing productive coach-athlete relationships with both males and females, some coaches noted gender differences. Some coaches felt that respect in the coach-athlete relationship with women was achieved more through relational qualities, whereas for men it was established through the coaches' competence as a coach. When asked, "*Are there similarities or*

differences associated with building the relationships with your men's and women's players?" one coach said:

[With] guys, it starts with respect and knowledge of the game. That's what I've come to realize. If they don't think I'm a good coach I'm going to have a much harder time building a relationship with them. With the girls I don't necessarily have to be a good coach. I have to care about them. Now there are variations in there. The more athletic girls are going to be a little different. By more athletic I mean they've grown up in that, they didn't just start playing in seventh grade, they started in fourth grade. They were on travel teams. Those are different. (004)

Another coach stated:

I think that the respect for the guys, as long as they respect what I am saying and believe me when I tell them things, I think that's the thing that will make the most difference. With women I think you have to have that, but that's not it. (009)

The relationship–performance orientation differences discussed earlier came out in the coaches' comments regarding respect, as coaches perceived that they were able to become respected by women more through their interpersonal acceptance and connection with each other. The following passage offers a thorough description of the differences perceived by some of the coaches in the study:

I think from a women's standpoint, when you're included in their circle as a peer while at the same time being respected as a coach, um it sounds kind of dumb but it's true where their respect for you as a teacher never wavers but...when it comes to off the field or interactions around campus or those types of things there's a genuine appreciation which borders almost on a friendship level. There's a care and concern that you can sense from them, and that you know that they appreciate about you as a coach. However, the line doesn't get crossed on the field, there's still a genuine respect for you as a coach and as a teacher, and if you tell them, "Hey you need to do this," they're not going to question it because of the friendship off of the field so to speak. So that's where I know that there is effectiveness as a coach for women. And on the men's side it's a harder thing because on the men's side the more you gain the respect and

friendship off the field it's not as easy to take the teaching and the authority on the field. It's harder for them. (008)

Coaches supported this contention in other ways. For example, one coach said “[In] my men’s program they call me ‘coach.’ I would have no problem if in the women’s program they called me [first name]. I wouldn’t because they would still be able to respect me” (011). Interestingly, some coaches noted that if their women’s players did not respect them, it would have a more negative impact on the functioning of the team. As one coach stated:

Now on the girls’ side, if they don’t really like or respect you, it seems like they don’t put in the work as much and they don’t respond well to what you’re telling them or asking them to do. (003)

When asked, “So respect is the premium because it doesn’t really matter if you’re liked or not, for both the males and females?” another coach stated:

If the females don’t respect something they’re more likely to take the team down with them than the men. If one or two of the men don’t respect me they are still going to play hard. If there are a couple of key females that don’t respect me for a decision that I made, we’re in trouble. I made a mistake 3 years ago. I called out a girl, blamed the loss on her and it didn’t go over well at all. We had several meetings about it and stuff like that. I suspended a boy for six games because of something he did and a lot of the guys didn’t necessarily respect my decision, but they still played hard through those six games. (005)

In conclusion, coaches felt that the qualities associated with successful coach–athlete relationships were primarily the same for both their male and female athletes. Coaches reported that effective coach–athlete relationships involved open and honest communication, respect, fairness, and consistency (see Table 1, p.126). Coaches noted the importance of making an effort to connect with their athletes on and off the field, and making a genuine effort to be an advocate for growth and development as both soccer

players and people. Coaches also noted the importance of being consistent on and off the field with both teams and establishing mutual respect for each other. Some coaches felt that respect in the coach–athlete relationship was achieved through the demonstration of both competence and interpersonal connection with their female athletes, while it was more important to achieve respect through the demonstration of competence and the ability to improve their athletes’ performance for their male players. While coaches reported that the qualities of successful coach–athlete relationships were similar across males and females coaches reported differences in how they interacted with their male and female athletes and how males and females responded to their coaching.

Developing the Relationship–Performance Orientation

After reviewing the transcripts it became apparent that coach–athlete and teammate relationships and athletic performance worked together to help form coaches perceptions of their male and female athletes’ competitive orientation. Consequently, I chose to define this orientation as the *relationship–performance orientation*. Perceptions of relationship–performance orientation were divided into two primary categories that emerged from the data: competitive orientation acceptance versus competitive orientation performance, and competitive orientation individual versus competitive orientation collective (Table 2). I defined *competitive orientation acceptance* as coaches perceiving players to have an integrated set of attitudes, motives, and beliefs whereby a significant importance or inclination is to feel accepted or to want acceptance from coaches and teammates. Acceptance refers to general feelings of approval, to having compelling recognition within coach–athlete and teammate relationships, or to feeling interpersonally

connected with coaches and/or teammates. I defined a *competitive orientation performance* as coaches perceiving players to have an integrated set of attitudes, motives, and beliefs whereby one has a strong desire or inclination to compete, perform well, and win. In regards to their relationships with coaches and teammates, this orientation is associated with athletes placing ‘athletic trust’ (simply the degree of trust they have in both their coaches’ ability to prepare their team to succeed athletically and their teammates athletic ability) above personal and collective respect, trust, and acceptance.

It is important to note that these orientations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Therefore, an athlete can have a strong desire or inclination to feel accepted by their teammates and coaches while also having a strong desire or inclination to compete, perform well, and win. A critical component of these orientations is how athletes are motivated or inclined to gain acceptance. According to the coaches interviewed in this study athletes who are perceived to be more oriented toward acceptance and less oriented to performance primarily seek to achieve acceptance through interpersonal relationships with coaches and teammates while athletes who are more oriented toward performance and less oriented toward acceptance primarily seek to achieve acceptance through their athletic performance.

I defined *competitive orientation individual* as perceptions that coaches share regarding players having an integrated set of attitudes, motives, and beliefs whereby a significant importance or inclination is for the individual to put his or her athletic interests and motives before the collective. This orientation involves thinking of the ‘self’ first. Meanwhile, I defined *competitive orientation collective* as perceptions that coaches

share regarding players having an integrated set of attitudes, motives, and beliefs whereby a significant importance or inclination is for the team to be connected or together. This orientation is associated with thinking of 'others' first, (teammates and coaches). These orientations may vary in degree and be situation-specific as an athlete can be predominately individually or collectively orientated depending on the situation.

Table 2.

Competitive Orientations

Category	Theme	Example
Competitive orientation performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong desire to compete, perform well, and win. • Place athletic ‘trust’ above interpersonal trust and respect • Seeks to attain interpersonal acceptance with coaches and teammates primarily through performing well individually. • Sport represents significant part of life and individual identity • Able to play with ‘problem players’ provided team is successful and ‘problem player follows basic team rules. 	<p>“With the men’s team, you have to prove yourself, you have to struggle and gain acceptance through your performance and through showing that you’re a capable member of the team. And then, only then, are you welcomed, at least with our guys I know that to be true.” (012)</p> <p>“It goes down to just what we talked about with the asshole; you know he’s performing so he’s accepted.” (003)</p>
Competitive orientation individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placing individual athletic interests and motives above the collective. • Less inclined to notice contributions or effort of others. • Aggrandize importance of their contributions relative to others. • Seek acceptance through their performance accomplishments • Less inclined to seek to develop interpersonal connection with coaches outside of soccer. • Less inclined to demonstrate care and concern for teammates. 	<p>“But the guy will think much more of his individual performance at the end of the game and what he accomplished individually and then tag it along to the team.” (008)</p> <p>“They [women] look around and they’re aware of what’s going on, where the guy, it’s all about me.” (006)</p> <p>“Guys who score a goal are so slow to acknowledge a teammate’s run that allowed it to happen.” (004)</p>
Competitive orientation collective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placing collective interests above individual interests or motives. • Notices contributions or effort of others. • Inclined and motivated to develop interpersonal connection with coaches and teammates outside of soccer. • Inclined to demonstrate care and concern for teammates. • Wants all team members to be connected socially and be a part of the team. 	<p>“Women can lean more towards wanting to please their coach and teammates and not worry as much about personal glory and satisfaction.” (008)</p> <p>“There are very few guys who will have taken the time really know what the other guys all think...the girls will have taken the time to talk about it.” (009)</p>

(cont.)

Category	Theme	Example
<i>(Table 2. cont.)</i>		
Competitive orientation acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks acceptance through establishing interpersonal relationships with coaches and teammates. 	“They [women] want to make sure they’re part of the group and accepted.” (002)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing acceptance with coaches and teammates stimulates motive to work hard for the team. 	“They [women] all want to be treated equally.” (003)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceives people should be valued based on their effort to connect with team as well as their athletic ability. 	“Women want to be accepted.” (007)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceives players should be treated equally. 	“I think women have a tough time performing until they’ve been accepted.” (008) “Maybe that’s why our women have so many activities to accept the new players, to get to know them more.” (013)

The results of this study reveal that coaches overwhelmingly perceive that female athletes are *more* oriented toward interpersonal acceptance and collectivity and *less* oriented toward performance and individuality compared to male athletes who are *more* oriented toward performance and individuality and *less* oriented toward interpersonal acceptance and collectivity (Table 2). As one coach stated simply, “I think a lot of it is the social relationships are more important for the women. I think for men it’s all about results” (007). Differences emerged in how coaches felt their male and female athletes perceived they needed to achieve interpersonal acceptance, with coaches feeling that males seek acceptance more *through* their athletic performance than females. The degrees and qualities of these perceived differences emerged in unique ways in both coach–athlete and teammate relationships.

These differences in perceived orientations reflect the coaches’ perceptions of the predominant inclination that male and female athletes have or bring with them to the athletic environment. It is important to note the coaches felt that *both* males and females were performance and relationship oriented; the differences exist in the degree of their orientation and can vary across individuals.

Acceptance Versus Performance Orientation in Male and Female Athletes

The construct of relationship–performance orientation evolved partly out of the coaches sharing their thoughts regarding the relationship between interpersonal acceptance (with coaches and teammates) and athletic performance. A specific question that prompted coaches to share their insights regarding acceptance and performance was

when coaches were asked to share their feelings on the following quote by Kathleen DeBoer (2004):

To excel, whether in athletics or other challenging endeavors, people must be convinced to struggle. Where gender enters the equation is in the relationship of acceptance to struggle and, therefore, transitively to performance. Females need to feel acceptance before they will commit to struggle. Males will struggle first, expecting acceptance only after they perform (p.33–34).

There was consistent and near unanimous agreement with DeBoer’s proclamation that men perceive they have to perform well in order to be accepted and that men ultimately garner acceptance through performance while women seek and perceive acceptance more through their relationships with coaches and teammates. As one coach noted:

It goes down to just what we talked about with the asshole; you know he’s performing so he’s accepted. On the women’s side, you’re performing, you’re an asshole, you’re not accepted... because there’s more to it than that. You have to be multi-faceted on the women’s side. (003)

Another coach noted that “the personal relationship with the girls has to be there to pull out that competitive drive, then they’ll compete at the same level the guys will” (006). Most coaches offered strong support for DeBoer’s claim:

- a) “I whole-heartedly agree with it.” (004)
- b) “I’m on board with that 100%.” (006)
- c) “Exactly.” (003)
- d) “I do agree with that, that for women acceptance is everything, just acceptance in the group is everything.” (010)
- e) “That’s great, I would agree completely.” (011)

f) “I think that I couldn’t agree with that more, I mean I think it is spot on.”

(012)

g) “It definitely has some validity I think, no question.” (015).

Meanwhile, the coaches perceived that achieving acceptance through performance primarily reflected the relationship–performance orientation of their men’s players. As one coach noted:

With the men’s team, you have to prove yourself, you have to struggle and gain acceptance through your performance and through showing that you’re a capable member of the team. And then, only then, are you welcomed, at least with our guys I know that to be true. (012)

Meanwhile another coach noted that, “whereas the guys they perceive, I gotta bust my ass to perform well and then I’m gonna be accepted” (012).

Although nearly all coaches agreed with DeBoer, there were two coaches who disagreed and a few coaches who agreed offered additional insights or qualifications worth noting. One of the coaches who disagreed noted that while he could “see what she is saying”, for his teams, “you try to tell them both you’ve got to earn what you get. So you are both going to have to bust your butt if you want to be accepted, if you want to play” (001).

Meanwhile another coach felt that while DeBoer’s thesis was probably true for other men’s teams, for his team everyone was accepted regardless of their playing ability, “they’re all part of the family” (005). Another coach noted that “I think the part she’s talking about with the women is probably true. I don’t know that guys are always that other way. I think they expect acceptance too” (009).

Finally, one coach offered an insightful personal reflection in the following dialogue:

I would agree with that in relation to athletic performance. I would disagree with that in relation to having a genuine influence on people. What I mean is the acceptance as described with the males where they struggle and they perform well and then based on that, on their performance, their acceptance is defined. The problem with that is if their performance is poor then that performance level to me indicates to me their degree of acceptance. (008)

Yeah, do you agree with that or not?

“I think it’s true but I don’t think that’s how you should coach.” (008)

Although most coaches did not articulate this distinction, I believe based on the depth and breadth of my interviews that coaches were not attempting to coach to or create these different orientations, rather coaches seemed to believe that their athletes simply brought these orientations with them to their teams. As will be discussed later, coaches perceived that socialization factors contributed to these differential orientations. Therefore, while coaches were primarily in agreement that their male and female athletes brought these different orientations to acceptance with them to their programs, coaches were not necessarily trying to *instill* these orientations within their athletes. Rather, the coaches interviewed simply observed and or perceived these orientations in their athletes.

Acceptance Versus Performance Orientation in Coach–Athlete Relationships

The coaches interviewed believed that feeling interpersonally accepted and connected with their coach was more important for their female athletes. Coaches noted that if female athletes do not feel connected with and accepted by their coaches, it could have a significant impact on their effort and performance in sport. One coach noted:

Women look at it and they say... if they don’t have that connection they’re not going to work for you because they don’t feel that you value

them, and if they don't have that connection then I just don't feel like they're willing to put forth the effort. Guys will play because they love playing, and they're competitive, and they just, they want to be successful. Whereas girls, if they don't feel connected to you then they're not going to do what you ask them to and... I've just, again it's just having those relationships and connections. (012)

When asked, why don't they (men) need that personal attention as much? one coach stated:

I notice with our women, you know, the competitive drive is a little bit more from the standpoint of they don't want to let the coaching staff and their teammates down and it's, you know, they do put a lot more attention into trying to please the coaching staff. (006)

The coaches noted that the coach-athlete relationship for females was multi-faceted with the coach having the potential to have a more active role in the athletic experience of the female athlete. Alternatively, the coach-athlete relationship for males was primarily oriented around their athletic performance. Coaches perceived that females' experience in sport was channeled more through whether or not they respected and liked their coach in *both* personal and athletic dimensions. One coach offered this account of the differences in regards to why the coach has the potential to significantly influence the experience of female athletes:

I've always believed that when women are in team sports, and the coach is a part of that, they identify and work and play for the human being and the coach as much as they play for themselves. Whereas men tend to think about themselves and their performance and the coach is incidental. If the coach changed, "well alright, we're getting a new coach." For the female the coach is very, very much a part of it and I think that they, uh, love or hate a coach much more and, it just might be part of the female make-up, it might be part of what we do as coaches. (010)

While the coaches interviewed felt that women were more inclined to work hard once they had established a relationship and connection with their coach, they felt that

men believed that they needed to perform well *initially* in order to gain the coach's acceptance. One coach said simply, "Guys will struggle first knowing that that is how they are going to be accepted by their coach" (014). Meanwhile this coach noted,

I think if the women don't feel like they are accepted by the team, or accepted by you as a person, then they are not going to do the struggle for you. They are not going to sacrifice their physical ability or their mental ability to push as hard as they could. (014)

Therefore, the fundamental difference between males and females that coaches noted was that they perceived that men *felt* they achieved acceptance from the coach primarily through their athletic performance. One coach stated:

You can have boys come in their rookie year and they'll bust ass the first day because they want to impress the coach, and the girl would want to be accepted by the group first and accepted by the coach before they would do that. (002)

The coaches offered insightful accounts as to why they perceived that their male players garnered acceptance more through performance and less through social relationships. One concept that emerged was coaches felt that sport occupied a greater proportion of the lives and self-concepts of their men's players.

Importance of Soccer to Life/Athletic Identity

A finding that emerged from the interviews was that coaches perceived that males were more singularly focused on soccer while females (although serious about soccer) had other elements of their lives that were also important to them. For example, coaches noted that their female athletes placed more of an emphasis on their academic goals compared to men:

Women want to play but they also have something else and that's an education. So I think the education is probably more important to them

then the men, and not all, but if you took a percentage I think there is more. You know they're here for the education. (002)

Coaches noted that their female players expressed more disappointment and concern if they were not doing well in school and were more likely to discontinue playing college soccer to focus on their academics. Coaches also felt that women were more likely to quit if they did not make the varsity squad, were not receiving much playing time, or not feeling connected to their coach. One coach stated:

I think men will stick it out. This year we had 38 guys and we lost 3. We had 22 women and 3 quit. It was about, "well, I'm not doing too much now, not playing, not helping the team, why should I? You know? I'd rather concentrate on school and work or something." (014)

The notion of a differential construction of athletic identity (males using athletics in their self-identification more than women) was a common theme as coaches made references to athletics being a greater part of their male athletes' identity. One coach stated simply, "it's more of who they are" (002). Coaches also mentioned that men had more difficulty getting over losses, were more likely to engage in pick-up soccer on their own, and more likely to return to be with the team after their eligibility ended. Meanwhile, as one coach noted: "women move on with life, guys will kind of hold onto it, I think" (014). One coach in particular attempted to summarize the thoughts of his female players by offering this interpretation:

On the women's side, "being a part of the team was great, but I don't need to be a part of the team to be who I am. No one treated me differently because I am part of the soccer team. They are always going to treat me as a woman, any better any worse, if I'm on the team or not on the team." (014)

Another coach noted the perceived differences between results and interpersonal connection as it relates to personal identity with the following statement:

I think that a lot of it is the social relationships are more important for the women, I think for men its all about results, it's all about wins and losses and competitiveness, and you know, being, having that machoness, maybe being able to go back to the residence halls or to home or to your high school even if you go that low to be able to say, "Yeah, we won last night!" You know, the guys I think that's more of a detail. For the women it is more of being able to walk through the residence halls or through your high school hallways and have everybody know just that you are a member of the team. Regardless of success, little or a lot, the women are always just more comfortable if everybody knows that, "Yeah, I am a part of the team" or "we all get along really well." (007)

The feeling that female players place a greater emphasis on being affiliated with the team and are more prone to think of themselves in relation to the team compared to men was also seen in comments regarding attribution, as coaches noted that women are more likely to attribute their success to the overall ability of the team. As one coach stated:

Guys who score a goal are so slow to acknowledge another teammate's dummy run you know that allowed it to happen. Girls score a goal and generally—I've had a couple of prima donnas—but most of them, they're just happy for all their teammates that we scored a goal. And that's more of the issue. (005)

Meanwhile, another coach stated:

The female never wants to walk away and say, "we won the game because of me." They want to say, "we won the game because we are a team, together." No, I don't know many females at all, maybe some of them might think inside, but would never publicly own up and say, "I won the game for us." The guy, there's a guy that would. You know how guys are, "Hey boys, I won the game for us. Coach asked me to take on number 3, beat him regularly. You got an assist from me. I got a goal, coach it's me." (010)

The theme that coaches perceived that females seek both personal and athletic acceptance compared to men who seek acceptance primarily through performance emerged in a variety of ways throughout the interviews with the most salient being

simply that coaches reported that their female players were more motivated to establish a social connection with their coaches and teammates.

Motivation to Develop a Social Relationship with Coaches

Coaches indicated that women were far more likely than men to initiate and maintain a social relationship with their coaches. The belief that female athletes value acceptance and seek connection with their coaches while males are less inclined to seek a relationship outside of sport with their coaches was stated or implied in a variety of ways in the interviews. For example, coaches said that their female players were more likely to stop by their offices to converse with them. When asked, “*What does a successful coach–athlete relationship look like with your male and female players?*” one coach said:

Both are different. The women I think use...they want more of your time, they want more positive feedback even though you give both, they will come into your office and talk more. So they’re more open to come in and chat, you know, cause they want the feedback. The men, they’re kind of set in their ways. (001)

Another coach, when talking about his male players, noted that, “they don’t feel like they need to stop up and let me know how their day is going...or they don’t need that connection” (003).

Coaches also noted that women were also more likely to share information from their life outside of soccer compared to the men:

The women’s team seems a little bit more, overall, more comfortable talking about everything. You know, just sit down and go off on a tangent about something, tell me about their boyfriend or something, and I’m like woah! I’ll listen and its fine, but you know I never get a guy talking about a girlfriend. You know, that’ll never happen. (015)

The coaches felt that most men would not take the extra time to establish a personal connection with them outside of the context of sport. One coach stated that he had more individual relationships with his female players because they were more willing to come into his office and spend time with him, noting, “Guys don’t care. Like I said, they’ll get to the field, they’ll wanna play and that’s it” (001).

