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Desired leadership styles in classroom and court:

Comparing ideal coaching and teaching styles of collegiate student-athletes

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Thesis submitted to the
Eberly College of Arts & Sciences
at West Virginia University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Communication Studies

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2014

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Argumentativeness

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to compare student-athletes' ideal coaching leadership styles and teaching leadership styles. Further, this study examined the relationship between student-athletes' level of argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness and their ideal leadership styles. Student-athletes (N=67) were surveyed about their ideal coaching and teaching leadership styles and their communication traits. The averages of each leadership styles were compared to rank them from most ideal to least ideal. Student-athletes prefer the leadership styles of Paternalistic, Democratic, and Transformational for coaches and the leadership styles of Laissez-Faire and Transactional for teachers. Student-athletes' argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness were related to some of their preferred ideal coaching and teaching leadership styles.

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Desired leadership styles in classroom and court:

Comparing ideal coaching and teaching styles of collegiate student-athletes

Sports, specifically college sports, have many facets in the United States; it is multi-layered and not uniform. College athletics have become a big business, especially for “big-time” universities. In fact, it is almost impossible to picture America without college sports (Andre & James, 1991). Sports have tremendous symbolic value. As players, officials, administrators, or spectators, either at the live events or as consumers of mediated sport, people express, for better or worse, a range of embodied emotions (Maguire, 1999). Many people identify with a university via the schools’ athletics teams.

Student-athletes are the heart of college sports. These individuals work to represent the university during athletic competition, in the classroom, community, and media. Being a student-athlete requires a lot effort and dedication to confront the formidable challenges of all these responsibilities at a high level. Though this seems like an impassable test, student-athletes “have the opportunity for an extraordinary education, in the most complete sense of the word” (Duderstadt, 2003, p. 190).

Athletes are often treated differently than others students because of their status. Student-athletes are “special” because, in a sense, they are working for the college. While coaches and athletic administrators are fully committed to their jobs, student-athletes are considered students first and athletes second (Gerdy, 1997). Student-athletes must to be good students so they can participate in practices and games. When students do not succeed in the classroom, they are no longer able to represent the university on the playing field.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) “is an association of member colleges that make certain rules governing eligibility, recruiting and financial aid” for all collegiate student-athletes (McQuilken, 1996, p. 27). One of most rigorous rules of the NCAA is the rule of eligibility. The purpose of the eligibility rule is to ensure that athletes are mainly students and stay on track toward graduation. Most student-athletes are given a scholarship which covers their tuition, fees, housing, and food. Student-athletes, besides having athletic commitments and training requirements, also have academic responsibilities including attending classes and labs, participating in study hall, completing homework and projects, and taking exams just like their non-athlete peers. Athletic departments offer help to student-athletes to achieve academic success by providing tutors, computer labs, and academic advisors. At the same time, in the end, student- athletes are the ones responsible for fulfilling both their athletic and classroom obligations.

For student-athletes, relationships with their coaches are tremendously important. Coaches control at least half of their time while they are enrolled in the institution (Gerdy, 1977). The time that student-athletes spend for practice, team meetings, traveling and competing takes most of their leisure time. The coach often is with the student-athletes during this time. Each coach has a distinct leadership style which student-athletes have to learn and understand. Student-athletes try to connect with their coaches because they spend a lot time together and understanding their coaching style will help the student-athlete be successful. Coaches and student-athletes work together to build good communication which helps them to have success both on the playing field and in the classroom.

The purpose of this study was to compare student-athletes’ ideal coaching leadership styles and ideal teaching leadership styles. Further, this study examined the relationship between

student-athletes' level of argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness and their ideal leadership styles. This study concentrated on six leadership styles (authoritarian, democratic, laissez-faire, paternalistic, transformational and transactional), as well as argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness. In sports, coaches can be observed using high level of verbal aggressiveness toward their athletes, which can cause problems with the student-athletes. In the classroom environment when teachers use verbal aggressiveness toward their students, students learn less (Myers, 2003). Given that problems exist when both sides -- coaches and students-athletes or teachers and students-athletes -- use this verbally aggressive communication style, I believed that student-athletes' verbal aggressiveness and argumentativeness could be related to their preferred leadership styles of their coaches and teachers.

Leadership Style

Leadership is the influence that a person has on the behaviors of others. It is a type of social influence that occurs when one person, the leader, is capable of causing a desired behavior of someone else, the follower, because of the bonds that unite them and the social relationship which occurs between leader and follower. Leadership is the art of mobilizing people for effective action. The essence of leadership is exerting special influence within a group in order to get closer to followers goals of lasting satisfaction and the essential needs of the group. Leadership is a fundamental part of the human experience. "Wherever society exists, leadership exists"(Hackman & Johnson, 2004, p.5). Leadership has been studied by sport management scholars in depth for a long time (Beam, Serwatka, & Wilson, 2004; Chelladurai, Imamura, Yamaguchi, Oinuma, & Miyaychi, 1998; Jambor & Zhang, 1997; Rimer & Chelladurai, 1995), but this research has primarily focused on organizational leadership styles, not on student-athletes' preferences (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980).