Another coach noted that his female athletes were more aware and concerned if he was not doing well, stating, “I think the women actually do care, like ‘what’s wrong with coach today?’, where I don’t think as many men will ask that or feel that way” (005).

Coaches also made more of an effort to connect with their female athletes both on and off the field. For example, one coach felt that in order to be successful in coaching female athletes, the coach needs to become a part of them. When asked, “*How do you become a part of them?*” the coach stated:

After training sessions, you know just one example, is I try to go around and talk to everybody. You know, “Hey how are you feeling? How you doing?” You know, and ask them those personal questions. Just trying to get some information out of them, you know, trying to get them to feel as if I do genuinely care about how they feel about what’s going on. (003)

Meanwhile, another coach said:

I think with the girls it is, I think the girls they need more information and feedback from the coaches, more personal contact, more, “Hey, you need to do this. You’re doing this well,” and then, “How’s your housing?”, all that stuff. “How are your classes?” (008)

Additionally, several coaches commented on how they included their female athletes in their personal lives, noting that their female athletes often developed relationships with their wives and children. Although coaches did report having both

teams over to their houses for occasional team meals, no coach referred to their men's players as personally connected to their family beyond these team gatherings. When coaches reported initiating similar communication to both teams outside of sport, they noted that they were more likely to receive a response from their female players. For example, coaches said that the women's players informed their coaches more about how they were doing socially and academically. When asked, "*How do you go about trying to break down those barriers and earn that respect from your female athletes?*" one coach stated:

I try to get involved in what's going on in their lives and that seems to be the biggest thing is knowing more about them and being more involved in, not only what goes on the field but off the field, and how that affects them. If a kid does well one semester, I send out emails to the guys and girls that they did well. I never hardly get any responses back from the guys, it's kind of like: look at it, delete it, great, you know; the girls notice that, they email me back: "Thanks man, I really have been working hard." They like that kind of involvement, they like that kind of interaction that they get. You know that they feel like I'm not only just coaching them, but I care about them as an athlete...but I'm involved with you here and here, you know as academics and what you're doing socially and how you're interacting and how you're fitting in. (003)

One coach offered this statement which reflects the perceptions of the coaches interviewed concerning the differences in social interaction between their male and female players:

Guys sometimes are less inclined to enter into that... relationship; you know it's harder. But the girls are more, are naturally looking for it and they're naturally gonna cater to it more. The guys aren't going to. (008)

In summary, the coaches reported that the coach-athlete relationship was more multidimensional with their female athletes. The coaches perceived that their female athletes were more motivated (oriented) to establish acceptance and connection with their

coaches than males, and coaches also reported extending themselves more socially with their female athletes. Interestingly, while coaches perceived these differences they also noted that they did not talk with their coaches much outside of sport when they were college athletes. Therefore, perhaps the coaches themselves were less inclined to go out of their way to foster a relationship with their men's players outside of sport since they did not have or seek that relationship themselves as athletes. For instance one coach recalled:

I don't remember going into the coach and just talking with him, you know, unless he called me in, but you know there was no need to. I had class, we had practice, we had games, and you know I was more worried about playing professional soccer. (001)

When coaches tried to account for these relationship–performance orientation differences many concluded that women are simply more social, value acceptance more, and our culture promotes these differences (a theme to be addressed later). One coach offered this insightful comment:

I think long term, if you really want to be influential in a male athlete's life, you still have to find that relational component. But I think in our culture women are much less prideful when it comes to acknowledging their need for respect and friendship and so they value that. (008)

Impact of Coach–Athlete Relationship on Athletic Performance:

Similarities and Differences

A unique attribute of the study was to assess the coaches' perceptions of how they felt their relationship with players' impacted athletic performance. While the coaches in the study noted that in general women were more acceptance-oriented and were motivated to develop an interpersonal connection with their coaches, not all coaches

believed that the performance of their women's team was impacted more or less by the relationship that individual players had with them. A slight majority of coaches did feel that in general, a female's performance *could* be affected more based on the relationship they had with their coach. However, these opinions contained qualifications and exceptions. Additionally, some coaches reported feeling that there were no differences. For instance, one coach stated simply, "the players perform how they perform, you know" (001). Another coach noted when reflecting on whether or not his teams performed differently based on his coach-athlete relationships, "In general terms, I don't think our team performance was better or worse" (007).

The coach-athlete relationship/performance dynamic was difficult to isolate because, as some coaches noted, the impact of teammate relationships plays a more crucial role in determining the success of the team. For example when asked, "*How do you feel the performance of your athletes relates to the relationship you have with them?*" one coach noted:

I think it's paramount with the women's team especially. You know, but one of the things I always, always say to both teams is that the bottom line is even though I'm the head coach, and it's my program, if you want to put it that way, I tell them that they're playing for each other and that's absolutely the bottom line, that they're not here necessarily to please me. They should be there working for each other and pleasing each other because they're the ones that are wrapped up in this. (012)

Another factor that emerged from coaches comments was the importance of successful athletic performance. As one coach noted, "I think if you are not doing too well, and you don't like your coach, it makes it worse" (014).

A few coaches noted that women would have a harder time playing for a coach that they did not like (014) or respect (005). For instance, when discussing whether or not females needed to like their coach in order to perform well, one coach noted:

I think it's somewhat accurate to tell you the truth, and you could have a group of brilliant girls, but if they don't believe in you, you know, if you can't get a belief system down to them, they'll never play as a team. Now I've had some stud guys and stud girls that, you know, you just don't have that connection with and they still perform, but it's probably more prevalent on the guys side where they're out there, they're doing their job, and whether I like the coach or not, I'm going to you know, we're going to play our guts out and we're going to try to win every game for my other guys. Now on the girls' side, if they don't really like you or respect you, it seems like they don't put in the work as much and they don't respond well to what you're telling them and asking them to do. (003)

Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that men would have no problem playing well if they did not like their coach. One coach noted that while a coach-athlete relationship conflict could have more of an impact on females it would eventually have an impact on men as well:

If the coach is that personality that everybody doesn't like, a women's side will self-destruct; a guys' side I think won't self-destruct. As much as they won't come together and achieve success, they could have achieved if they didn't have to deal with that. So that's where I think the difference is that I see. So yeah, I think guys short-term can deal with it more effectively and they don't self-destruct quite as much, but they never reach the level they could have reached. (008)

The coaches interviewed offered mixed perceptions regarding the relationship between coach-athlete relationships and performance. The success of the team, the competitiveness of the athletes, and the relationships within the team were variables that also needed to be considered. Additionally, coaches did not mention any differences between positive coach-athlete relationships and athletic performance.

Coaches Perceptions of Males and Females Relationship–Performance

Orientation in Teammate Relationships

In addition to assessing the coach–athlete relationship, coaches were also asked to share their perceptions regarding teammate relationships within their men’s and women’s teams. Similar to the coach–athlete relationship, coaches felt that women were more oriented toward feeling accepted and connected with their teammates personally, socially, and athletically, while men were less inclined to seek and establish these connections and primarily sought acceptance with their teammates through athletic performance. Coaches were asked to share their perceptions regarding what successful teammate relationships ‘look like’. While all coaches perceived that it was important for both males and females to work hard and play for each other, the coaches interviewed reported that their female athletes placed a greater value on acceptance and being interpersonally connected with their teammates compared to males. One coach said, “They [women] do more team stuff together, they try to be around. Best player or worst player, they all want to be treated equally” (003). Meanwhile, another coach stated:

[Women] will do things socially as a team, want to do things socially as a team, want to have group activity. In preseason they want to be together in groups doing things. Women talk about team-bonding. I’ve never heard men use the word, you know, they don’t talk about team-bonding. (010)

The coaches interviewed appreciated the greater efforts their female players made to establish cohesion within the group because in particular, coaches noted that female players provided a support system for each other that had greater depth and breadth than that of their men’s teams. While this was seen primarily as a positive, coaches noted that

at times, the strong desire to achieve group cohesion could have the adverse effect of alienating those players who differed from the group:

A lot of times you'll bring in some girls that may not be accepted into your program, and it has nothing to do with them as a soccer player. A lot of times it's off the field garbage. You know it is, "Well this person drinks more than I do" or "This person socializes with this group and we don't really socialize with that group" and it becomes more divisions in the women's side than the men's side can be. You know the men, if he goes off and does that, well that's his own business. (003)

Meanwhile, coaches felt that men were primarily individually and performance oriented. When comparing males and females one coach noted that:

Sometimes women can lean towards wanting to please their coach and their teammates and those types of things and not worry as much about personal glory and satisfaction. And males can, again generalizing, but males have a harder time getting past wanting to do their own... wanting to do the best for themselves and wanting to score, you know, all five goals themselves. (008)

As another coach bluntly noted, regarding the importance of men to feel accepted by their teammates, "guys couldn't care less if they were accepted" (010). Meanwhile another coach, when talking about acceptance, felt that men were more individually motivated while women were more collectively motivated, noting that with the guys, "It's all about me" (006). Finally, another coach felt that men wanted to be pushed so the team could win and they could individually succeed:

They [men] want to be driven to succeed because I think men have that alpha male thing: they want to be the best, they wanna be able to have that chip on their shoulder. So they want somebody to push them to their limits, and maybe even beyond. So they can walk around and say, "Hey, we won. I'm the best men's soccer player on this campus. I'm gonna go on and try out for the Wave" [professional soccer team] (011).

Teammate Relationships and Athletic Performance: Differences

A specific focus of the study was to determine the coaches' perceptions regarding whether or not they felt that positive or negative teammate relationships similarly impacted the performance of their men's and women's teams. A common stereotype in competitive sport is that men can play with people they do not like, women cannot. In order to examine the validity of this stereotype and gain a deeper insight, coaches were asked to share their perceptions of the relationship between athletic performance and teammate relationships. The majority of coaches believed that teammate relationships had a greater impact on the overall performance of their women's team compared to their men's team. However, this difference was almost exclusively related to *negative* teammate relationships. Coaches felt that negative teammate relationships were more likely to impact the performance of their women's team because women were more acceptance and connection-oriented. Therefore, coaches perceived that women were more likely to put energy and time toward a relationship problem which could mitigate their ability to simply focus on athletic performance. Specifically, coaches noted that women would have a harder time separating athletic performance from interpersonal difficulties. As one coach stated:

The women cannot put aside a plague to win. That team will spend most of its energy trying to encompass the plague and becoming stronger as a unit. And the more defiant that plague is, the more defiant and unfocused the women's team becomes, which allows them to digress. (005)

Meanwhile, many coaches felt that males would be more focused on whether or not they trusted a teammate to do his job athletically, rather than whether or not he was liked by his teammates. For instance, one coach stated:

I think men, they don't have to like each other to perform well. I think they have to trust each other on the soccer field. I think on the women's side it is a little bit more because I think socially it's more important to them. You know and I think that arguments, and when women don't get along, I think it can spill over and really disjoint the team... you know drive some girls away... form cliques of other girls, and it's just gonna become a real spotty affair. I think on the men's side, you know those interpersonal relationships aren't as important. (011)

While coaches felt that women had a more multi-dimensional paradigm through which they interpreted their relationship with their coaches, the coaches in this study also felt this to be true in teammate relationships. Therefore, coaches also felt that women would struggle more with playing with people they did not like because their motivation to play and overall experience in sport has more dimensions than simply performing well and winning. One coach said,

Guys who dislike each other can still play well. It's not the case with girls... I think as a coach one of the first things I had to recognize is that girls, many of them are great athletes and love the sport, but for most girls the number one motivation to play is their friends. And if they don't like the kids they're playing with they're less likely to play and play well. (011)

Another coach noted:

I see it all the time and even within our women's team now there's some differentiation. You know, if something's going on and this girl started dating this girl's boyfriend or whatever and it's a bad situation, she gets excluded a little bit... when it comes to the game and when it comes to training even, you know, like the ball doesn't make its way over there as much as maybe it normally would. And I think women just operate that way, if they're mad and they don't like what you've done, it carries over to the field. And with guys, they may not like you, but if they, if you're going to give them a chance to win the game, that's more important to them. (012)

Coaches also noted that men value talent more, which allows them to play with people they don't like. One coach noted that:

Guys will respect talent and will get past that. I'm not gonna hear a guy come in and say he's not passing to me because I've never heard that from a guy. You know he's not passing to me because he doesn't like me. I haven't heard that before on the men's side. (015)

Additionally, another coach stated:

Women, if you try to just incorporate a player that they didn't like within the group, it was hard sometimes. Even if the person possibly, well not possibly, was skill-wise o.k. with the group, I would get, you know, two or three would come up and they just didn't want this person or that person to be part of the core group. Where a guy, if a guy's really good, unless he's just a complete asshole, will go ahead, and you know, if he can do something for your team you'll suck up around him and cover for him even. You know, say he's a one-way player, and he's good enough to create enough havoc that the other guys, obviously as a coach you would talk to the guys around him and tell them to, you know "you gotta cover for him sometimes" but the women would have more difficulty with that. They like a sort of group that gets along, to make it work. In the boys you can have less congeniality within the group and still get a positive result because the purpose is to go out and try to win that day. (002)

Although the majority of coaches felt that negative teammate relationships, specifically the presence of problem players (players that are causing problems or are not well liked by their teammates) would impact the performance of their women's team more, this was not always a direct correlation because the coaches mentioned other variables that influenced this relationship, such as the performance success of the team, the individual ability of the players involved, whether or not the players received special treatment, athletic trust, and the competitiveness of individual players on the team.

Performance Success and Playing Ability of 'Problem' Players

Coaches noted that problem players on men's teams would not be a detriment to the team's performance as long as they were performing well on the field or the team was

winning. However, if the team was not winning, coaches felt that these players could cause significant problems. One coach noted:

You know if the guy's an asshole, but he's still putting the ball in the back of the net and we are winning, everything's kosher. Now if he's an asshole and we are losing, sometimes the shit hits the fan. On the women's side, you know, and you have an asshole and she's doing well and performing, the girls still won't like her. They still won't accept her. Maybe some of the better players on the team will, but she will not be accepted by everybody. (003)

In regard to the playing ability of a problem player, one coach noted, "What is important for the men is their individual performance. What matters is if Jimmy can score goals and help us win. It doesn't matter if Jimmy is an asshole" (010).

Similar to playing ability, coaches noted that what was critical for the men's players was not whether or not they liked each other but whether or not they trusted each other athletically:

I think men, they don't have to like each other to perform well. I think they have to trust each other on the soccer field. The men aren't gonna pass to somebody during a game if they're not any good and if they're gonna lose the ball. (004)

Presence of Special Treatment

In addition to playing ability and overall team success, coaches noted that a problem player could disrupt a men's team if he was allowed to transgress the standards and rules of the team. One coach said, "If the plague is getting special treatment the team will regress" (005). Therefore, for men's teams, the impact of problem players on athletic performance seems to be influenced by the success of a men's team as well as the individual playing ability of the problem players, and whether or not they adhere to the basic standards and rules of the team.

As stated previously, a common stereotype regarding males and females is that guys can play with people they do not like, women cannot. The data in this study suggests that while this stereotype has some credibility, it is overly simplistic, as the coaches noted factors that inhibit men from being able to play with players who are not well liked by their teammates. Specifically, what emerged from the coaches interviewed was that it depends on whether or not the team is performing well, or if the problem player is performing well, and allowed to cross the boundaries established by the team.

Positive Teammate Relationships and Athletic Performance

Another interesting finding was that a few of the coaches noted differences in what drives positive team chemistry. Some coaches noted that winning drives team chemistry more for men's teams, while successful performances do not necessarily drive team chemistry for women's teams. One coach noted that unlike the women's team, the better his men's team performed, the better his players got along (007):

I think with the men it would be playing first, chemistry second. With the women, I still think that that chemistry could happen and lead to better playing, but if playing better happened I don't know that it would drive the team chemistry. (007)

Another coach noted that if a men's team was performing well and a player started to act disgruntled, the leadership of the team would be quick to confront him:

Nobody would ever complain about playing time. Nobody would ever complain about positions on the team. It was taken care of because we had such a good men's program that our captains and upperclassmen, that if somebody said "Jesus why am I not playing like?"... "What do you mean? We're 14—1 right now, shut up, what are you talking about?" You know, success with the men breeds everything. (013)

Meanwhile, when asked about the relationship between athletic success and team chemistry for women the same coach noted, “Their thoughts on playing, it is just an offshoot of it, it is not an end to all means” (013).

Teammate Relationships and Athletic Performance: Similarities

One coach believed that negative and positive teammate relationships affect both men and women equally. When asked to compare the importance of teammate relationships to athletic performance, he said that it was equally important for both his men’s and women’s teams, “I think a team’s a team. They just need to have both: bond, trust each other, and get along” (001). The coach noted that it could be difficult for both men and women to play with people they did not like. The coach stated, “It’s equal. I will say it depends on the day. Doing this 16 years, you have your good days, you have your bad days” (001).

Meanwhile, another coach who had coached college men and women in multiple sports felt that positive teammate relationships helped the performance of both teams equally and negative relationships would eventually affect the women’s and men’s teams in the same way. However, he felt that negative teammate relationships on the women’s team had to be dealt with immediately:

In the short term, if men don’t get along they’re still gonna work together on the field or on the ice or whatever. Long term however, over the course of a season, if they don’t get along you won’t see championship type of... The women, the difference there is that many times in the short term, day to day, week to week, if there’s a huge conflict you gotta solve it then before, my experience was, before you could really do anything on the field or on the ice. So that was the difference; men you have a little bit of a window. You still have to solve it for there to be long term success, but women, if there was any difficult dynamics you have, to me, they can’t get by in the short term, they’ve gotta solve it, they’ve gotta deal with it now.

You have to solve it eventually and that's where I think they are the same, in the big picture, men and women I think are more similar than we give them credit for because it still needs to be solved. (008)

Finally, another coach noted that while he has coached female players who have reported having a difficult time playing with someone on the team that they did not like, he felt that it was more a problem of perception rather than something directly related to performance:

I've heard women say it in the meetings we've had, "Hey she looks, she sees me open and doesn't pass me the ball," those type of things. But I see every game they play too, and I've never seen it that way. I think it is a bit mythical if you will. I think it is a bit maybe the way women see the world or the way women see their relationship. You know, "I don't get along with her so she's not passing me the ball." You know, at the end of the day she really was passing her the ball... You know, I think it almost is a mythical thing. I really don't think it is an issue but I think they perceive it as one, and that can fester and cause problems. (015)

In conclusion, regarding the relationship between teammate relationships and performance, the majority of coaches perceived that women had a more difficult time performing well if they had negative relationships with their teammates. However, most coaches did not necessarily delineate a gender difference in athletic performance if the relationships were positive. In fact, a few coaches believed that performing well was more likely to produce successful relationships with men's teams because their overall competitive orientation was more performance-based.

Team Building Perceptions and Practices

Since research has not compared whether or not coaches differ in both their perceptions and practices of team building, coaches were asked to share their experiences regarding how they incorporated team building in both their programs. Specifically,

coaches were asked, “*How do you build successful teammate relationships with your players?*” Interestingly, despite perceiving that women place a greater priority on connecting as a team and have more difficulty playing with people they do not like, overall the coaches had primarily similar strategies for team building activities and conducted them during their pre-season (2 weeks of practices and scrimmages in August before the season starts for both males and females) for each team. Additionally, in the interest of time and generating a family atmosphere within the two teams, many coaches had the men’s and women’s teams do some team building together.

Another point of interest was that coaches primarily enabled the athletes themselves to conduct the bulk of their team building on their own. Coaches noted that it was important for both teams to simply spend time getting to know and respect each other, as well as learning to respect each other’s differences. Several coaches stated that the time demands of coaching both teams, particularly during the pre-season where they may have up to five or six different practices a day, did not allow them much time to be with their teams outside of their practices. Additionally, coaches did not have much time for structured team building activities once both their seasons and school started.

Nevertheless, some interesting comparisons emerged from the interviews. When coaches initiated group activities that involved working to get to know one another, compared to activities that involved less structure (such as simply hanging out at the coach’s house) or more adventure (such as ropes courses), they found the men to be more resistant. One coach recalled:

When I was only coaching the girls, the first night I used to have them, they did a mixer questionnaire: I’d give out 3 x 5 cards with about 15

questions on it and they had to find one other person that they didn't know in that room and ask them all 15 questions—everything to family, anything that I thought might connect them. And then we'd talk about it afterwards. Guys, I tried it with the guys once, they could care less... They were putting goofy answers down, half of them didn't do it. You know they had no interest in that. They were like, "When do we play?" That's what they care about. (004)

Another example was of a coach who conducted scavenger hunts on campus in an effort to help the incoming players become oriented to where things were, as well as to have his older players befriend the younger players. This coach noted:

It's interesting, the men would rather just be with guys they already know and do it. They're gonna drag their feet all the while anyway, "scavenger hunt? What's this?" But with the women I think its...they're eager. They're like, "Yeah I want to meet one of the younger girls. I want to hang out with her and see what she's all about." So, they're much more accepting of that than I think the men's players are. (012)

A few coaches reported doing activities that involved the female players supporting each other but they chose not to do it with their men's teams. For example, one coach had a big sister program in which a junior or senior befriended and looked out for an incoming player. Alternatively, he had his incoming players silently pick a senior that they would go to for questions and help regarding academic matters. When asked why he did not have this program with his men's team, he said that he never felt it necessary because the men would not admit that they needed help (010).

Lastly, although the majority of coaches did not report significant differences regarding how they structured their team building exercises, coaches still viewed the interpersonal relationships with their women's teams as more important, and a few coaches did report intentionally working harder to establish positive team chemistry with their women's team. For example, one coach stated that he spent more time with his

women's players in the pre-season because he felt that it was more important that they felt connected with him and with their teammates (012). Additionally, when talking about his women's team, another coach noted:

I think they're closer as a team. I think they're closer knit and I think that one of the key ways to succeed... you always hear the joking about women, they hold grudges for a longer period of time than men do. So, we spend a good majority of time nurturing tight bonds and not having little personality differences. (005)

Developing Relationships Versus Hierarchy

The most interesting phenomenon that emerged regarding differences in the relational development of teams was that coaches perceived that in addition to developing interpersonal relationships, men were also developing a performance-based hierarchy that served to lead and guide the team. The following comment acts as a summary for several coaches:

I try to spend more time with the women's players during the pre-season because I feel like the guys are much more interested in connecting with each other and just being like, "Oh, well, this is the guy that's trying to beat me out," or whatever... some of that shuffling of the hierarchy I think is o.k. in the men's team. I don't feel like I have to be quite as hands on, at least initially, with the men's team because there's that whole process of the guys kind of sorting it out and battling a little bit in practice to kind of establish, well here are the leaders in our program and here are the guys that are trying to work their way in and start to develop some of those relationships. But with the women, I have found, too, that if you don't connect with some of those young players especially you can lose them because it's a tough transition for them. Especially for women's players. And it happens with the men on occasion, but with the women you know if you don't give them a sense of belonging and connection right away you can lose those kids. (012)

The concept of a performance-based hierarchy also emerged when coaches discussed the similarities and differences between the leadership characteristics of team

captains. While coaches noted that it was possible for a weaker player to emerge as a team leader on both the men's and women's teams, they regarded a weak player ascending to the leadership role of a men's team as an exceptional phenomenon. When asked whether or not a guy can be a leader without being a good player, one coach said,

I think he can. It's difficult though. You see it more prevalent on the women's team. You don't even have to be the best player, but you're the one that kind of communicates well with everybody. But on the guys side, my three seniors this year are captains. Two of them are starters and one's not. The two that are starters are respected a little bit more because what they do on the field is taken in a higher light than the guy that's not playing, you know, he comes off the bench or doesn't play at all. If he told them to stop drinking one night, "Screw you. You don't even play." (011)

Another coach noted, "Guys are all about hierarchy and the pecking order. And the pecking order is more based on playing ability than it is with the women's team"

(004). Alternatively, one coach stated:

We've had some girls in our program that were ok players but great leaders. Just because they were so in tune with all of the girls and made connections with the bottom player and the top player and was just able to negotiate problems in the team and to help alleviate some of those situations. And, so I think as long as that person is a good communicator and is able to get around and connect and be personable with all of the players, they don't care if she's the best player or not. (012)

One coach simply noted that for men, you do have to rely on the playing ability, whereas for women it's "subject to so many other things" (013). Meanwhile, another coach stated:

The pecking order is arranged differently. If the best player on your team tells somebody to shut up, they're probably going to shut up on the men's team. On the girl's team anyone can say it as long as it's someone that everybody likes. It's different, a different dynamic, their play on the field isn't as much tied into who they are and how they get along with people. (004)

The coaches interviewed felt that women offered a greater support system for each other and made a greater effort to connect with their teammates on an interpersonal level. However, despite a greater desire to connect with each other on and off the field, one drawback that several coaches noted was that at times, women had a harder time letting go of their feelings about their teammates while the men stayed out of their teammates' lives more. When comparing the similarities and differences in his captain meetings, one coach noted that the women would often bring up the reactions the female players had regarding each other's behavior:

Just little things like somebody on the team, they're not happy with the way that person is reacting and they get up in a huff about everybody else's business. Where the men, they are just focused on their own thing. (015)

Another coach noted that, "The female players I think pass judgment a lot easier on players. You know, she hooked up with so and so, and so she's condemned for life now" (003).

Additionally, despite the desire to seek and promote interpersonal connections with their teammates, coaches noted that women had a harder time confronting each other personally if they had any problems with their teammates:

On the guys team they can get in an argument in a training about whether or not a ball was in or out, and afterwards they'll, it's like it didn't happen or they'll talk about it. I think that's a huge difference. The men afterwards will talk about the arguments that they got in. I think women are different. I think first of all they're not going to talk about it, they're going to let it fester for a little bit, and if they do it's gonna turn into a big fight. They will talk to every other girl on the team about that girl they argued with before they actually approach the girl that they had the argument with. (004)

Another coach noted that his female players would not tell a teammate to her face that she is being a jerk because they were friends, while guys would simply say, “You are a jerk and this is the way its got to be, just do it” (014). Therefore, the coaches perceived that men had a greater tolerance for (or perhaps less of an interest in) their teammates behavior, while the women offered more personal support and valued interpersonal connection more, but at times struggled more with teammate behavior and were less likely to personally confront a teammate with whom they had a problem. One coach offered this summary when asked why he felt the guys did not care as much about the behavior of their teammates:

You know, guys just, “that’s his thing” and they’re more open to letting players go their own way. The girls, it’s almost like either you’re a part of the group or you’re not a part of the group. But with guys, you could have a guy that, you know his thing is computers and one guy’s partying, and one guy’s hanging out with girls and one guy is just being a social video game guy and everybody kind of coexists and they’re all happy with that. With the girls it’s almost like they expect a little more team unity, that everybody does it this way, and it’s hard for them to understand that so-and-so likes to do this, you know, and if it’s within the rules, then let her do it. They have a hard time letting that go, they feel like they need to micromanage a little bit more of the social aspects and what’s going on so it’s all fair across the board. (003)

Coaches also perceived that women occasionally would have a harder time separating their personal friendships from athletic competition. For example, when talking about pick-up games in practice in which players select the teams themselves, one coach stated:

One of the problems they [women] have with pick-up soccer is they don’t want to pick. You say, “Annie and Rachel pick the teams” and Annie’s first pick is huge because she has her best friend over there, and yet, she knows her best friend isn’t a great player, so she picks her best friend. Why does she do that? Well because most important to her is her

relationship to her best friend than winning the pick-up game. Never happens with the men. With the men it is like, “Well I got Jimmy.” He doesn’t like Jimmy, but Jimmy is going to win the pick-up game. (010)

Interestingly, this coach noted that his women would tell him that they did not want to pick the teams themselves, they preferred to him pick the teams (010).

Despite this difference associated with personal relationships and athletic performance, coaches noted that women work harder at trying to have the entire team feel connected with each other. Therefore, it would be unfair to simply state that the women consistently value their individual friendships above the collective chemistry of the team.

One coach offered this insight:

Somebody new comes in, it’s a new process to get them into the group and maybe that’s why our women have so many social activities to get that group and accept the new players and that’s a way to get to know them more, accept them more, to give them the chance not to be individuals but be in a group and be more accepting off the field, and then it’s easier to do on the field. (013)

Coachability

Of all perceived differences that emerged between males and females in coach-athlete relationships, coachability was the most pronounced as only *one* coach felt that there was not a difference in coachability. I defined coachability as a construct that includes (but is not limited to) an athlete being inquisitive, teachable, attentive and receptive to instruction, trusting, and willing to change or try new ideas, concepts, and strategies. Coaches summarized the basic difference in coachability by noting that women ask *how* and men ask *why*. As one coach stated when talking about coaching women:

I think the difference of how and why automatically lets women be coachable. They want to know how to do it. They want to know how to do a drill. They want to know how to run a formation that's going to beat the other team. They want to know how to have the proper mechanics to finish a ball better or how to have the proper mechanics to play defense better. The guys are like "Why do we have to run this drill? I don't care if it makes my defense better." (005)

Another coach said, "Women are more likely to follow and are going to question less" (011), while another coach stated the following about his male players:

If you ask them to do something, they'll say, "Why?" in their minds, maybe not out loud, but they'll ask why. Whereas the girls will generally do it: "This is what coach wants us to do, we'll do it." (004)

Other coaches noted that men needed to see immediate benefit from specific coaching instructions; otherwise, they would question more and possibly resort to doing their own thing.

With men, to get them to buy into something you want them to do, it has to work immediately. If I say, "Hey this is what we need to do" and it doesn't work it's harder to get them convinced that that's what they should do. Whereas I think women, they are more willing to say, "How? Alright coach, this is what you want to get done, how do I get that done and how do I do that? How do I perfect this to get it done your way?" (007)

Coaches noted that they valued and appreciated the willingness of their female players to learn and how quickly they implemented what the coaches asked of them. As one coach stated:

I certainly appreciate coaching the women simply because I think they absorb the information a lot faster. I like being able to say to the girls, "This is what we are going to try to do and this is how we're going to do it" and then they switch on. They like that, they want the information. And then when you see them apply it right after you talked about it, you're like, hey! And that to me is rewarding. (012)

Another coach said:

[The women] respond to what you're telling them, and if you tell them to do one thing they'll end up doing it. Like if you tell them, "O.k. every time the ball is here you have to be on the touch line as an outside mid or whatever." You find the women are doing it more often than the men. With the men, it takes a lot more ingraining to get to that point. The women, say it one time and it's almost there you know. You train it a few times and it's a done deal for the most part, more often than the men where you run something, train it, and they're still doing their own thing. I have seen that big difference. (015)

While coaches had a tremendous respect and appreciation for the ability of female athletes to respond positively to coaching, they noted one drawback: coaches felt that at times, because their female athletes followed instructions explicitly, their ability to improvise and create opportunities for themselves outside of the instructions given by the coach was mitigated. Essentially, coaches noted that to be successful in soccer, players need to be able to think for themselves and make adjustments within a dynamic environment that cannot be completely scripted. One coach explained:

My experience is most men think they know better, and so you're trying to mold them and they've got that built in ego. The women are the opposite, sometimes to a fault...The women if you tell them what to do, they'll do it to a fault. So that you've got this guy that thinks maybe too individually and you've got this woman that maybe listens too literally. [In] my experiences, you could tell one of the girls, "Never pass up a shot from the 18 yard line, never pass that up", and she'll be standing on the 18 yard line and there is a wide open teammate 12 feet away. The clear intelligent play is to make the pass and she'll take the shot. And then when you try to explain why you didn't pass, she'll say, "Because you told me never to pass up a shot." So, what I've had to learn with women sometimes is, "Yes, but you also have a brain so what I tell you has to be filtered through that." Where the guy is the opposite. The guy you'll try to tell him something and he wants to filter it out right away because he thinks he has a better idea immediately. (008)

Another coach offered this self-reflection:

I think [women are] coachable in the respect that they respond to what you're trying to teach quicker, but sometimes that becomes a problem. You might say every time the ball is in this situation or close to every time [do this], but maybe there's a time that they need to be creative and not be a robot...[but] they don't do it because it's, "Well you told me to..." "Uh-huh, I did, but you've got to be a little creative here and you could have done this and cut inside." So is it coachable? Coachable in the fact that they're doing what you asked them to do, but like I said, it could backfire on certain situations. (015)

Another coach simply noted that he has the utmost respect for his female players because they do what he asks of them, but he noted that "it comes to a fault, when they do it too much" (010).

The differences in coachability reflected differences in coach-athlete and teammate relationships in that coaches perceived that male athletes were more self-oriented than female athletes who were more collectively-oriented (involving the coach and team within their paradigm of athletic participation).

Driving Versus Leading: Comparisons

One of the goals of the study was to empirically examine a quote by Anson Dorrance (1996) that has received a lot of attention in the soccer community the last 10 years, "You drive men, you lead women" (p.32). Coaches were asked to share their perceptions regarding Dorrance's proclamation, their interpretation of the leading versus driving comparison, and how it applied to their coaching. Nearly every coach was familiar with Dorrance's proclamation and what constituted leading versus driving. The coaches interviewed perceived *driving* to reflect consistent pushing, commanding, and

challenging athletes, while *leading* referred more to guiding, directing, and supporting.

One coach said:

When I think of the word “drive.” I think of having long meetings, watching a ton of tape, doing ridiculous amounts of fitness, always talking tactics with them. When I think of leading them I think of, “Hey, come on, let’s get together. Let’s go through this journey together. I’m gonna try to help you. I’m gonna show you how things need to be done. I’m here to mentor you.” (011)

Overall, coaches agreed with Dorrance’s assessment that women responded better to being led versus driven and noted that they were more likely to drive their male players (see appendix D). One coach expressed the following when comparing how he led versus drove his men’s and women’s teams:

The one thing we did notice a lot with our women is that when we hit that brick wall, if we could go backwards a little bit in what we did and show them more successes, we could then get through the brick wall and keep going forward and continue to get better. Whereas with the guys, I think that when we hit that brick wall, alright, maybe this is as good as our talent is going to get us this year. Now we didn’t necessarily have to go backwards and say this is what we did, this is where we were successful, here is how we got to where we were. We could continue to challenge them and throw new things at them, new ideas at them, things that they couldn’t accomplish and just push them forward, force them to work hard and eventually that would start to click in. We would be able to break down some of those barriers and get to a little bit better playing level. (007)

Another coach stated:

I think men, they want to be driven. They want to be driven to succeed because I think men have that alpha male thing, they want to be the best, they want to have that. They want to be able to have that chip on their shoulder so they want somebody to push them to their limits and maybe even beyond. On the women’s side, I don’t think they want to be driven to that. That’s not important to them. I think if you drive a woman you’re going to drive them to quit. You’re going to drive them to hate you and to hate the game. (004)

Finally, one coach noted, “I think men you have to be firm and give solid direction. And women I think you form consensus and take them with you” (002).

In terms of communication differences, one coach noted that for men:

You can just crack the whip. You can give them an objective and they will go do it. The more straight to the point, and more organized, and the more point blank it is, sometimes the better they will respond to that type of training and communication. (003)

Coaches also noted driving their female players as well; however, they were more cautious about it compared to the men.

We can motivate [the men] them you know more in just get after it and yell at them a little bit and challenge them and push them. And the women, for some of them that worked and for some of them that didn't and you had to be careful on how you did that because there were certain players that would shut down and certain players that would get excited depending on your motivational tactics. (007)

However, nearly every coach stated that at times it is necessary to both lead and drive men and women, and the key is to recognize *what* each individual needs and *when* he or she needs it. Additionally, while coaches noted that they were more inclined to drive their male athletes versus their female athletes, they stated that not all males or females responded to being either driven or led, “Like you say, ‘coach guys this way, coach women that way.’ But there’s 1 in 10 for each of those that are the opposite” (009).

Another coach stated:

If you draw a line across the spectrum, there are crossovers. As a good coach you have to figure out that there are some guys that just melt, they can't handle it. They just can't handle being criticized. And there are some that can. On the women's side, I think it's much more a problem. But with some men you can't do that, I mean you just, they need building up the same as women. And there are some women that will tell you, “Treat me like the guys. Criticize me, I can take it. I can take it.” (010)

Some coaches also noted that they felt they were able to drive their women's players once they had established a positive relationship with them.

Now the key for me is, once I established a real positive relationship with female athletes and with a women's team, then I was able to treat them more similar, more authoritative. And they responded probably more so and better than the males did. So to stay with my example, if I'm being real hard on them and... making them run—once I established a real positive relational aspect with the individuals on the women's team and it was never in question that I cared about them and cared for them and that there was a real cohesive togetherness—then I could move into a more authoritative role with the women's team and they actually responded often times better than the men. The men it was sometimes the opposite. You'd have to be authoritative in the beginning to kind of in some ways, command authority and then based on their responses, sometimes you ended up with a cohesive group and sometimes you didn't. So for me it was harder to pinpoint. (008)

When discussing coaching women, I asked one coach, “What do you mean you have to know, you have to know them in what capacity?” and he said:

You have to know them personally. You have to know what they respond to. Do they respond to being yelled at? Do they need to be coddled? Do they need to be told everything that they did right, and then you have to hide what they did wrong? (004)

As coaches expressed that they needed to identify which athletes responded to being either driven or led, they also noted that they needed to identify the situations in which their teams needed to be either driven or led. Coaches said that while they may drive their male players more, they had to consider what the team needed throughout the season because there would be times when individual players or the team itself would need more support, encouragement, and guidance rather than firm direction. When talking about driving versus leading his teams, one coach offered the following insight, “What I would say is with the men if there are seven [coaching actions] that are driving

and three are leading, one of those three of the leading might be the most important of the whole ten” (008). Finally, coaches also reported making adaptations to their behavior in order to lead more and drive less. As one coach noted when comparing driving versus leading athletes, “I’m becoming more and more convinced that leading is certainly much more beneficial to everyone involved” (012).

However, coaches also noted that the women’s game has been evolving and becoming more competitive, and the female athletes that were joining their programs recently were responding better to being pushed. Consequently, some coaches noted that they adjusted their training environments accordingly:

Basically I said, “No, the women are going to do the same exact thing that the men do: conditioning, practices... I always tell them, “If you need a day or if I’m too hard, then you have to tell me and then we’ll adjust. But as long as I don’t hear anything, we’re going to do the same thing.” So if we condition, and we run hills, and we do stuff like that, they’re going to do the same thing that the guys do. They may do it slower, but they’re going to do the same amount. And they do it. (001)

In conclusion, the majority of coaches reported driving their men more and leading their women more. However, coaches noted that their leader behavior was situation and individual specific and at times it was necessary to do both. Additionally coaches noted growing as a coach and adapting both more leading behaviors as well as driving behaviors with their female athletes in response to the women’s game becoming more competitive.

Competitiveness

Nearly every coach made at least one reference to their male athletes being more competitive than their female athletes. One coach gave a definition of competitiveness which serves as a framework for how they interpreted this concept:

...What you bring to the table day in and day out and how you bring it to the table, your willingness to work, your willingness to win—to do everything in your power to win or lose, to play your best, to fight for everything that you're going to get in the game of soccer. (003)

The differences in competitiveness among men's and women's teams were primarily focused around comments involving the coaches' training environment, where coaches perceived that their men's players were more consistently competitive with each other in practices. When asked, *“Do you think the women or men are more competitive?”* one coach responded:

Yeah, [in] every little game in practice or before practice they're doing something really competitive, whereas the women are a lot more social before practice and even during practice. I have to make the games competitive to drive them, and motivate them, and get them going. Otherwise, I think they would be competitive to an extent but I don't think they'd be, “Hey we have to win this game” and be the most driven players they can be. I think the men are more competitive. (015)

Meanwhile, regarding the competition within their training environments one coach stated:

I think the biggest, single-most thing that I appreciate about the men is that in the training environment they're switched on...Every single day is competitive and they're just in there battling. I really enjoy that. The women have their days that they do that, but it fluctuates...If half the group is having a bad day, no matter what you do as a coach, you're not going to be able to massage the session into an ultra-competitive environment because it's just not going to happen. It just can't. And so with the guys I really value that. I like being able to go and know every

day that they're going to show up and they're going to battle and really be switched on to playing soccer. (012)

Another coach said:

I mean just trying to get it [competitiveness] out of [the women] my first few years was hard, even at practice to get them to go at each other and not be afraid if you tweak an ankle here or there. If you hit one of your teammate's ankles it's not that big of a deal. To play aggressive against each other was hard to get them to do. (014)

The differences in competitiveness were specific to training. Coaches expressed that they wanted their women's players to consistently bring a strong desire to compete hard, "not just on game-day but when they're playing keep away in practice" (009). Interestingly, coaches did not mention differences between the competitiveness of their male and female players during their games (competition with other schools). The differences between competitiveness in games versus training may be explained by the relationship–performance orientation differences described earlier. Men may compete harder in practice because they are more individually oriented and view acceptance with their coaches and teammates as being achieved more through their performance than through their relationships. The women may have a harder time making their teammates look bad or potentially hurting them through aggressive play during practice because they are more oriented toward collectivity and acceptance. These inhibitions are removed when playing against other teams because they are not motivated to connect with and be accepted by their opponents, and like the men, they are also heavily motivated to perform well during games. Coaches also stated that they perceived the gender differences in competitiveness to decrease in comparing women to men at higher levels of competition (NCAA Division I versus NCAA Division III).

Competitiveness: Comparing Levels of Collegiate Competition

Several coaches made references to the evolution of the women's game of soccer, noting that the women's game, in terms of the skill and competitiveness of the players, had improved significantly in the last 5 years. While coaches still expressed significant differences in competitiveness in NCAA Division III athletes, they perceived these differences to be gradually decreasing, and felt that the women's game had evolved to the point where the differences were less pronounced among NCAA Division I athletes. As one coach stated, "I think the women's game is just behind the men's game right now when you talk about the competitive drive in the Division III environment" (006). Another coach commented when discussing his women's program relative to other divisions:

It's hard to get, sometimes, women to compete hard against each other. I never had women scuffle at practice. I only had them for 5 years, mind you, but there's always a practice somewhere along the line where you sort of have to separate somebody on the men's side, not because they don't like their teammate, but [because] they don't like the last 30 seconds of what happened... The boys will get angry at each other in practice, and most of it in a good way. Where women are so willing to be a part of the group or the consensus that they don't want to stand out and kick your butt in a drill because "I'm making her look bad." It probably gets a little easier as you go up levels of divisions, but in Division III, and private liberal arts colleges, you don't have many girls that just kick ass and take names. You want a kid like that. You'd like two or three, and then they could bring the rest of them up. It's hard to get your team leaders to do that, to just destroy the other player at practice, like you would want them to. (002)

Another coach said:

I know I've seen Division I programs where it's not the case, you know, the girls are just as scrappy and competitive in practice as the guys are, sometimes even more. The level of players that I'm working with right now, I would say the guys are more competitive day in and day out in

practice. The girls are not just going through the motions but they don't want to hurt each other. They lay off in situations where in a game they'd go all out. (003)

Despite the notion of the women's game being behind the men's game, coaches noted that the differences were becoming smaller. Being involved in coaching and recruiting both male and female athletes, which involves significant time watching youth soccer and interacting with youth coaches, these coaches were in a unique position to witness the transformation of the women's game and how it compares to the men's game. Coaches did not make any references to the men's game evolving and male athletes becoming more competitive, yet noted that the women's game was becoming more competitive overall. When asked, "*What differentiates those that want it or can take it from those that can't?*" one coach described the recent evolution he has noticed in his women's players:

It's interesting. I think part of it is culturally we're starting to see a bit of a change where women are put into those [competitive] situations more, where the demands are just different. I think that up until probably 5 years ago in my experience dealing with female athletes,... it just wasn't accepted that female soccer at least at the Division III level was any good. I think now we're in a different environment where a lot of the girls that are coming into my program are just much more liberated, or head strong, or just are competitive as people, and I think that's been a shift in our culture. I think those kids are just coming out of environments where they're going head to head with men in their school...and their perception is just, "You know what? I can do anything that a men's player can do. Maybe not as fast, maybe not as dynamically"... I think that they want to be treated like the male athletes that we have. (012)

As coaches were discussing the evolution of the women's game, they stated that some of their women's players were coming from training environments in their high school and club programs that developed competitiveness, while others were not.

Alternatively, they did not make this distinction with their men's players. When asked,

"Are the guys coming from a similar training environment?" one coach said:

[It's] not that they're coming from a similar training environment, but there's always that physicalness: there's always that competitiveness, that aggressiveness built into almost all guys. The aggressiveness and the physicalness sometimes isn't built into all the girls at the Division III level. (002)

One coach who had coached women's college soccer for 27 years commented that while the women's game was evolving and becoming more competitive, the increase in NCAA Division I and II programs near his school was pulling away many of the most competitive female players. "We're getting a different kind of crowd and that number up top is shrinking a bit and the middle group is getting bigger" (013).

However, while the majority of coaches felt that their men's players were more competitive in training (although, as stated, they acknowledged that this gap was decreasing), two coaches did not feel that there was a difference in competitiveness. One coach stated simply, "I don't think there is that big of a difference. If the kid is competitive and you're a male or female, because I've had them on both teams, they're going to compete" (006). The other coach who did not feel there was a difference in competitiveness, felt that competitiveness of his players was more a function of the environment he established for both programs:

I think a lot of that comes from the team atmosphere, team environment again. If the environment is competitiveness on the field, cross the line with your boots. Off the field we can be friends you know. It's the environment. (005)

Therefore, the differences that exist between individual players and the differences in the environments they come from, as well as the environments that the

coaches establish within their programs, are important variables that emerged from the study. While coaches felt that overall their male athletes were more competitive they perceived more similarities at higher levels of competition and also noted that women being trained in environments fostering competition held similar levels of competitiveness to men. Based on the thoughts shared by these coaches it is too simplistic to just say that men are more competitive than women. Instead, differences may be more specific to training environment and level of competition.

Feedback

Comments regarding feedback were primarily focused around criticism, praise, and instruction behaviors. Several coaches felt that their female players wanted and needed more feedback, specifically more instruction and positive reinforcement. Coaches perceived that females wanted or needed more feedback compared to the men for the following reasons: stronger desire to know *how* do to things (skills, techniques, tactics etc.), confidence (women seek more assurance because they are less confident), and a stronger desire to please and talk with their coach. However, coaches also said that while men were more confident, this confidence could allow male players to perceive that they did not 'need' much coaching. Additionally, coaches noted that males could have too much of an ego or be too immature to ask for assistance. On the other hand, in regards to female wanting more feedback, one coach noted:

They'll come in and they'll say, "Coach I really need...how can I get a better first touch?" or "How can I do this because I really want to be able to do this better." And if you sit and talk with them...actually what I think they're looking for is for you to say, "You don't have a problem with it, you're just fine." So you end up telling them, "You can do it, you just

have to believe in yourself.” Then once they have that confidence, now their play goes up. (001)

When asked, “Why do you think that female athletes need more feedback?”

another coach stated:

I think some of them are less certain. It usually works the other way too. This is my perspective through 5 years, that you can get a fairly accomplished women’s player that doesn’t have confidence in her own abilities sometimes. For whatever reason they need more reassurance. Where [as] a young man who really has lesser skills is usually more assured even though they don’t have the toolbox to go with their assurance. (002)

Another coach noted the following regarding the need to give the women more positive feedback and encouragement:

A lot of guys will just do the job and go home, where a lot of the girls they want that pat on the back. They want that extra something, for playing. And as a reward for playing, and if they do well, you have to let them know they did well. With the guys, you give them a thumbs-up and they’re good to go. They don’t really need a pat on the back; they don’t need to have a verbal reminder. (004)

In regards to feedback and the desire to please their coaches, one coach said:

I think girls put a lot more attention into trying to please the coaching staff—assistant coaches and myself—[and] trying to please their teammates. And if they’re not getting a lot of feedback or individual feedback from the coaches or me that they are doing things well or they need to improve in this area, I think that impacts them at a greater level because then they step on the field and they, [say] “Am I doing things right? Am I pleasing the coach?” You know, “What do I need to do?” (006)

In regards to how the feedback coaches gave their women’s players differed from the feedback they gave their men’s players, the biggest difference that emerged was in how coaches delivered criticism to their players. The majority of coaches noted that they were more likely to yell at their men’s players and criticize a male in front of his

teammates. However, coaches stated that, often times they would not criticize a female as harshly or individually. The following interchange is an example of this dynamic:

With men you can blow up on them and call them out, and they will get over it very quickly and continue to play. Whereas sometimes with women's players—and I think again it's the way you communicate that message—if you're yelling and it's just total negative instruction that's coming out of your mouth, and there's no sort of constructive criticism paired along with it, then women won't react to that. (012)

Why do you think that is, that the women just won't react to that?

I don't know. I think women want information. They want to be given ideas about how to fix the problem. They already know they messed up. They already know they made a mistake. They're not so much bothered by that. If you call them out on it and don't give them a way to fix it, then they're bothered by it and they won't react to that. They'll just take it personally rather than applying it to their game and trying to make themselves better. They just take it as a personal attack rather than constructive education. (012)

And for the men it is...?

You know men. They'll say, "Well that guy's an asshole but I'll try it." Then they'll go on and try to do their business. Or guys will get angry and they'll just push harder and try to prove you wrong, and say, "Well, he doesn't know what he's talking about I'm going to do it better or I'll try it," or whatever. Guys just take that information and it fuels them a different way than women. If you're just shouting something, and blowing them up, and you're angry, guys will react differently to that and girls will just shutdown. (012)

Several coaches mentioned these differences when criticizing their players.

Coaches perceived that occasionally they *had* to call a male out in front of his teammates in order to keep the respect of his players and keep the men in line. Alternatively, coaches perceived that singling out a female player would often lead to other players offering support to her because they would regard the coach's criticism as unfair and unnecessarily isolating her from the group. One coach explained:

In women, sometimes if you correct someone hard with that group situation, the other women in the group want to comfort the person that is doing something wrong. So you have to be careful, [or they will ask], "Why are you so hard on her? She's trying the best she can." It's not that I've ever, just chewed somebody's, you know. I had some understanding of treating it differently, but there's much more consensus of women to run to keep that woman in the group, where a guy says, "Well this guy needs to be straightened out if we want to be good, so I'm glad coach said something." And if you don't sit and bite frequently in a boys' practice if things are going wrong, the boys will take that as a sign of either weakness or lack of knowledge I think. (002)

Another coach offered a similar comment:

In the men's team, you're more likely to be critical individually and not worry about it as much. [You] turn around and say, "You need to shape up and make some tackles here. I see you, you're deliberately avoiding tackling here and I don't like it. And the rest of you better make a note of it as well." And that individual could take it in the men; a female there would be... there'll be interruptions in your team because you're picking somebody out and they would bristle. They would think you're attacking one of them. With the men, some of them would go, "I'm glad he said that," and it makes that guy respond a little bit as well because he might be the next one that's going to be singled out...I think with men that's not a problem. (010)

Additionally, another coach stated:

You can point out mistakes a lot easier [to men] without having to worry about that player's feelings, about the way you addressed it, or the way you brought it out. The guys can be a little more open and accepting of feelings, and the way you critique their performances. (003)

Coaches perceived that women would internalize criticism more and were more careful with how and when they delivered criticism to their players. Rather than singling out their women's players, coaches noted that they would often challenge or criticize the women's team as a whole in an effort to move the entire group together.

...Women are perceived to be treated differently, with maybe more respect than men are, and maybe that's why I do it as well. I will yell at the women's team as a whole though. I hate to use the word yell, it doesn't sound right when it comes out of my mouth, yell. But I will criticize and I'll show... emotion I guess is a better word. Yeah, I'll show emotion as I

address a women's team as a whole. I mean if they come out and are under-performing, not representing themselves well, those are the type of things that make me upset. You come out and you can get beat by a better team, but if you don't represent yourself well, you're not representing your teammates well through hard work, I'm going let you know about it. I'm going call you out on that as a team. (011)

Interestingly, some coaches noted that they had begun to challenge themselves to consider whether or not they should be treating both their male and female athletes similarly in regards to providing feedback that involved criticism. When talking about criticizing male and female players, I asked one coach, "*How would they look different?*" and he replied:

I think, in general, because... in my own mind I'm supposed to think that guys can handle it more. I'm going to be harder on them. I'm going to yell at them more. I'm going to call them out on the carpet more. I'm going to be more confrontational. I'm going to be more negative, more critical. With the girls, in the same sort of framework of I'm yelling at them, I might be less confrontational, less specific in my criticism. And I'm not sure if that's right or wrong. That's just the nature of it. I probably brought my preconceived notions in. (008)

Meanwhile, another coach offered this personal reflection:

Well, for a while I thought, "I can just coach the guys harder and do these other things," and in the last couple of years I started to think, "You know what, it's sloppy coaching to do that." I'm letting myself get emotional in the moment and so I'm doing things that are probably counter-productive. But the guys let me get away with it because you know, they're guys, they're more confident. It's probably a lot more productive to treat them in the same way that I would treat the women players and take a little less emotional tone when I'm telling them things that are going to be critical or that they can perceive as critical...because they'll get more out of what I'm saying. (009)

Other coaches reported making positive changes in how they criticized their players. For example, one coach stated, "One thing on the men's side that I started to get away from a little bit was calling people out in front of everybody" (011).

In conclusion, coaches felt that “in general women need and want a lot of feedback” (002). Coaches reported giving more positive feedback to their female players because they perceived that the women needed and wanted more positive feedback. Coaches also noted that women were motivated to learn how to accomplish the goals and tasks set out by their coaches and respond well to constructive criticism. However, coaches said that the women would not respond well to undifferentiated anger or frustration, while the men could ‘handle it’ and possibly benefit from it (at least as it relates to their effort or athletic performance). Consequently, the coaches reported ‘yelling’ more at their men’s players. Nevertheless, some coaches stated that they were beginning to feel that both males and females should be coached similarly with respect to criticism and feedback. Additionally, coaches also recognized the importance of taking individual differences into account when communicating with their athletes as they should not assume that all men or all women would respond similarly. As one coach said:

Emotionally I’ve found that 90% of the men’s players can all handle it if I critique you [them] positive[ly] or negative[ly]. Sometimes the women’s side is more of a 50–50 balance between the players that can take that public criticism to learn and then the people that need to have the individual, off-to-the-side communication. (003)

Coaching the Game

Despite the significant relational and orientation differences mentioned, coaches did not perceive many differences in how they coached their male and female players. Specifically, coaches did not see many differences in regards to the training, instruction, direction, and exercises they administered to their players but expressed differences in how they communicated with males and females (see appendix D). Coaches made a

distinction between the relational elements of coaching and the information and instruction they provided. For example, when asked whether or not he coached his men's and women's teams similarly or differently, one coach replied, "I think the relationships you have with them are somewhat different. As far as the nuts and bolts of practice, it's the same" (002). Meanwhile, another coach said:

It's more of a mental switch for me going from the men to women, because the information is basically the same that you want to get across—the coaching points, the aspects. It's how you deliver those things and the timing of those points...that are different between men and women. (003)

Additionally, a third coach commented:

I think that was one of the hard things at practice every day—that one follows the other regardless which way you flip them. And even though they need the same training, and the time, and technical and tactical development of wherever they're at, the way you would address both of them is pretty different. (002)

When asked, "*If someone were to ask you, is coaching males and females different, what would you say?*" one coach offered the following statement that not only summarizes the distinction between communication and information, but captures the primary factors the coaches shared regarding coaching and relating to their athletes:

I would say when I first started coaching I saw there were huge differences. Now and just where I'm at, I'm starting to see more and more similarities, just in the way that you manage players, in the way you structure your expectations for players. I think it's growing more and more similar, and I don't know if that's a change in just the competitive level of Division III athletics on the men's and women's side or, or what it is. But I definitely feel like they're getting closer to the same point than they are going different directions, if that makes sense. The biggest difference lies in the relationships. Otherwise, the way you coach those players, the information you give them, how challenging the environment is, it's the same. It's the same thing and they want that. But the way you

communicate with them and the way you connect with them is much, much different. (012)

This quote can be seen as a summary of the coaches' perspective on coaching and relating to their male and female players. Coaches perceive similarities regarding training, instruction, and expectations but acknowledge differences in how this information is communicated and how connections are established within the coach–athlete relationship.

Aside from the relational and orientation differences discussed, the greatest difference that coaches noted was simply the physical differences (speed, size, and strength) between men and women and how these differences affected the way the game was played—and occasionally how they needed to coach their teams. One coach said:

I think personally that the biggest difference between dealing with men and women is just the speed of how things are done. The guys play at a much faster level athletically than the women do, and as a coach, it was o.k. if I had the women first, you know the level was ok. But if I had the guys first and the training sessions are fast, fast, fast, then you get to the women and they are doing the exact same thing maybe, but just the speed of how quickly it gets done, whether it be just running a drill or whether it be actual playing you know, with the ball at your feet, may not be as quick. And as a coach coming from a men's to a women's [training] you had to make sure that you reminded yourself consistently, "I have the women's team here, don't expect it to be done quite as quickly"...just because physically they are not capable of doing it that quickly. (007)

Another coach who had coached men's and women's college soccer for 17 years said:

The first year I am doing both, I'm like, "the women just don't get it." Then you learn, it's not that they don't get it, they just don't do it as fast. So, it's a different game. Like I said, you give them the same drills, it's just going to happen differently. (001)

Coaches did note that while they primarily did the same activities they occasionally had to “coach to the differences” (008). For example, one coach said:

If I put out an exercise where they have to sprint a 50-yard sprint to the line and back, I’m not going to put the same time restriction on the women as I am on the men. I think that’s kind of an obvious one, right? So that’s how it’s different. So when anyone says “treat them the same,” I come back with that right away, “Well they can’t do the same thing.” Women can’t hit a 50-yard, 60-yard driven ball. Most women can’t. If they could, it would be great. But my men can. So tactically I can coach them differently, so my tactical expectations are different. My physical expectations are different. (011)

In addition to the physical differences between males and females coaches put an emphasis on recognizing what their individual athletes and teams needed, acknowledging that situations were often unique. One coach expressed how his coaching decisions varied depending on the context (individual, gender, etc),

...From an athletic standpoint, there are times that it doesn’t change, it is what it is, I’m going to teach a kid to shoot the same, I’m going to teach a kid to pass the same way. There are other times where I’m going to put there gender in front of the word athlete. This is a male athlete so I’m going to treat this person a little differently than a female athlete. And then there are times where I’m going to put the word person in front of both of them, so regardless of whether they are a male athlete or not I’m going to treat them as a person should be treated. So there are times where I’m going to treat them different. But I think to say males and females are just totally different and you’ve got to coach them different is too much of a generalization. (008)

Culture

Several coaches believed that American culture socializes males and females differently and these differences are manifested in males’ and females’ experiences in sport. The coaches interviewed felt that cultural differences influenced varying

perceptions of social responsibility and social support, and these social expectations influenced their athletes' behavior on and off the field:

I think that the women really need to trust one another. I do really believe that it's a lot of societal norms that are put on women that make them... Whether or not they're more self-conscious than men I suppose is a whole other study for you, but I do think there are more societal norms that are put on women as far as weight, appearance, how they're supposed to conduct themselves, how they're supposed to talk. That puts pressure on them in social settings and the soccer team is a social setting. It really is at least 90% of the time, right? Traveling, that's a social setting. When we eat together as a team that's a social setting. So if girls can't trust each other you know I don't think that they're going to perform well together. But on the men's side I think that there might not be as many social norms, they might not have as many pressures or if they do, they deal with them differently. (011)

Interestingly, coaches noted that these cultural differences impacted their ability to create an intensely competitive training environment with their women's team. One coach explained:

One thing I think we battle as coaches of female athletes is... society. You know society has told women that, "You're not supposed to push. You're not supposed to shove. It's not lady-like. You're not supposed to sweat. You're not supposed to get dirty and work really hard. And guys aren't supposed to yell at you." On the other hand boys are thought to be a little more rough when they're growing up. They play with trucks. They're not out there, most guys at least aren't, brushing little doll's hair and stuff like that, and being really gentle. So I think the hard thing is... as a women's coach one of the challenges we face is how in training do we create that intense atmosphere so a girl in training will feel free to be physical and push another girl, slide into another girl. They should be able to steal the ball from another girl, and then after training they can still be friends. (012)

Other coaches recognized this dynamic between trying to push their female players and how pushing female athletes might be contrary to the social expectations women encounter:

We're fighting to get them to be tougher with each other, but in the meantime their meeting and they're having social functions and they're making friends. There's my new friend over there. Am I going to give her one or am I going to lay off a bit? I'm probably going to lay off a bit. Is that right? I don't know, but that's the way it is. (013)

When talking about how the male athletes were more confident individually when they played, I asked one coach to speculate on how that develops. He replied:

I think it is just our American culture to some degree. You know men are...their parents I think nurture them to be tougher and just work through it. And women, women always enjoy talking about it regardless, even when they're sure of something. The communication patterns are much more different, much more consensus oriented. Where a male team, if you chose to approach it this way, you could probably scream and yell and just tell them what it is they're going to do. (002)

Another socialization difference that coaches noted was how their players would express their need for affection and support, particularly when having conflict with their coach. When talking about a potential coach-athlete conflict one coach noted that a male would feel inhibited to inform his peers that he was upset because the coach really yelled at him. However, he added, "It seemed like for the women to go back and spill their guts, that was socially, that was o.k." (007). One coach offered the following statement which explains how many of the coaches interpreted this phenomenon:

I think in our culture women are much less prideful when it comes to acknowledging their need for respect and friendship, and so they value that. They don't have any problem expressing that as a need...Our culture needs to define men as more tough and "handle it on your own" and "don't cry" and "you don't need a hug" and those types of things. So I think that with guys our culture defines it like that so they've grown up in a culture that's told them this is kind of how you're supposed to be, and this is how you're supposed to learn, and this is how you're supposed to interact with other men, and that type of thing. (008)

In regards to how males and females are socialized within training environments coaches acknowledged that women's athletics is becoming more competitive and the

female athletes who come from competitive training environments want a training environment that is more intense and challenging. Nevertheless, coaches still made a distinction between women's players who were brought up in competitive athletic environments similar to men versus those who were not. Coaches felt that their men's players would be more equally competitive regardless of their training background while the female players who came from more competitive club and high school teams were significantly more competitive than those who did not. One coach of a successful program (in terms of winning a large percentage of their games) noted this distinction between his players, the majority of whom came from highly competitive environments, and other female athletes:

I've found it to be out of the norm to be able to push those girls than in the norm and I've dealt with a pretty large portion of female athletes. I think it's probably fair to say, yeah, some of them want it, [a highly competitive environment] but most probably don't. (012)

Coaching Both Men's and Women's Teams Concurrently

While coaches stated they enjoyed coaching both their men's and women's teams, all the coaches interviewed commented that the logistics of running both programs was stressful. Coaches noted difficulties in travel, scheduling common opponents, recruiting, and managing budgets. However, the biggest frustration identified by the coaches was that they simply did not have enough time to give each program the full attention it deserved.

Time and Training Constraints

Several coaches discussed the difficulties involved in having enough time to train and operate their programs optimally, noting in particular the inability to spend time with

individual players, “Because I’m doing both teams it’s more of a team thing [approach] than an individual thing [approach] because I really don’t have time to spend individually with players” (001). Another coach said, “I have 3 hours to try and have contact with two teams. That’s absolutely impossible” (011). Meanwhile, another coach stated:

It got increasingly hard and difficult to have enough time especially during the school year. Not so much the pre-season, but once the school year started, to have enough daylight hours since we don’t have lit fields, to devote enough energy and time to both teams, in a way that I would like to coach both teams. (002)

Unfortunately, many coaches felt that having to coach both teams negatively affected the experience of their players. One coach recalled, “This group of girls definitely suffered from my not being able to give them undivided attention” (004). When asked, “*What does a successful coach–athlete relationship look like with your male and female players?*” one coach responded:

I think that’s an area where personally I fall short a little bit because of the time constraints. .. I think it affects the women’s program more because I don’t think they get the personal relationship and contact from the guy who is in charge that I think they would prefer. The amount of individual conversations and things like that would help them with their confidence and their play. So I think that’s a short coming just because of all the other things without a full-time assistant [to help] and paperwork, and all that stuff that’s just gotta be done. I think that cuts into personal attention. (006)

Another coach said:

You want to be able to spend time with your team kind of doing some of the healing or celebrating with them and you can’t when you are coaching both teams because you’re getting ready for the next one. Other than a couple of words right after the game you don’t get that time, and so that’s a big problem in my mind. Having enough time to do video review with your teams appropriately, um to do outside activities with the team, team building, all those things. (012)

Coaches noted being in a difficult position and expressed the frustration involved with having to decide how to best manage their situation. “You want to do what is best for both teams, but sometimes it just isn’t there, so you have to pick and choose” (014). Despite the difficulties associated with leading both programs the coaches reported enjoying coaching both teams. Coaches seemed to genuinely embrace the challenge of connecting with both male and female athletes and helping them grow and develop as people.

Enjoyment and Gratification

Towards the end of the interview coaches were asked, “*Have you enjoyed coaching one of your programs more than the other?*” The majority of coaches mentioned that they enjoyed aspects of coaching both programs while three coaches reported enjoying coaching their women’s team more. Coaches made comments such as, “I really enjoy them both” (015), “I think for me, each one gives a release to the other” (014), “At times different, but I enjoy both” (001), and “It’s been a learning experience for me. I enjoy aspects of both” (004), while another coach noted that, “I’ve always answered that by the fact that I enjoyed the group as a group. There have been some bad women’s groups and some bad men’s groups” (010). Meanwhile, one coach noted that, “it changes year to year with the personalities that I get on the team” (003). Finally, one coach said, “I always enjoy the team. I’m just happy in general if we put forth a good effort and we succeed” (013).

The coaches who elaborated on what they enjoyed differently about coaching each team talked about their appreciation for the level of play and competitiveness of the

men's game and their appreciation for the relationships they developed with their women's players. One coach explained:

I like the men because in my situation here the men play a better brand of soccer. It's more exciting to watch. At times it's a faster game, it's more competitive. And I can really let my competitive juices fly out with the men. On the women's side I enjoy it because of the personal relationships, I enjoy it because the girls laugh more, they joke more with one another... [they are] more pleasant to be around before the game. When you're waiting, there's always that dead time on the bus, you know that half hour before they can get dressed for the games. I would much rather hang out with the girl's team because there's just going to be more things that I will enjoy talking to them about actually. With the guys team, I'm so removed from that age. I'm not going to talk FIFA with them. I don't play videogames. What can I talk to them about other than soccer really? With the women, it just seems that there are more things that we can talk about, such as my baby that's coming. (004)

Another coach who said that, "by and large I enjoy both" (012), noted that he had recently gotten more enjoyment from coaching his women's program:

I guess I've just always been a guy that's valued relationships and I just found that developing those relationships with the women's team [has] just been a little more gratifying more recently than working with the men's team. I have great relationships with some of the men's players, but just the environment that we have with the women's team right now, it's just a really healthy one, I feel. (012)

Finally, another coach who reported enjoying both said:

From a success standpoint, I've enjoyed coaching the men. The last couple years I really have taken enjoyment in coaching our women's team. The last 2 years I'm noticing... my wife has noticed that I kind of have taken enjoyment in the women's drive to be accepted. They're a lot more interested in interacting with the coach than the guys are, and I've enjoyed that. I wish the guys would interact with me more. (006)

Of the three coaches who reported that they enjoyed coaching their women's team more, they expressed their appreciation for being more connected with them personally.

As one coach noted:

You know, maybe it's for selfish reasons because you hear more of their success stories. Like they will email: "Hey I did really well on this or that" and "I got a job interview", "I did really well on that test that we've been studying for for 3 weeks." And you just see those joys and successes as opposed to the guys. They'll coast through, they'll do what they need to do. They'll get by. (005)

The second coach who reported enjoying his women's team more stated:

I've enjoyed being on the sidelines for the men's team more because they play at so much of a higher level. In the last year I would say the men's team, both teams, were just a little below 500 and the men's team vastly underperformed. The women's team, that was an improvement for them and I really enjoyed coaching the women's team. And not just the soccer. I really enjoyed being around them as individuals so much more than the guys team. But in terms of what I enjoy, I would probably say that I enjoy coaching the women's team more. (009)

Finally, the third coach said:

I enjoyed coaching the women more... With men, to get them to buy into something you want them to do, it has to work immediately. If I say, "Hey, this is what you need to do", and it doesn't work, it's harder to get them convinced that that's what they should do... Whereas I think with women, they are more willing to say, "How? Alright coach, this is what you want to get done, how do I get that done?"... With the women, you know, they seem to be more willing to learn how to get what you want accomplished, accomplished. Whereas the men want that immediate satisfaction. (007)

The majority of coaches did not mention a preference between coaching males and females. Coaches enjoyed the different aspects of coaching their men's and women's teams and noted that each year each team was different. The coaches who elaborated on the differences as well as the three coaches who preferred coaching the women noted enjoying the relationships that they were able to develop with their women's players and appreciated that the women were more receptive and responsive to their coaching.

These thoughts align with some of the primary findings of the study which demonstrate that the coaches interviewed perceived their female players to be more

coachable and relationship-oriented than their male players. The following chapter addresses the implications and contributions of these findings, discusses the strengths and limitations of the study, and looks toward the future.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

This chapter reviews and interprets the results, integrates the findings with other research, and discusses the strengths, limitations, and implications of the study. The chapter also identifies possibilities for future research on male and female coach–athlete and teammate relationships. The chapter discusses the results as they relate to the five primary research questions supporting the study and provides additional insight and interpretation into the three largest components of the study: competitive orientation, coaching, and leadership. Figures were developed in each of these areas to further explain and discuss the results and they provide a greater understanding of how specific concepts and characteristics work together to explain the key findings of the study. With coaches’ perceptions of males and females relationship–performance orientations in mind, the chapter also analyzes a recent theoretical perspective with which to view male and female orientations and preferences for leadership in sport. Finally, the chapter also interprets the experiences and perceptions of the coaches within a symbolic interactionist paradigm in an attempt to provide an alternative approach in viewing the coach–athlete relationship.

Discussing Qualities of Successful Coach–Athlete Relationships

Coaches reported that effective communication, honesty and openness, caring, consistency, and respect are the hallmarks of successful relationships (Table 3). These characteristics have been identified in other studies involving collegiate coaches (Gould et al. 1999; Gould et al. 2002; LaVoi, 2007; Rhind and Jowett, 2010). Since research has not analyzed the perceptions of dual-role coaches the results of the study add additional

context and application to previous work with collegiate coaches and strengthens our overall understanding of the characteristics of successful coach–athlete relationships.

Table 3.

Qualities of Successful Coach–athlete Relationships

Theme	Example
Effective communication	“They have to listen to me and I have to listen to them. This isn’t a one-way street.” (005)
Honesty and openness	“It all starts with honesty. I never tell them what they want to hear. And I can tell you that short term there are often strong reactions against that, but long term 100% of those kids will come back and thank me for that.” (004)
Caring	“I think the biggest thing that I need to do is make sure that I spend time with each and every one of my athletes. That I make a personal connection.” (011)
Consistency	“To me it’s being yourself, number one, and number two, trying to be yourself consistently day after day.” (007).

Despite the differences perceived regarding the importance of relationships the coaches did not report these qualities to be *more* important in coach–athlete relationships with females, suggesting that while males may not need or want to talk to their coaches as much as females they still they still need the same *qualities* in their relationships. The feelings of the coaches are consistent with LaVoi’s (2007) research with college athletes which demonstrated that males and females described similar qualities in successful coach–athlete relationships although females described the qualities in more detail.

While replicating the findings of other studies is useful, identifying the qualities is not as illuminating as understanding how they are developed within the coach–athlete

dyad. Additionally, quality identification does not illustrate the *motivation* associated with developing successful coach–athlete relationships. This study incorporated the impact of coach–athlete and teammate relationships upon competitive orientation to expand beyond quality identification and explore motivational strategies of coaches and athletes.

The Relationship–Performance Orientation Construct

The relationship–performance orientation construct was developed to explain coaches’ specific perceptions of male and female competitive orientation and it serves as a significant contribution of this study. It provides a construct to interpret and understand the varying levels of impact and importance that coach–athlete and teammate relationships and athletic performance have upon an athlete’s experience in sport. The relationship–performance orientation construct also provides a useful and needed framework in which to interpret the perceptions and experiences of coaches and provides a tool in which to further examine coach–athlete and teammate relationships. The depth and breadth of information gathered in the interviews helps to transcend predominant stereotypes, and perhaps even assumptions associated with male and female athletes, producing a richer and more multi-faceted understanding of the possible impact of gender and performance on coach–athlete and teammate relationships.

A prevailing theme that emerged from the interviews was that the coaches perceived that overall their female athletes were more *relationship oriented* than males who were perceived to be more *performance oriented*. Male coaches also felt that their female athletes had a more *collective orientation* compared to males who had more of an

individual orientation toward the athletic context. Additionally, the majority of the coaches believed that their male athletes sought interpersonal acceptance from their coaches and teammates primarily through athletic performance while females sought acceptance primarily through interpersonal connection. Finally, the coaches felt that their female athletes overall orientation to sport was more multi-dimensional than their male athletes.

Figure 1 summarizes these findings. As Figure 1 indicates, male and female athletes have *both* performance and relationship oriented dimensions and individual and collective orientations. However, differences exist as a matter of degree with males being more inclined to value individual and team performance greater than individual and collective acceptance. The differences depict underlying values and motives between males and females as perceived by the male coaches. The male coaches interviewed perceived their male athletes assigned greater importance to athletic performance (both individual and team) relative to interpersonal acceptance on both individual (athlete to coach and athlete to teammates) and collective (teammates and coaches combined) levels.

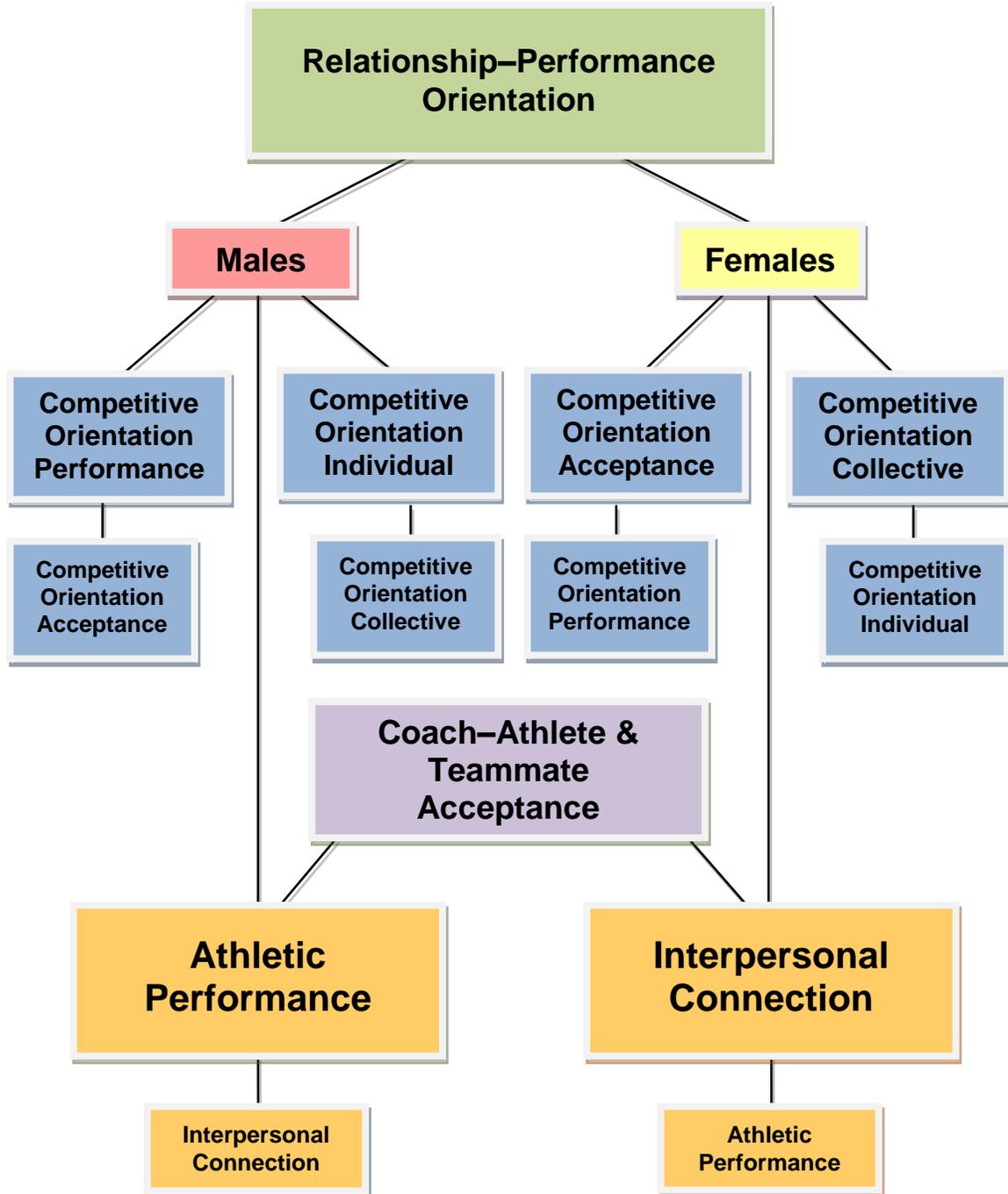


Figure 1. Relationship-Performance Orientation.

Figure illustrates specific types of relationship performance orientations and specific ways athletes seek coach and teammate acceptance. The figure shows that males are more performance and individually oriented while females are more relationship (acceptance) and collectively oriented. The figure also shows that males seek coach and teammate acceptance more through performance compared to females who seek coach and teammate acceptance more through interpersonal connection.

Figure 1 also demonstrates that coaches perceived males to be more oriented individually (thinking of themselves first and placing their interests above the team) while females are more oriented collectively (think of the team first). Finally, Figure 1 connects relationship orientation to how athletes were thought to seek acceptance from coaches and teammates as this was another difference that emerged within the data involving relationship–performance orientations. As Figure 1 demonstrates, males were thought to seek acceptance from both coaches and teammates primarily through their athletic performance compared to females who sought coach and teammate acceptance more through fostering an interpersonal connection with coaches and teammates. However, these differences are also a matter of degree as coaches perceived both male and female athletes to seek acceptance through performance and interpersonal relationships. The male coaches interviewed noted that these were general differences across males and females and that individual differences may exist between male and female athletes. The differences in order and size depicted in Figure 1 reflect the varying degrees and types of differences perceived by the majority of male coaches interviewed.

To date, research in sport has not compared coaches' perceptions of how interpersonal acceptance and athletic performance impact the role of coach–athlete relationships and athletes' competitive orientations. However, other research findings in sport psychology relate to the perceptions reported by the majority of coaches in the study. For example, research has found that female college athletes value the social aspects of participation more than males who prefer a more competitive orientation (Flood & Hellstedt, 1991; Gill, 2004). Interestingly, Lorimer and Jowett (2010) found

that female athletes coached by males were more adept at judging the accuracy of their coaches' thoughts and feelings in practice compared to male athletes coached by males. Tusak, Faganel, and Bednarik (2005) found that a win orientation predicted perceptions of athletic identity more strongly for elite male athletes. Meanwhile, research outside of sport has found that when placed within teams females prefer a more equal distribution of power, influence, and participation compared to males (Berdahl & Anderson, 2005).

Finally, in regards to the socialization and cultural differences mentioned by coaches, research among youth sport has found that males report greater levels of sport identity than females (Lau, Cheung, & Randsell, 2007). These results support the results of this study which found that dual-role college coaches perceived their female athletes to be more motivated to connect socially with their coaches and teammates, preferred a more equal leadership environment, and did not have as much personal identity invested in athletics.

Since this study is the first to explore gender similarities and differences with respect to the impact of coach–athlete and teammate relationships and athletic performance upon competitive orientation there is not a precedent of previous sport psychology research from which to draw upon when discussing and interpreting the results, specifically the differences between a collective versus individualistic orientation to teams. However, the results of this study do reflect common stereotypes and claims made in books written by college coaches (DeBoer, 2004; Dorrance, 1996). Research outside of sport has investigated this gender dynamic in greater detail and consequently offers stronger evidence to support the perceptions of coaches. Specifically, the research

on self-construals conducted by Cross and Madson (1997) and a more recent theory on leadership preferences proposed by Berdahl and Anderson (2005) provide an insightful perspective through which to interpret and understand the results of this study regarding differences in relationship–performance orientation.

Cross and Madson’s (1997) research on independent versus interdependent self-construals has unique relevance when analyzing the differences in relationship–performance orientation noted by the coaches. Cross and Madson note that more than 2 decades of research supports their contention that men and women differ in the extent to which interdependence versus independence-related attributes are included in their self-representations. They state that men have more independent self-construals and women have more interdependent self-construals. Although individuals with an independent self-construal desire relationships, “their relationships often reflect individualistic goals” (p.7). Meanwhile, for the person with an interdependent self-construal, “relationships are viewed as integral parts of the person’s very being” (p.7). Cross and Madson state that multiple social influences “promote independent ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving for men and relational ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving for women” (p.7).

The differences found between independent versus interdependent self-construals has also been noted in group dynamics research which may be a closer environment to that of college athletic teams. For example, Song, Cadsby, and Morris (2004) found that college males are significantly more self-interested and less other-regarding when they are responsible for a group. Research has demonstrated that from adolescence male relationships are established through hierarchy and dominance, while females tend to

establish relationships based on affiliation, mutuality, intimacy, esteem enhancement and affection (Cross & Madson, 1997; Maccoby, 1990).

Berdahl and Anderson (2005) developed a model to predict the emergence of group norms when studying gender and leadership centralization in groups over time. They note that little research has looked at how sex composition influences emerging leadership structure, specifically:

Whether a group develops a more centralized leadership structure, whereby leadership is concentrated in one or a few group members, or a more decentralized structure whereby leadership is shared among members (p.45).

The coaches interviewed stated that women made more attempts than men to promote a decentralized leadership structure (similar to a collective orientation) in which the input and contribution of each member is valued compared to men which seek to establish a more centralized leadership structure that renders a hierarchy based on performance. Interestingly, as one coach noted, “You know guys are all about hierarchy and the pecking order. And the pecking order is more based on playing ability than it is with the women’s team” (004).

Berdahl and Anderson (2005) state that a sex differences approach focusing on personality and social role differences has been used to explain variances between males and females. However, rather than using a sex differences approach, Berdahl and Anderson purport that men and women have different *preferences* for how power is distributed and shared within groups. To support this contention, Berdahl and Anderson cite research involving social dominance orientation which has found men to endorse social inequality more than women and mention that men tend to prefer policies that

favor social hierarchy while women favor social equality and communality (Pratto et al., 2000; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994). Additionally, men also tend to support equity norms, which reward individuals for their contributions to a group, and women tend to favor equality norms, which emphasize equal outcomes for group members regardless of their contributions (Watts, Messe, & Vallacher, 1982). The coaches in this study also perceived these differences, noting that their male athletes regard performance contributions more highly than females when it comes to respecting teammates.

Berdahl and Anderson (2005) state that “centralized leadership groups of men and decentralized leadership groups of women are likely to go unchallenged if these structures reflect members’ preferences” (p.46). To test their preferences theory Berdahl and Anderson completed two longitudinal studies in which college students were placed in teams to invent and promote an environmental organization. Tasks included identifying an environmental cause, designing various promotional items, and fundraising. Results supported their predictions:

(a) Women, more than men, preferred equality norms in groups; (b) all-male and majority-male groups had relatively centralized leadership structures; (c) all-female groups had relatively decentralized leadership structures; and (d) balanced and majority-female groups were relatively centralized at the onset of group interaction but decreased in centralization over time (p.45).

Studies involving leadership preferences in sport have primarily focused on coaches’ leadership styles and motivational climates but have not considered how performance and coach–athlete and teammate relationships combine to impact athletes’ preferences. However, early studies did find that females reported wanting more

participation in the leadership decisions of coaches compared to males (Chelladurai & Arnott, 1985; Chelladurai et al., 1989). Additionally, one recent study of college athletes by Holmes et al. (2008) assessed preferences and perceptions regarding peer relationships and found that men preferred more autocratic behaviors and valued performance more than women who placed more emphasis on being vocal and encouraging the team than men. If females want a more decentralized leadership environment in sport it may be reflected in the research regarding cohesion which has demonstrated that task and social cohesion are particularly important and seemingly more impactful for females (Carron et al. 2002). Although research has been limited, the preferences theory proposed by Berdahl and Anderson (2005) would seem to have support in the context of college athletics. Therefore, a contribution of this study is that it may offer an alternative approach to studying leadership in sport, one that analyzes preferences for leadership development and composition.

After considering the results of the study and reflecting on differences in leadership preferences and behavior we must consider what the ramifications and consequences are for these differences and how they relate to sport. Is there an optimal leadership structure in team sports, or an optimal structure for male and female teams? Berdahl and Anderson's (2005) groups worked on additive tasks, (tasks in which the more each member contributes the more likely performance improves). A centralized leadership structure would be more likely to mitigate performance if it means only a few members actively contribute to group activities (Berdahl & Anderson, 2005). Centralized leadership has been thought to inhibit performance in other types of tasks including

brainstorming (Stroebe & Diehl, 1994; Sutton & Hargadon, 1996) judgment (Laughlin & Ellis, 1986) and decision making (Janis, 1989). However, in other contexts, a high level of centralization can be a productive way to organize activities and improve performance, especially in situations that call for significant coordination and complexity (Berdahl & Anderson, 2005). Berdahl and Anderson note that research needs to address the effects and consequences of task types and group size on emergent leadership structures. In the case of competitive athletics, it seems that successful performance is dependent on having aspects of *both* centralized and decentralized leadership structures because success in team sports has an additive (decentralized) element (each person contributing to the training and performance of the team), as well as a centralized element (firm organization, vision, and decision making from a specific person or people, and specific tasks needing to be completed by specific people). Interestingly, while the coaches in this study cited differences with respect to how males and females organize and act through their leadership structures, the coaches did not mention a preference or offer concerns for how this impacted their teams. Rather, coaches seemed to feel that males and females have these different orientations and preferences, and to be successful in coaching males and females necessitates that coaches *enable* their athletes to simply be themselves. Therefore, when reviewing the results of this study it seems that coaches coach their team *through* their perceptions of male and female preferences rather than imposing specific ideologies about coaching males and females upon their athletes. Additionally, coaches mentioned the importance of recognizing the unique individual characteristics of each athlete and noted that some male athletes were more relationship oriented (or at least

needed to be coached more through a relationship orientation) and some female athletes were more performance oriented. Coaches noted that the challenge was to recognize the type of leadership and communication that each situation and each athlete needed:

I just don't think it's as easy as saying, "You treat them differently, you treat them the same." Sometimes you treat them the same, sometimes you treat them differently, based on the situation. (008)

Coaches reported investing more time in their relationships with their female athletes (specifically offering more feedback and encouragement) and believed that females spent more time developing coach-athlete and teammate relationships because coaches felt that this is what their female athletes wanted and needed in order to be more effective. As one coach stated when comparing the interest between male and female athletes in developing a personal connection with their coaches:

Guys sometimes are less inclined to enter into that relationship; it's harder. But the girls are more...are naturally looking for it and they're naturally going to cater to it more. The guys aren't going to. (008)

This perception shared by coaches was also extended to teammate relationships as coaches made several comments about how females spent more time together and made more of an effort to have each person feel connected to the team. In drawing upon Berdahl and Anderson's (2005) work it would suggest that the female college soccer players referred to by coaches in this study spent more time trying to connect with their coaches and teammates because they value and prefer a more decentralized leadership structure that emphasizes the contributions of each member more equally than in a centralized structure. Alternatively, because men are more equity and performance oriented, male athletes prefer a more centralized leadership structure. Coaches noted that

their male athletes gave more attention and respect to organizing and understanding the leadership hierarchy compared to females.

Figure 2 combines these different leadership preferences, illustrated by Berdahl and Anderson (2005), and puts them within the context of this study, thus extending the utility of the relationship–performance orientation construct. Figure 2 depicts the various qualities that the male coaches perceived male and female athletes value and seek within the leadership structure of their teams. Figure 2 also connects the leadership preferences to the relationship–performance orientation differences (CO refers to competitive orientation in Figure 2) perceived by the male coaches interviewed, depicting an interrelated loop in which both leadership preferences and relationship–performance orientations impact each other to create desired outcomes of leadership and relationship preferences. Centralized leadership preferences align more with individual and performance orientations, while decentralized leadership preferences align more with relationship orientations.

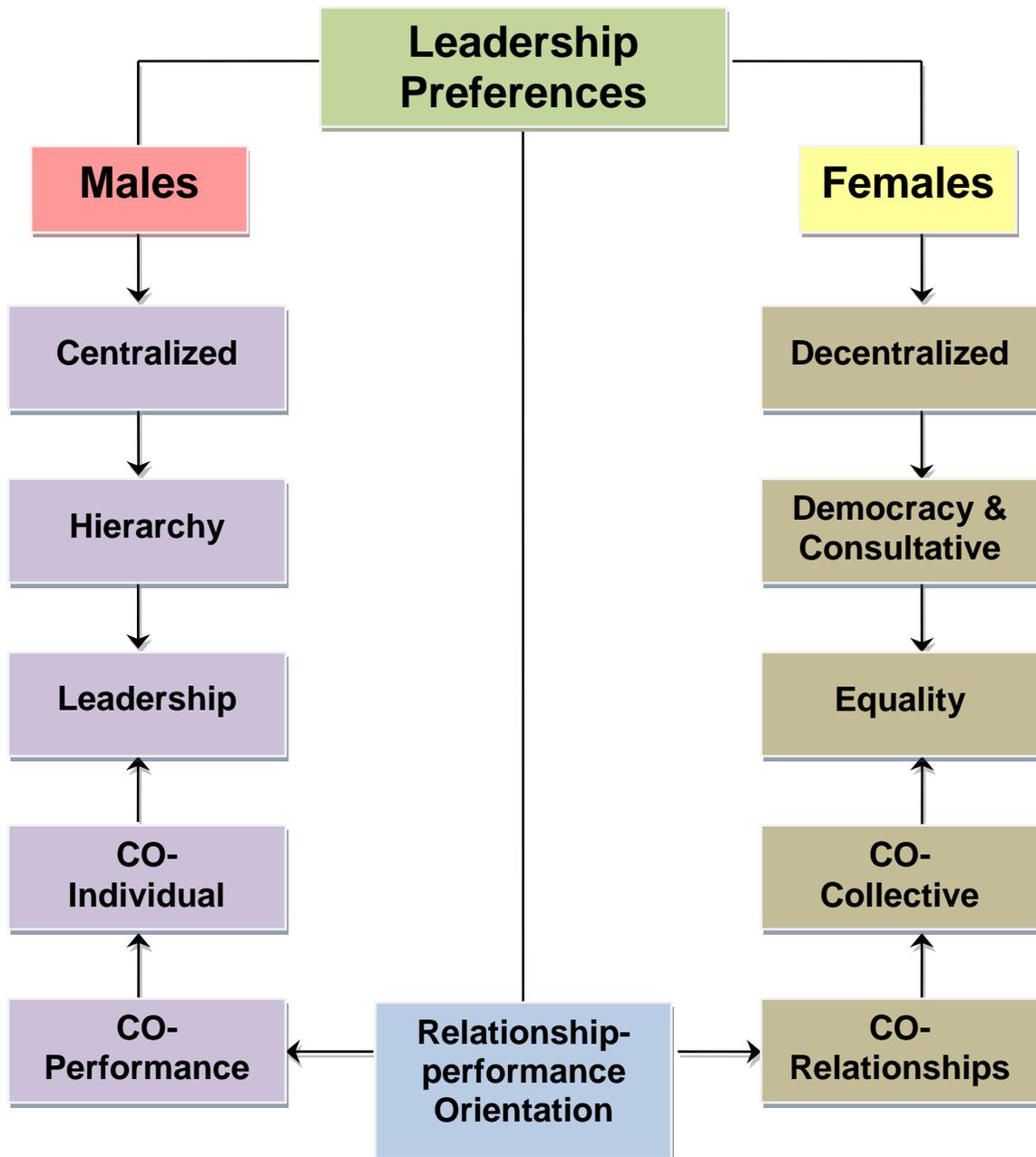


Figure 2. Leadership Preferences and Relationship-Performance Orientation. This figure illustrates coaches perceived differences in males and females leadership preferences. The figure shows that leadership preferences also are associated with perceived differences in relationship performance orientation.

The differences in relationship–performance orientation reported by coaches may simply reflect the preferences that males and females have toward the centralization of power and influence within groups, and may be a manifestation of gender role socialization in our culture. As the groups in Berdahl and Anderson’s (2005) study evolved over time in support of their preferences, coaches also found that the centralization of leadership and communication evolved over time within their men’s and women’s teams to reflect the dominant orientations and preferences of the players themselves. Although research has not applied Berdahl and Anderson’s theory to sport, the results of this study support their preferences theory, and warrants future applications to sport.

Impact of Coach–Athlete and Teammate Relationships on Performance

A unique characteristic of this study was to examine coaches’ perceptions of the impact of coach–athlete and teammate relationships on athletic performance. Previous research has identified that effective coach–athlete and teammate relationships are important contributors to successful performances of both male and female athletes (Carron et al., 2002; Feltz & Lirgg, 1998; Gould et al., 1999; Jackson et al., 2009; Pensgaard & Roberts, 2000). However, research has either not reported or specifically investigated whether or not coach–athlete and teammate relationships are perceived to have a different effect on the performance of male and female college athletes. The results of this study revealed that a slight majority of coaches perceived that a coach–athlete relationship *could* impact the performance of females more than males. However, the impact of a coach–athlete relationship on athletic performance was primarily

mentioned in the context of a problematic coach–athlete relationship (not respecting or liking their coach) with coaches noting that a poor coach–athlete relationship would be more likely to impact the performance of their female athletes. The male dual-role coaches did not differentiate between positive coach–athlete relationships and the athletic performance of males and females. These results are interesting considering the importance these coaches perceived that their female players placed on having an effective interpersonal coach–athlete relationship. It is possible that effective coach–athlete relationships may be valued or sought more by female athletes, but this *value* may not directly translate into increased athletic performance. Additionally, while female athletes may make a greater effort to interact with their coach, the relationship may still be of equal importance to males but simply take on a different form or process. As LaVoi (2007) noted in her review of coach–athlete closeness for male and female college athletes:

However, one should not assume that males value closeness with their coaches to a lesser degree. Rather the process may look, sound and be constructed in different ways due to gender role socialization (p.508).

In fact, research has been conducted to support the notion that males and females need the same qualities in a coach–athlete relationship and may be equally limited by the absence of these qualities. For example, Gould et al. (1999) interviewed 11 male and 12 female Olympians and found that both males and females preparation and performance during the 1996 Olympics was negatively affected by a lack of trust, communication, support, and respect between athletes and coaches. It is also worth noting that compared to youth athletes, college athletes are more experienced and skilled, and therefore have

had more opportunities to not only interact with coaches, and consequently manage coach–athlete relationships, but also are better prepared to isolate their relationship from their athletic performance.

Compared to coach–athlete relationships, a greater majority of coaches felt that teammate relationships could impact the performance of female players’ more than male players. This impact was isolated to negative relationships as nearly all of the coaches did not feel that positive coach–athlete or teammate relationships would influence males or females differently. Additionally, coaches cited other variables, such as the success of the team, the athletic ability and work ethic of players that might not be liked by their teammates, and the competitiveness of the athletes, that could influence whether or not an athlete’s performance would be impacted by coach–athlete and teammate relationships. Uncovering these additional variables is a contribution of this study as it puts the impact of coach–athlete and teammate relationships on athletic performance into a broader perspective and gives a context through which to better understand this dynamic. The results of the study challenge the traditional stereotype that men can play with people they do not like while women cannot because they reveal that this stereotype is true only if specific conditions are met. The coaches supported this stereotype provided both the team and the athlete were performing well, and the athlete was abiding by the standards of the team. Coaches also noted that while in general their female athletes would have a harder time playing with people they did not like, the more competitive female athletes acted similar to male athletes. Additionally, although the coaches interviewed did not specifically discuss whether or not they perceived that the more relationship oriented

male athletes would have a harder time playing with teammates they did not like, this possibility should not be discounted as coaches noted that individual differences were prevalent across male and female athletes.

As female athletics continues to become more competitive and resemble men's athletics, the impact of coach–athlete and teammate relationships on performance may become increasingly similar for males and females. For now, illuminating the conditions necessary to uphold the stereotype that relationships can impact females' athletic performance more than males illustrates that the influence of relationships on male and female athletic performance may not be as pronounced as people in the athletic community might believe.

In summary, this study sought to identify coaches' perceptions of the overall impact of coach–athlete and teammate relationships on the athletic performance of males and females (an interesting area that has not received much attention). Results yielded only mild support for perceptions that coach–athlete relationships impact the performance of female athletes more, and fair support for teammate relationships impacting the performance of female athletes to a greater degree than males. Additionally, coaches primarily distinguished between negative relationships and performance, suggesting that positive coach–athlete and teammate relationships offer similar benefits to both male and female NCAA Division III soccer players.

Coaching and Relating to Males and Females: Driving Versus Leading

Coaches reported that coaching males and females was primarily similar, yet noted giving women more feedback and believing that women were significantly more

coachable than men. Despite describing effective communication as the most important element to a successful coach–athlete relationship and noting the same qualities necessary for success in coach–athlete relationships, the coaches cited differences in *how* they communicated with their male and female athletes. The apparent contradictions in these results require elaboration.

First, in regards to coaching males and females similarly, coaches referred to similarities in the training, instruction, and drills used in practice but noted differences in how they communicated to males and females, and how their coaching was received by their athletes. Therefore, coaches distinguished between coaching the game itself (the specific elements associated with soccer such as tactical and technical teaching) and how they *delivered* communication. The distinction between coaching and communication delineated by these coaches may seem odd since communication is a fundamental aspect of coaching. Nevertheless, the results of the study identify this distinction, at least as far as it exists in the perceptions and experiences of the coaches interviewed, and represents a contribution to research involving coaching male and female athletes.

Second, the differences in coachability seem to align with the differences reported in feedback, and consequently the overall differences reported in relationship–orientation. Coaches felt that their female athletes were more inquisitive, attentive and receptive to instruction, trusting, and willing to change or try new ideas, concepts, and strategies, which are qualities that would seem to lead coaches to provide more feedback to female athletes. In regards to feedback, coaches perceived that their female athletes wanted and needed more because they had a stronger desire to know and learn the elements of soccer

(skills, techniques, tactics, etc), had less confidence (and therefore needed more assurance), and had a greater desire to please and connect socially with their coaches. Meanwhile, coaches perceived their male athletes to be more confident and self-oriented, and therefore did not want or perhaps value the external feedback from the coach as much as females did. While previous research comparing male and female athletes has not looked at coachability, the results of this study illustrate that it is potentially a significant difference between male and female college soccer players.

Third, the differences reported by coaches in how they communicated to their male and female athletes may be explained by the differences coaches noted in driving versus leading males and females. The greatest difference between coaching and communication could be characterized by the differences coaches reported between leading and driving, as several coaches reporting *driving* their male athletes more and *leading* their female athletes more. The driving versus leading distinction is a primary contribution of the study because it seems to lend empirical support to Dorrance's (1996) contention that male athletes respond better to being driven and female athletes respond better to being led (at least in the opinion of the coaches interviewed). Content analysis revealed that coaches were on the same page with respect to what it meant to drive versus lead their athletes.

Coaches felt their male athletes wanted a "commander" (002) and responded better to firm direction, and at times, public criticism of individuals. Meanwhile women were thought to respond better to a more unified approach where the coach took a more

active role in forming a collective identity and direction (which also resonates with the leadership preferences mentioned earlier). As one coach noted:

To drive them, you have to push them, you have to motivate them, you really have to be more of a strong...[You have to say] “This is what I want. This is what I expect. This is the way you do it. This is how we will be successful.” With the women, to lead them you have to become a part of them. You have to be involved in every aspect of what’s going on with them as a person and as a player. The better you are able to lead, the better you are able to make them feel as if they are a part of something bigger than themselves. (003)

Although research has not specifically analyzed leading versus driving, the results of this study do support research which has found that male coaches use more punishment strategies and verbal aggression (which are examples of driving behavior) with male athletes (Lacy & Goldston, 1990; Martin et al., 2009). A comment from one coach provides an example:

We do the same amount of team building with both but we make it a point to nurture during certain events to the women. Like if I’m doing a cardio drill, I’ll call out a male and I’ll make him do pushups in front of his teammates and if he’s slacking his teammates will look at him. I won’t do that to a woman. I won’t isolate one of the women. We’ll just talk about doing it as a unit and make sure the unit is doing its job. (005)

In summary, coaches reported coaching their male and female athletes similarly in terms of the instruction and exercises they administered yet noted differences in *how* they communicated with their athletes. Coaches also perceived a difference in gender roles and socialization (will be discussed more in the next section) and while not necessarily trying to uphold these differences, coaches seemed to communicate with their athletes, at least in part, through or from these perceived differences in the social construction of gender. The driving versus leading differences and ultimately the differences in how

these male coaches coached their players may have evolved from, and be perpetuated by, perceptions of socialization and gender roles. Figure 3 was developed to integrate the elements of coaching (communication, instruction, and drills) reported by the male coaches with the driving and leading differences they mentioned. While coaches perceived they coached both males and females similarly, they noted differences in communication. The differences in communication are characterized through the driving versus leading perspective. Additionally, culture is incorporated into Figure 3 to illustrate how perceived gender roles and socialization become integrated and ultimately influence the leadership and communication differences (driving versus leading) adopted by these male coaches. Figure 3 represents a reciprocal relationship to illustrate that coaches are both influenced by their athletes and the surrounding culture, as well as influencing the surrounding culture and their athletes through their coaching strategies.

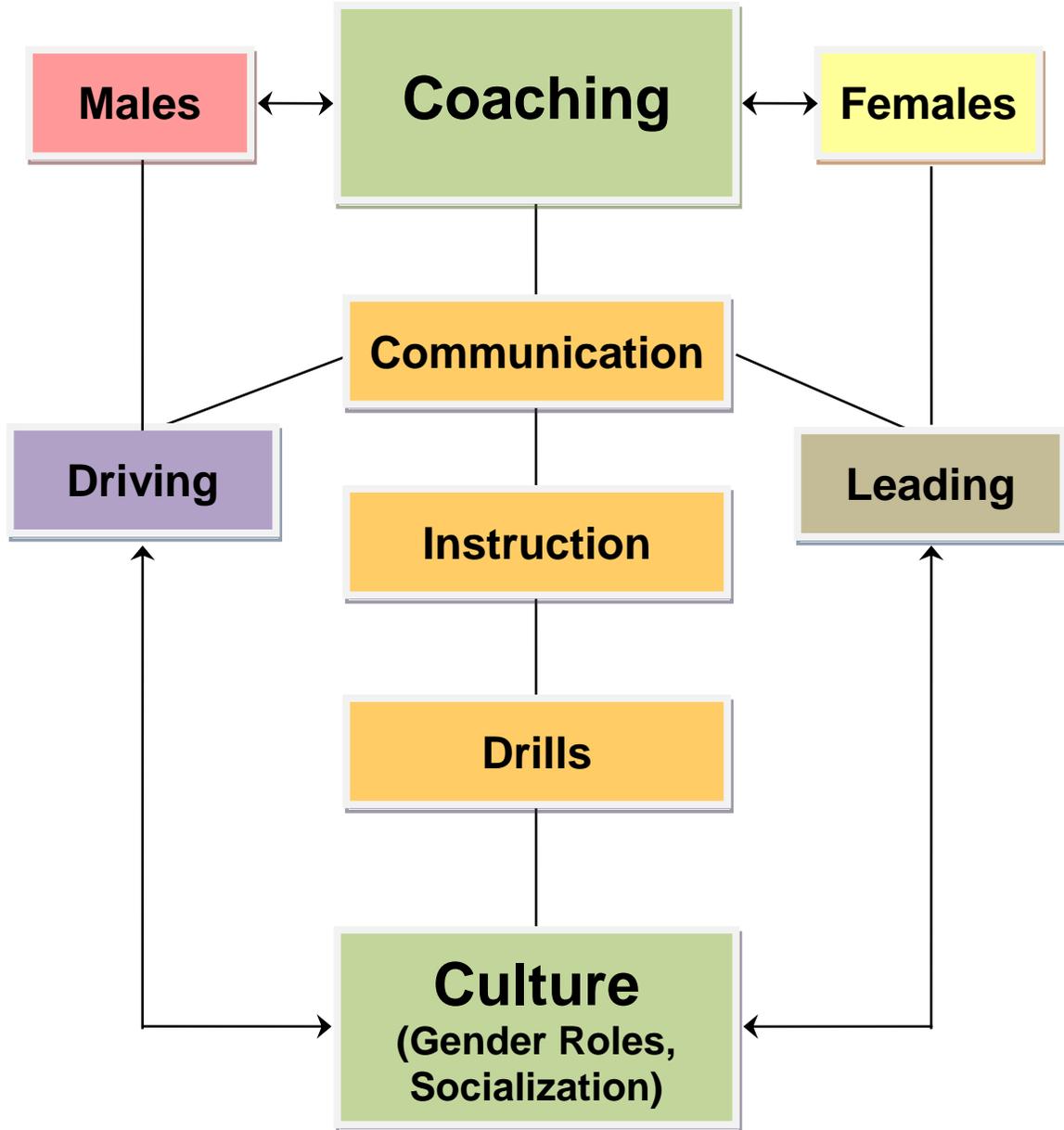


Figure 3. Coaching Males and Females.

This figure illustrates that coaches perceived the instruction and drills to be similar when coaching males and females however when communicating coaches reported being more likely to use driving behaviors with men and leading behaviors with women. Culture is incorporated in the figure to show that it impacts coaches' perceptions of how to communicate with male and female athletes.

Despite the differences noted between driving and leading male and female athletes nearly every coach noted that at times it is necessary to do *both* and that the key is to recognize *what* each individual needs and *when* he or she needs it. While coaches stated that they were more inclined to drive their male athletes versus their female athletes, coaches noted that not all males or females responded to solely being either driven or led. Therefore, individual differences may supersede perceived gender differences for the male coaches in this study.

The differences regarding leadership behavior and relating to males and females seem to be a function of coaches' perceptions regarding culture (in which males are brought up in a more authoritarian paradigm and females are brought up in a more relational paradigm) and competitiveness. Although not explicitly stated, coaches appeared to be responding and coaching partly through different gender role expectations. Coaches seemed to be coaching through what they perceived to be effective with male and female athletes. Coaches opinions may have be mediated through their perceptions of gender even if they regarded themselves as responding to their athletes as individuals. Coaches in the study seemed focused on having a positive influence on their athletes experience and performance rather than coaching through specific perceptions of gender, and coaches' ideological positions seemed to be dynamic as they noted the women's game has been evolving and becoming more competitive. As coaches perceive their female players to be more performance-oriented they adjust by challenging them more and training them harder. In conclusion, the perceptions of culture and competitiveness

impacted the thoughts and behaviors of the coaches interviewed and illustrate an important dynamic that warrants future discussion and research.

Perceptions of Culture, Socialization, and the Impact of Competitiveness

One of the more intriguing findings of the study was that coaches perceived cultural and socialization differences between males and females, but said that these differences were less prevalent in the more competitive female athletes. Coaches felt that males are brought up in environments that emphasize individuality and personal achievement while female socialization places greater emphasis on social responsibility, collectivity, and relationships. One coach offered an interesting account that characterized both his perceptions of the differences and how he used the differences to be effective in coaching his women's team:

I just think it's probably the nature of growing up in modern society, of the pressures that are put on young men to be all they can be as an individual. Be a man, do this... and the women being the other way. I'm going to guess that you come off the field as a young player a male a lot of times will hear from the coach or parents, "How did you do? What did you accomplish in the match today?" "Did you get a goal?" And as a young lady coming off a match... "Did you enjoy it? Did your team play well? You guys won? that's good"...And so there you go. They're used to that. You play on whatever you can to get it out. (012)

The coach went on to share an example of how he utilized this perspective when he coached:

When I need to pull something out of the women's team in overtime or whatever, I'm saying stuff like, "You gotta work hard for your teammates. Look around you and see how hard everybody's working, and know you're supportive of each other, and you know we've got a good squad here",,, I rally around that point and they've always picked up on it. (012)

The differences in perceived socialization also impacted (as previously mentioned) the coaches' feedback as coaches reported giving more feedback and encouragement to their female players and harsher, more individual criticism to their male players.

Rather than challenging gender roles or socialization, the coaches in the study appear to be primarily *reacting* to perceived similarities and differences in male and female athletes and also identifying the individual qualities of each athlete and trying to coach and relate in ways that will be most impactful for each player. While coaches note these cultural and social differences they also note that each person and team is unique, and therefore the challenge of the coach is identifying what types of communication and motivation will work well in each situation. Perhaps the coaches in the study did develop a gendered paradigm for communicating with and motivating males and females, but did not necessarily coach entirely through this schema as they acknowledged individual differences and tried to also coach through them. Coaches did not report much effort in personally challenging gender roles or ideology but did state that the women's game was evolving and becoming more competitive. With increased competitiveness coaches perceived that women were training harder and placing a greater importance upon winning. In this regard, coaches felt that the women's game was evolving and starting to resemble the men's game. The coaches in this study seemed to be adapting to the perceived evolution of the women's game rather than attempting to force changes in relating to males and females and training them.

When discussing the evolution of the women's game coaches referred to the importance of the training environments that their female athletes were coming from, noting that some of their players were coming from intense environments that pushed players to train and compete harder. As a NCAA Division III coach for 12 years I have noticed the evolution of the women's game and noticed that the more driven and competitive players primarily go to NCAA Division I and II programs. However, each year Division III programs seem to attract more of these players which I feel is an indication that more females are being coached in environments that place a greater importance on training hard and performing well, which consequently is elevating the level and importance of competition across the country. Interestingly, coaches reported that their male athletes were more competitive with each other within their training environments but did not note differences in competitiveness between males and females in their matches with other teams, suggesting that in games against outside competition the females were as competitive as the men.

Researchers have noted that prior to the expansion of female participation in high school and college athletics (which can be traced to the enactment of Title IX in 1972) being competitive and being female were antithetical and participation in competitive sport may cause females to experience cognitive dissonance between the social expectations of being a woman and the competitive expectations of being an athlete (Renzetti & Curran, 2003). Despite the evolution of women's sport there is still doubt involving the degree of competitiveness and aggressiveness that is "appropriate" for females in competition, and perceptions that women are not as competitive as men

persist. However, recent studies with boys and girls do not find any dissonance. For example, in a recent study of middle school students females perceived themselves as athletically equal to their male peers and referred to themselves as *athletic* and *competitive* (Constantinou, Manson, & Silverman, 2009). Interestingly, research is starting to show that among elite athletes, specifically athletes that represent countries in international competition, males and females have similar achievement orientations, perceptions of motivational climate, and perceptions of overall athletic identity (Abrahamsen, Roberts, & Pensgaard, 2008; Tusak et al., 2005). As women's sport at college and professional levels continues to resemble men's sport (in terms of physicality and competitiveness) research should continue to assess coaches and athletes perceptions of relationship–performance orientations and identify potential advantages and disadvantages of these orientations.

Studies have shown that when traditional gender norms and/or roles are removed or manipulated, sex differences can be omitted (Lightdale & Prentice, 1994; Spencer et al., 1999). Although sport cannot simply eradicate the impact of gender norms and roles without a prolonged evolution, the results of this study clearly support this trend and these coaches note a shift in the overall culture of women's athletics and seem to be adapting their coaching behaviors accordingly. While coaches in this study believed that in general their male athletes were more competitive than their female athletes, and their female athletes were more relationship oriented, the coaches also stated that the more *competitive* female athletes were more performance oriented and consequently resembled the predominant orientations of male athletes. Future research can investigate how

females incorporate both competitive and relationship orientations within their overall orientation to sport and compare these with males. Additionally future research can investigate how male athletes could enhance their performance and overall experience in sport by adopting orientations that equally value both competition and cooperation as successful performances and experiences in sport often involve a collective synergy with teammates and coaches. Although coaches did not cite an evolution or significant change in the men's game future research should still consider this possibility as well as the impact and influence of coach-athlete and teammate relationships upon males overall experience in sport.

Team Building

In an attempt to better understand how coaches tried to foster team cohesion, and whether or not there were primarily similarities or differences between the approaches used, coaches were asked to explain how they attempted to build effective teammate relationships. Responses illustrated that coaches had similar team building exercises for both males and females, and primarily relied on the athletes themselves to conduct team building. Coaches' team building plans lacked depth and sophistication as coaches primarily reported simply making sure their teams spent time together in social situations during their pre-seasons and checking in with their captains to see how the team was getting along. While it may be logical to assume that coaches would spend a considerable amount of time trying to foster team chemistry and cohesion, dual role coaches are also having to meet the coaching, scouting, and recruiting demands of both teams

simultaneously which may inhibit their ability to devote significant time to additional team activities.

Coaches discussed the importance of athletes' simply spending time together to develop relationships and acknowledged that the time and schedule demands of coaching both teams made it difficult to incorporate structured team building outside of practice time. As stated, coaches reported relying on the captains and players themselves to initiate and maintain effective teammate relationships. Coaches perceived that women in particular, were inclined to do this on their own; perhaps implying that given their own time constraints coaching both teams it did not warrant additional focus. Rather than having a systematic team building process, coaches focused more effort on simply coaching soccer and responding to the perceived needs of individual players when they had the time.

Although the coaches perceived differences in communicating with male and female athletes, and differences in perceptions of relationship–performance orientations, these differences were primarily not manifested in any structured approaches to team building. Future research may need to study coaches who coach only one team and consequently have more time to plan and conduct team building in order to get a better understanding of how coaches incorporate team building with male and female athletes.

Time Demands and Enjoyment

Coaches offered numerous comments regarding the logistical difficulties associated with having to simultaneously coach both men's and women's teams and noted the impact it had on their ability to give each athlete and team as much time and

effort as they would have liked. Despite the enjoyment reported in coaching both teams the coaches interviewed expressed concern in their ability to successfully meet the demands of coaching both teams. However, the coaches did not report any significant difficulties having to relate to and coach both males and females. Rather, they cited being limited by the obvious demands of scheduling, training, traveling, and managing all aspects of both programs—not by the athletes themselves. Therefore, the results of this study reveal that coaches did not feel hindered by any perceived differences or difficulty in working with either male or female athletes, but rather focused on the unique challenges and opportunities that each team presented, irrespective of gender.

These results are corroborated by the coaches' feelings of enjoyment as the majority of coaches primarily did not report any differences in the level of enjoyment or satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) they felt in coaching both males and females. Overall, coaches enjoyed aspects of coaching both males and females and, aside from the logistical difficulties of coaching both teams, seemed equally adept and interested in coaching males or females. Although these results are not startling, they do indicate that these college coaches seemed to value their experiences similarly despite noting the differences in communicating with their male and female athletes.

Strengths of the Study

This study is the first to interview male dual-role college soccer coaches who coach both men's and women's teams and the first to analyze coaches' perceptions of the role and impact of performance and coach-athlete and teammate relationships upon males and females overall orientation to sport. The study lends empirical support to the

belief that coach–athlete and teammate relationships impact female athletes overall orientation to sport more significantly than males (according to the male dual-role coaches interviewed). The study offers confirmation from dual-role coaches that in general female athletes are more “relationship oriented” than males. However, the study goes beyond these simplistic classifications and illustrates how and why coaches arrived at these conclusions, and perhaps more importantly, how their communication and leadership with their athletes reflects their perceptions.

The study develops a construct, the relationship–performance orientation, that gives both articulation and meaning to previous reports of coaches that have purported that female athletes overall orientation to sport is more multi-faceted than males, incorporating both relationship and performance orientations. While the study gives empirical substance to preconceived ideologies regarding coaching males and females it also offers greater analysis to specific stereotypes, uncovering their limitations and qualifications, as in the case of “men are more competitive than women” and “women cannot play with teammates they do not like while men can.”

The study also lends empirical support to the question of whether or not coaches perceive they need to primarily *drive* their male athletes and *lead* their female athletes, illustrating that coaches both perceive this dynamic, and more importantly, coach to this dynamic. The opinions and experiences shared by coaches illustrate insightful similarities and differences in how coaches interact with their male and female athletes. Specifically, the study uncovers a unique dynamic between coaching and communication, yielding a

potential paradox in which coaches simultaneously report coaching males and females similarly but communicating with them differently.

At a time in which female athletics in our culture is continuing to evolve, the study offers a unique “snapshot” of dual-role coaches comparisons of the similarities and differences in coaching and communicating with current college athletes, which despite anecdotal evidence, has not been systematically researched. The design of the study enabled coaches to speak freely and at length regarding their unique experiences coaching and relating to both male and female athletes, and ultimately produces rich and meaningful information that not only improves our current understanding of coaching male and female college athletes but also exposes areas of future research.

Limitations of the Study

Although the study provided a unique opportunity to assess NCAA Division III male soccer coaches who coach both male and female teams, it lacks valuable comparative information as it did not obtain the perceptions of female coaches who coach female teams and it did not assess the perceptions of male and female athletes. The results of the study reflect the experiences and perceptions of these male soccer coaches coaching male and female athletes and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of male and female coaches who coach only male or female teams. Additionally, the results of the study may be specific only to NCAA Division III soccer coaches and may not reflect the opinions of coaches in other sports. Therefore, the ability to generalize these findings to other coaches and sports is limited. The study also lacks the ability to generalize these findings across other levels of competition. The study only focused on NCAA Division

III soccer coaches; the differences reported by the coaches in this study, such as differences in competitive orientation, may not be perceived by NCAA Division I, II, and professional coaches.

The design of the study is both a strength and limitation. Although the interviews yielded a rich understanding of the experiences and perceptions of dual-role coaches, the study was obviously limited by both the questions asked and those not asked. The semi-structured interview provided a framework and direction for coaches, but it also potentially limited their ability to speak to insightful elements of coaching males and females that were not included in the study. Additionally, interviewing athletes and comparing them with the coaches' interviews would have yielded a more powerful understanding of coach–athlete and teammate relationships; especially for teammate relationships where coaches lacked direct knowledge and had to rely on observation and experience and their recollection of their athletes' relationships with each other.

Finally, while the study yields an insightful “snapshot” of perceptions of coaches coaching male and female college soccer players, the results of study may not be replicated across different sports or be replicated in the future as the coaches note that coaching female college athletes has been a dynamic and evolving process. Future research must be continued in order to assess longitudinal similarities or differences in coaching males and females.

Future Research

This study provided an opportunity to interview a select group of male dual-role NCAA Division III soccer coaches who had previously not been studied, but it did not

compare the coaches' perceptions with the perceptions of their athletes. Future research should investigate male and female players' perceptions of the importance of coach-athlete and teammate relationships and how each impacts their overall experience in sport and their individual athletic performance, in order to investigate potential similarities and differences between male and female athletes. While the male coaches studied perceived that females are more relationship oriented compared to males, the accuracy of their perceptions should be confirmed through assessing the perceptions and preferences of athletes themselves. It is possible that the competitive orientation perceptions of male and female athletes may be more similar than those reported by their coaches.

Since the coaches interviewed noted that NCAA Division III female athletes are becoming more competitive and report that the culture of women's sport is changing, future studies need to continue to assess this phenomenon and compare both male and female coaches and athletes across different levels of sport such as: high school, NCAA Division I, II, and III, and professional. For example, it would be interesting to compare female coaches' perceptions of whether or not they feel that female athletes are becoming more competitive and win-oriented, and what strengths and possible limitations accompany this evolution. It is possible that female athletes on elite NCAA Division I teams have similar competitive orientations to male athletes. Additionally, the results of the study may be specific to Division III soccer teams and may not be found across other sports, particularly in a sport like Division I women's basketball that receives more media coverage and pressure on coaches to win. Since dual-role coaches are not present in sports like men's and women's basketball the results of the study may be attributed to a

unique context (men's and women's soccer teams) in a unique setting (NCAA Division III). Therefore, future research should assess the relationship–performance orientation construct with average and elite male and female teams across NCAA Division I, II, and III. This research is needed to both establish the relationship–performance orientation construct and determine if the results of this study can be generalized to other levels of competition. Finally, it would be interesting to assess coaches perceptions of whether or not male athletes are becoming more relationship oriented.

Results of this study are consistent with Jambor and Zhang (1997) who found that female coaches provided more social support behavior. The coaches in this study were male but noted that they gave more social support behavior to their female athletes. Therefore, future research should also compare the amount of support that male coaches provide compared to female coaches. Ideally research would also compare male and female coaches of male and female athletes; however, there are few female coaches who coach both males and females.

There has been a large amount of research devoted to leadership styles and preferences in the leadership behavior of coaches (Beam et al., 2004; Chelladurai & Haggerty, 1978; Hoigaard et al., 2008; Salminen & Liukkonen, 1996; Smith et al., 1978). However, research has not compared male and female athletes' preferences for leadership structure among the players themselves. Specifically, studies can compare male and female athletes' preferences for decentralized versus centralized leadership structures. Athletic teams have a more centralized approach with respect to having both head and assistant coaches and captains. However, female athletes may want a more decentralized

leadership structure within the players and male athletes may want a more centralized leadership structure. The results of this study support this possibility as coaches' report their female athletes engaging in more decentralized behaviors. However, these are the perceptions of the coaches and not the athletes themselves. It is also conceivable that while female athletes' value and put forward greater effort in connecting with their teammates socially more than males, they still may want a centralized leadership structure and consequently may differ from the non-athlete populations studied by Berdahl and Anderson (2005).

Research has shown negative effects of motivational climates that are primarily ego or performance oriented, suggesting that effective coaches and teams emphasize mastery-type environments that develop and draw upon the strengths of each person (Olympiou et al., 2008). While each coach and team is unique it is possible that in general the most successful teams are the ones that are able to blend centralized and decentralized leadership components as well as performance and relationship orientations. Interestingly, a few coaches wondered if positive team chemistry would improve the performance of a men's team more than a women's team. These coaches noted that since males are less inclined to develop and foster effective interpersonal relationships with their teammates (compared to females), if a high degree of interpersonal support was developed and combined with an emphasis on performing well, it could have a great impact on the team's success. Future research should continue to assess the qualities associated with successful and unsuccessful coach-athlete relationships and start assessing the qualities of successful and unsuccessful teammate

relationships. Additionally, research must expand beyond quality identification and investigate what these qualities actually impact and how they are manifested in male and female athletes. For example, what does it actually mean to respect your coach or teammates, and how is this quality developed?

This study developed a relationship–performance orientation construct which offers a contribution to research involving achievement goal orientations. Research on goal orientations has primarily focused on individual task and ego orientations (Chian & Wang, 2008; Hanrahan & Cerin, 2009; Vosloo, Ostrow, & Watson, 2009). However, some research has noted that social orientations are important to consider alongside task and ego orientations. For example a study by Stuntz and Weiss (2003) found that three specific social orientations—friendship, group acceptance, and coach praise—were distinct from task and ego orientations. A second study by Stuntz and Weiss (2009) concluded that defining success or competence in terms of social relationships can have positive motivational benefits in sport. Although the work of Stuntz and Weiss was completed with middle school boys and girls and may not be replicated with college athletes, it offers the possibility for considering the impact of alternative orientations to higher levels of sport, specifically the impact of social dynamics. The results of this study suggest that acceptance from coaches and teammates is a critical component of college athletes overall orientation to sport as well.

If relationship–performance orientation measures are developed, we can compare their relationship to both task and ego orientations and determine, like Stuntz and Weiss (2009) did, whether or not they are distinct from task and ego orientation. Regardless,

achievement goal orientation research in sport should expand beyond task and ego orientation and include both social and relationship–performance orientations as they represent important variables that would expand our knowledge in this area.

The relationship–performance orientation construct is in its infancy and must be clearly identified, measured, and compared across other achievement orientations. The relationship–performance orientation construct was developed out of the coaches responses regarding the perceived importance of developing meaningful interpersonal relationships with teammates and coaches relative to the perceived importance of performing well. Although it is stated that coaches perceived athletes could be both relationship and performance oriented relationships are complex and dynamic. Therefore, future research must define more clearly what it means to be relationship oriented as athletes may view relationships as necessary products of successful performance rather than simply describing the degree of interpersonal connections felt or desired with coaches and teammates.

If there are indeed significant differences in the relationship–performance orientations of male and female athletes’ research needs to explore what impact this has upon both coaches and athletes; specifically, research must consider their effects. For example, are their difficulties within teams if athletes have dissimilar relationship–performance orientations? The coaches interviewed in this study noted general differences between the perceived relationship–performance orientations of their male and female athletes, with female athletes being perceived as more relationship oriented,

but did not illustrate any specific problems, concerns, or effects within their teams, leaving room for a significant amount of research in this area.

Interpreting the Coach–Athlete Relationship with Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interaction is a useful social psychological paradigm with which to interpret and discuss the results of this study as they relate to coach–athlete and teammate relationships. The term *symbolic interaction* refers to the distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between people and posits that people interpret or define each other’s actions instead of simply reacting to them (Blumer, 1969). From a symbolic interactionist perspective, the coaches’ perceptions and behavior are derived from the meaning they attach to the actions of their athletes. Since the coaches in this study were experienced coaches, they had numerous interactions with athletes’ over time and these interactions served to develop the meaning and eventual opinions that coaches constructed over the course of their careers in coaching. Consequently, for the coaches in this study their thoughts and behavior are thought to derive primarily from the interactions they had coaching males and females. Blumer (1969) states that a person “forms and aligns his own action on the basis of such interpretation of the acts of others. This is the fundamental way in which a group action takes place in human society” (p.82). Additionally, Armstrong (2007) notes:

Symbolic interactionism posits that individuals often organize their conduct in accord with their expectations of others and depending upon their familiarity with the situations. Consequently, definitions and meanings attached to situations often govern individual and group behavior (p.113).

A strict sex differences approach is not the medium through which the results of this study were interpreted, nor is it a tenet of symbolic interaction as a sociological paradigm. Rather, through previous interactions, coaches and athletes develop and acquire common understandings—or schemas—of how to act in specific situations. Poczwardowski et al. (2003) also utilized a symbolic interaction paradigm in an attempt to introduce and explain the concept of meaning in coach–athlete relationships. The authors stated that “through negotiating meaning, via their relationship (i.e., activity, interaction, and care), both the athlete and coach experienced growth on both task and interpersonal levels” (p.134). Additionally, Jackson et al. (2009) noted from interviews with both coaches and athletes that favorable self-efficacy perceptions developed from positive perceptions of each other and positive perceptions of what each person (coach and athlete) *perceived* each other felt about each other.

Since coaches in this study noted the importance of adapting their behavior to specific situations or individuals, they acknowledged that not all interactions with males and females are the same and that male and female athletes bring their own unique constructions of themselves to their teams. To say that coaches report female athletes being more relationship than performance oriented reflects the multitude of interactions they had with their players’ over time but does not imply a unilateral sex difference approach because coaches cited both individual differences and changes in athletes’ behavior over time.

When discussing these results regarding gender similarities and differences it is important to note the potential impact of culture, social systems, and social roles. From a

symbolic interaction paradigm these are regarded as structural features that set conditions for peoples' behavior but do not determine them. As Blumer (1969) notes, people "do not act toward culture, social structure or the like; they act toward situations" (p.88). This is to not to mitigate the possible impact of culture, socialization, and the construction of gender. Blumer states that social forces supply "fixed sets of symbols which people use in interpreting their situations" (p.88). Therefore coaches are also influenced by social forces (how gender is constructed and how society shapes expectations of male and female behavior in sport). However, Blumer also notes that as new situations arise and old situations become unstable, the influence of social organization decreases. Therefore in a constantly changing environment it is up to the individual to construct their own sense of meaning. Coaches talked about an increase in the competitiveness and performance orientation of their female athletes in recent years, depicting a culture and an athletic environment that is continually evolving. As one coach commented, "I think now we are in a different environment where a lot of the girls that are coming into my program are just much more liberated, or head strong, or just are competitive as people, and I think that's been a shift in our culture" (012). Symbolic interactionists have noted the importance of developing research that specifies both variations in social structure and social persons (Stryker, 2002) and these approaches align well with the recent surge in qualitative studies with coaches and athletes.

While culture can yield a framework with which to interpret peoples' behavior, people are actively constructing their own meanings and concurrently evolving as the culture evolves, but the individual is the primary agent of behavior. While the coaches

reported significant differences between their male and female athletes with respect to their athletes' relationship–performance orientations, the coaches stated that these differences are becoming smaller as female athletes become more competitive. Since symbolic interaction is associated with constructing meaning it is a useful lens through which to interpret coach–athlete relationships as coaches seem to be actively engaged in a dynamic process of learning, relating, and connecting with their athletes in which both the coach and athlete impact each other.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study it is concluded that male dual-role college soccer coaches perceive: (a) similar qualities are needed for successful coach–athlete relationships with males and females; (b) coaching males and females is similar; and (c) despite these similarities, differences exist in coachability, relationship–performance orientation, communication, and leadership. These areas are discussed in terms of coach–athlete relationships, relationship–performance orientation, and coaching versus communication and leadership.

Coach–Athlete Relationships

Coaches felt that *effective communication, honesty and openness, caring, consistency, and respect* are the characteristics of successful relationships (Table 3, p. 187) for both males and females. Despite differences noted in leadership and communication coaches felt that the aforementioned qualities are necessary in establishing productive relationships with both males and females and the absence of these qualities would negatively impact the success of the coach–athlete relationship.

While these characteristics have been identified in other studies involving collegiate coaches (Gould et al. 1999; Gould et al. 2002; LaVoi, 2007; Rhind and Jowett, 2010) this study is the first to assess the perceptions of dual-role college soccer coaches. While the qualities of successful coach–athlete relationships may be similar for both males and females, how these qualities are perceived and achieved may be different and represent interesting areas for future research.

Relationship–Performance Orientation

Coaches perceived their male athletes to be more performance oriented and their female athletes to be more relationship oriented. However, coaches noted that elements of both orientations are present in males and females and that individual differences exist. Additionally coaches noted that the more competitive female athletes have stronger performance orientations.

The relationship–performance orientation construct was developed to explain how interpersonal relationships with coaches and teammates and athletic performance can impact male and female athletes overall competitive orientation. The emergence and development of the relationship–performance orientation is a primary contribution of this study. It uniquely discusses the impact of coach–athlete and teammate relationships and athletic performance upon an athlete’s overall orientation to sport in a way that has not previously been described, considered, or researched. The relationship–performance orientation construct has potential to offer more than previous constructs, such as task and ego orientations or performance and mastery orientations, because these orientations

do not adequately consider the importance and impact of coach–athlete and teammate relationships which are primary sources of influence in sport.

Coaching Versus Communication and Leadership

Coaches perceived coaching males and females to be similar, but cited differences in coachability and how they led and communicated with males and females. Coaches noted that females were more coachable because they were more receptive to instruction, trusting, and willing to change or try new ideas, concepts, and strategies. Coaches also reported giving female athletes more feedback than males and felt that females wanted more feedback. The differences in coachability also reflected coaches' feelings that females are more amenable and interested in relating and working with others.

Meanwhile, the differences in communication and leadership are best characterized with the driving versus leading approach discussed by coaches. Coaches noted using more driving behaviors when coaching and communicating with males and more leading behaviors when coaching and communicating with females. Additionally, content analysis revealed that coaches perceived their male athletes to place a greater value on centralized leadership approaches compared to females who valued decentralized approaches more. The centralized versus decentralized approaches discussed provide a means to understanding differences in communication and leadership and opens additional possibilities for future research in the areas of coaching, communication, and leadership. Finally, coaches perceived that female athletes are more collectively oriented which helps explain their preferences for a decentralized leadership structure while males are more individually oriented and value a more hierarchical

leadership structure, which reflects a more centralized approach. In summary, the similarities reported in coaching males and females were specific to training and instruction, while the differences reported in leadership and communication reflect differences in the relational elements of coaching.

Final Thoughts

This study is a contribution to research involving coaches' perceptions of coaching and relating to male and female college athletes, and serves as the only study to systematically examine dual-role college coaches' perceptions of the impact of coach-athlete and teammate relationships and athletic performance upon competitive orientation. Despite anecdotal differences reported in coaching males and females, this study is the first to interview experienced dual-role college soccer coaches and gather their perceptions of the similarities and differences in coaching and communicating with both male and female college athletes. The results of the study illustrate that male dual-role college soccer coaches perceive coaching males and females to be a dynamic and evolving phenomenon in which male and female orientations to sport are becoming more similar. Despite the differences perceived by the male coaches interviewed we have to be careful not to simply place female athletes in a relationship "box" and male athletes in a performance "box". There may be more similarities than differences between male and female athletes regarding the importance of coach-athlete and teammate relationships, and their impact on an athlete's experience, orientation to sport, and athletic performance. Additionally, one should not assume that "more relationship oriented" equals "less competitive." Female athletes may be equally interested in both winning and personally

connecting with their coaches and teammates. Beyond personal orientation or interest, it benefits male and female athletes to demonstrate care and concern for their teammates as improving overall social cohesion and mutual understanding improves the performance of a team (Callow, Smith, Hardy, Arthur, & Hardy, 2009) and the efficacy levels of its members (Marcos et al., 2010).

Nevertheless, the coaches interviewed report differences in regards to their relationships with males and females and these differences stimulate discussion. Coaches specifically mention females making more of an effort to get to know their coaches and teammates compared to males, noting that female coach–athlete relationships are more multi-dimensional. Women may simply be more adept at being both relationship and performance orientated, or more interested in incorporating both orientations simultaneously. Women are often expected to manage more relationships than men, and in the process take on more interpersonal caregiving roles than men (Eagly, 2009). Therefore, socialization characteristics may influence an athlete’s relationship–performance orientation. Differences between males and females may primarily be a function of *how* they communicate (with behavior and actions) their preferences for effective coach–athlete and teammate relationships.

If the results of this study reflect true similarities and differences in males and females orientation to sport, future research needs to examine the effects. While limitations have been noted, the study significantly improves our knowledge of the experiences and perceptions of male college coaches who coach both male and female

athletes, and can be a catalyst for additional research involving coaching, communication, leadership, and relationship science.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

Intro: As the head coach of both a men's and women's college soccer program you offer a unique perspective on the experience of coaching both men and women at the collegiate level. This interview is an opportunity for you to share your experiences coaching your men's and women's teams and your perceptions regarding coaching male and female athletes.

Part I.

1. Grand Question

“Why did you decide to be both the men's and women's coach at ...?”

Transition—As the coach of both a men's and women's team I believe you have a unique perspective on relating to both male and female athletes. I am interested in exploring your thoughts and experiences regarding coach–athlete and teammate relationships and how you feel they relate to the performance of your players and teams.

2. Coach–athlete Relationship Building and How it Relates to Performance

A. What does a successful coach–athlete relationship look like with your male and female players?

Possible Probes:

- What are the characteristics of a successful relationship *on* the field?
- What are the characteristics of a successful relationship *off* the field?
- Are there differences and similarities associated with building relationships with your men's and women's players *on* the field?
- Are there differences and similarities associated with building relationships with your men's and women's players *off* the field?

B. What's the experience like trying to build successful coach–athlete relationships with your male and female athletes?

Possible Probes:

- How do you build successful coach–athlete relationships with your players?
- Are there differences and similarities associated with building relationships with your men's and women's players?

Transition—Now I'd like to further explore relationships in regards to how they affect the performance of your players.

- C. How do you feel the performance of your athletes relates to the relationship you have with them?

Possible Probes:

- Are there differences and similarities between your male and female athletes in this regard?
- Have you noticed differences in the types of relationships you feel your men's and women's players need to have with you in order to perform well? How?
- Overall, what are your thoughts regarding the importance of coach–athlete relationships for the performance of your male and female athletes?

Transition—Now I'd like to explore teammate relationship building and how it relates to performance.

3. Teammate Relationship Building and How it Relates to Performance

- A. What do successful teammate relationships look like with your male and female players?

Possible Probes:

- What are the characteristics of successful relationships *on* the field?
 - What are the characteristics of successful relationships *off* the field?
 - Are there differences and similarities associated with building relationships between your men's and women's players *on* the field?
 - Are there differences and similarities associated with building relationships with your men's and women's players *off* the field?
- B. For your male and female athletes, what's the experience like trying to build successful relationships between the players themselves?

Possible Probes:

- How do you build successful teammate relationships with your players?
- Are there differences and similarities associated with building teammate relationships with your men's and women's players?
- Team building exercises
 - Do you use team-building exercises? If so, how?
 - Do you use similar and/or different team building exercises with your men's and women's programs?

- Do you use team-building exercises more frequently for either team?

Transition—Now let's talk about teammate relationships and how they relate to the performance of your teams.

- C. What's the correlation between performance and the relationships your athletes have with each other *off* the field? i.e, how are they related?

Possible Probes:

- Are there differences and similarities between the teams in this regard? How? Why?

- D. What's the correlation between performance and the relationships your athletes have with each other *off* the field? i.e, how are they related?

Possible Probes:

- Are there differences and similarities between the teams in this regard? How? Why?

Part II—Gender (Experiences and Perceptions)

I. Grand Question

A lot of people believe that coaching males and females is totally different. What has been your experience?

II. Gender Stereotypes: Leadership

- A. Leadership: Anson Dorrance, winner of 17 National Championships when asked to compare coaching men and women has been quoted as saying “you drive men, you lead women”. What has your experience been like in this regard?

Possible Probe:

- How are you most effective when leading male and female athletes?

Transition—Now I'd like to read a quote from a recent book on gender and competition:

- B. Competitive Orientation: Kathleen DeBoer, a former successful college coach and athletic administrator recently published a book entitled *Gender and Competition, How Men and Women Approach Work and Play Differently*. DeBoer states the following: “To excel in athletics, people must be convinced to struggle. Where gender enters the equation is in the relationship of acceptance to struggle and, therefore, transitively to performance. Females need to feel acceptance before they will commit to struggle. Males will struggle first, expecting acceptance only after they perform” (DeBoer, 2004).

Female Acceptance—Struggle—Performance

Male Struggle—Performance—Acceptance

What has your experience been like in this regard?

Possible Probes:

- How do you create your environment to enable your athletes to feel accepted?
- How do you create your environment to enable your athletes to ‘struggle’?

Part III—Conclusion

Transition—I appreciate you taking the time to meet with me and share your insights regarding coaching. I have just a few final questions.

- I. Have you enjoyed coaching one of your programs more than the other? Why?
- II. What advice would you give younger coaches who coach both male and female teams?
- III. Do you have any additional thoughts regarding coaching male and female athletes that you would like to share?

APPENDIX B

Consent Form

IRB #0604M84807

Examining the Experience of Male Head Coaches who Coach Male and Female Intercollegiate Soccer Teams

You are invited to be in a research study of male intercollegiate soccer coaches who coach both men's and women's teams. You were selected as a possible participant because of your status as a head men's and women's intercollegiate soccer coach. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Mike Navarre Ph.D. candidate, School of Kinesiology and Dr. Diane Wiese-Bjornstal, Advisor, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to identify the experiences and perceptions of intercollegiate soccer coaches who coach both male and female teams.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

Participate in an interview regarding your experiences and perceptions coaching men's and women's soccer teams. The interview will last approximately 1.5 hours. Additionally once we have transcribed the interview we would ask you to be available via a follow-up phone call to clarify or interpret any of your comments that are difficult for us to understand.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

There are no conceivable risks to participating in this study.

The benefits to participation are providing valuable insights into coaching college athletes which can serve to help other coaches, players, and administrators better understand the experience and knowledge of coaches who coach both male and female athletes and teams.

Compensation:

You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify participants. Research records and audio recordings will be stored securely and only the researchers listed above will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researchers conducting this study are Mike Navarre and Dr. Diane Wiese-Bjornstal. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact them at The University of Minnesota–Twin Cities: Mike Navarre (612) 382-6588, navar007@umn.edu, or Diane Wiese-Bjornstal (612) 625-6580, dwiese@umn.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects’ Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

Glossary

- Coachability**—Construct that includes (but is not limited to) an athlete being inquisitive, teachable, attentive and receptive to instruction, trusting, and willing to change or try new ideas, concepts, and strategies.
- Coach–Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q)**—Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004) built on their previous research to develop the CART-Q to assess an athletes’ direct perspective and meta-perspective. The direct perspective refers to how athletes perceive their relationship with their coach while the meta-perspective refers to how athletes believe their coach perceives their relationship.
- Coaching Behavior Assessment System (CBAS)**—Instrument developed out of the meditational model of leadership. CBAS records overt behavior with the following dimensions: supportiveness, instructiveness, and punitiveness, (Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1978).
- Coaching Behavior Scale for Sport (CBS-S)**—A sport-specific measure, to investigate coaching behaviors and satisfaction ratings across sport-type and gender (Baker, Yardley, & Côté 2003). The seven behaviors addressed in the CBS-S are physical training and planning, goal setting, mental preparation, technical skills, competition strategies, personal rapport, and negative personal rapport.
- Coaching Effectiveness Program (CET)**—Program developed by Smith, Smoll, and Curtis (1979) to train youth coaches to give more positive feedback to their athletes and create a nurturing environment.
- Coaching Efficacy Scale (CES)**—Assesses coaching confidence along four dimensions: game strategy, motivation, teaching technique, and character building (Feltz, Chase, Moritz, & Sullivan, 1999).
- Coding**—“Systematically labeling concepts, themes, events, and topical markers so that you can readily retrieve and examine all of the data units that refer to the same subject across all your interviews” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 207).
- Cohesion**—A dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs (Carron, Brawley, & Widmeyer, 1998).
- Collective Efficacy**—Refers to a group’s a belief in its conjoint capabilities to produce given levels of attainment (Bandura, 1986; 1997).

Competitiveness—A construct that refers to the amount of effort and determination to win that athletes have each practice and game. Also refers to athletes willingness do everything in their control to win and play their best.

Competitive Orientation Acceptance—Refers to perceptions that coaches share regarding players having an integrated set of attitudes, motives, and beliefs whereby a significant importance is to feel accepted (generally approved of or having compelling recognition) and connected with coaches and/or teammates. Note: this also refers to a perceived predisposition or inclination to have this integrated set of attitudes, motives, and beliefs.

Competitive Orientation Collective—Refers to perceptions that coaches share regarding players having an integrated set of attitudes, motives, and beliefs whereby a significant importance is for the team to be connected/together. Also associated with thinking of others first, (teammates, coaches, even those less fortunate, (ex: community service). Note: this also refers to a perceived predisposition or inclination to have this integrated set of attitudes, motives, and beliefs. *Differs from CO Acceptance b/c it refers to a group orientation not an individual orientation.*

Competitive Orientation Individual—Refers to perceptions that coaches share regarding players having an integrated set of attitudes, motives, and beliefs whereby a significant importance is for the individual to put their interests and motives before or ahead of the collective. Involves thinking of the ‘self’ first.

Competitive Orientation Inventory (COI)—Assesses the relative importance of performance versus outcome (Vealey, 1986).

Competitive Orientation Performance—Refers to perceptions that coaches share regarding players having an integrated set of attitudes, motives, and beliefs whereby one has a strong desire to compete, win, and perform well. Associated with placing ‘athletic trust’ in their teammates above personal respect, trust, acceptance, and connection. Note: this also refers to a perceived predisposition or inclination to have this integrated set of attitudes, motives, and beliefs.

Culture—Refers to the integrated system of socially acquired values, beliefs, and rules of conduct which delimit the range of accepted behaviors within sport.

Dual-role—Refers to male college soccer coaches who simultaneously are the head coach of both men’s and women’s college soccer programs.

Feedback—Evaluative information, can refer to the act of providing praise, compliment, or criticism.

Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO)—A questionnaire developed by Schutz (1967) to assess three basic needs: affection, inclusion, and control. Later adapted it to sport to assess coach–athlete compatibility, (Carron and Bennett, 1977).

Gender—The appearance, actions, thoughts, and feelings that society deems as masculine or feminine (Birrell, 2000).

Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS)—Developed by Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) to test the Multidimensional Model of Leadership. The LSS identified five dimensions of leadership behavior in sport: training and instruction, democratic behavior, autocratic behavior, social support, and positive feedback. The LSS was later revised (RLSS) to include situational considerations, (Chelladurai, 1990).

Mediational Model of Leadership—Model that attempts to illustrate what coaches do, how these behaviors are perceived and recalled by their players, and players' attitudinal responses to the total situation, (Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977).

Motivational climate—Assumed to be a function of the goals that a group aspires to achieve, the evaluation and reward process, and how individuals are expected to relate to each other.

Multidimensional Model of Leadership—Focused on decision-making styles of coaches. The original model had three styles of decision-making: autocratic, consultative, and delegative (Chelladurai & Haggerty, 1978).

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)—Consists of three divisions (I,II, and III). NCAA division I and II schools are able to provide athletic scholarships to student–athletes while NCAA division III schools do not provide aid in the form of athletic scholarships.

Perceived Coaching Competence Questionnaire—Measures coaches perceptions of competence in seven areas: communication, teaching sport skills, motivation, training and conditioning, sport-specific knowledge of strategies and tactics, coaching during competition, and practice and seasonal planning (Barber, 1998).

Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire (PMCSQ)—Assesses the perceived motivational climate of teams. Climates that emphasize learning and development (task oriented) are referred to as *mastery oriented*, while climates that emphasize outcomes over development (ego orientation) are referred to as *performance oriented* (Walling, Duda, & Chi, 1993).

Relationship–Performance Orientation—A construct developed by the researcher to explain coaches' perceptions of the relative impact and importance that coach–

athlete and teammate relationships and athletic performance (individual and collective) have upon male and female athletes' overall orientation to sport.

Sport Orientation Questionnaire (SOQ)—Assesses three dimensions: competitiveness (desire to strive for success in competitive sport), win orientation (a desire to win and avoid losing), and goal orientation (an emphasis on achieving personal goals), (Gill & Deeter 1988).