The most commonly studied leadership perspective in sports is the Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MML) developed by Chelladurai (1978). The major types of leadership behaviors are prescribed leader behavior, leader behavior preferred, and the actual leader behavior. In MML, it has been stated that the environment differs from more to less favorable in correlation with adaptation versus reactive behavior. It was also emphasized that the leadership process is easier if a leader's behavior is greatly advocated as a result of the "situational variables operative" (Chelladurai & Carron, 1978, p. 63). However, according to discretionary behavior, the environment is viewed as less suitable for the leader. What is more, performance and satisfaction play a huge role in the multidimensional model which focuses on outputs of competitors and subordinate degree satisfaction with experienced leadership. In MML, there are two interrelationships seen as two parameters from various perspectives which are direct results of the leader's behavior. Subordinates, athletes, are striving towards mission accomplishment, whereas leaders, coaches, meet preferences in both satisfaction and performance. Coaches are most likely seen as "benefactors" who gives athletes opportunities to perform, develop their skills and help achieve their full potential (Chelladurai & Carron, 1978, p. 72). According to Chelladurai and Carron, "in order to achieve equality, the athlete must reciprocate and provide some benefit to the coach" (p. 72). Performance of a student athlete would be more beneficial with contribution of satisfactory leadership and their own commitment to the program. Six leadership styles were investigated in this study: authoritarian, democratic, laissez-faire, paternalistic, transformational and transactional.

The authoritarian leadership style or autocratic leader dictates procedures, controls all activities and makes decision with little input from the others members of the group. Basically the leader makes choices based on his/her own ideas and judgment. Athletes who are competing

in really high levels of competition often prefer autocratic behaviors from their coaches (Turman, 2003). Chelladurai (1978) suggested that athletes in dependent sports (e.g., several players playing at once) would prefer more autocratic behavior than those in independent sports (e.g., one player plays at a time). Terry and Howe (1984) found that athletes from dependent sports preferred less autocratic behavior than athletes in independent sports. Riemer and Chelladurai (1995) noted that defensive football players preferred more autocratic leadership style than offensive football players. More recently, Surujlal and Dhurup (2012) argued that athletes do not prefer autocratic behavior because athletes don't like to be "dictated" by their coaches. Autocratic coaches and teachers would tell their players and students what to do, paying little attention to student-athlete input and feedback.

The participative or democratic leader involves all the team members in the decision process. Input from each member is valued and respected but in the end the leader still makes the final decision. Athletes in sports like football and basketball prefer democratic leadership (Turman, 2003). Turman also noted that athletes from independent sports preferred more democratic leadership styles and less autocratic leadership styles than did athletes in dependent sports. Yuosof (2007) stated that coaches who use democratic leadership styles toward their athletes gain from their students higher group cohesion. Additionally, Ramezaninezhad et al. (2009) found that soccer coaches preferred more training and instruction leadership styles than the democratic leadership styles. Robins and Coulter (2002) suggested that democratic leadership style typically led to higher performance levels than the autocratic style. Earlier studies noted that female athletes preferred more democratic leadership styles (Beam, Serwatka, & Wilson, 2004; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Martin, Jackson, Richardson, & Weiller, 1999; Sherman et al.; Terry, 1984).

The laissez-faire is a hands off leadership style and followers do not perceive much power from their leaders (Hackman & Johnson, 2004). The leader does not give too much direction to one's subordinate, giving the followers freedom to make decisions about what they want to do and even if they want to do the given behaviors. Positive aspects of laissez-faire leadership style is that followers can feel a high level of autonomy and self-rule. However, this type of leadership often is related to decreased motivation, focus, productivity, and satisfaction (Hackman & Johnson, 2004). The laissez-faire coach and teacher would give student-athletes little direction and would exhibit less interests in their players and students.

The paternalistic leader takes care of one's followers like a parent. Followers are loyal to and trust their leader because they know that their leader wants the best for them. The paternalistic leader is very demanding of one's subordinates and particular about how they perform. According to Erben and Guneser (2008), paternalistic leadership affects emotional dedication to the task and maintains this dedication. Also, paternalistic leadership has an effect on the ethical climate. One of the major viewpoints in paternalism is intention because it has to do with people's actions and certain behaviors towards others. Coaches and teachers might use a paternalistic leadership style to motivate and nurture their players and students. Paternalistic leadership behaviors are frequent in organizational contexts and are related to positive workplace culture.

Transformational leaders, also called charismatic leaders, challenge and motivate their followers (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders help followers achieve their goals by sharing vision for how they can get there. Avolio and Bass (2002) suggested that transformational leaders encourage others to achieve their goals and ambitions, even beyond expectations. Transformational leaders attempt to raise the level of moral maturity and they concentrate on

each individual's sense of self-worth and self-esteem to encourage others involvement in pursuing these goals and purposes. Avolio and Bass (2002) stated that transformational leaders behave in order to accomplish more effective results by leadership and their persuasion over followers. Both transformational coaches and teachers would have high goals for their players and students and would collaborate with them in order for those players and students to succeed.

The transactional leader uses rewards and punishments as motivational tools. In most cases, the transactional leader uses punishments for not meeting standards and rewards for doing well. A punishment is less personal and is based on one's follower's performance. Avolio and Bass (2002) said that transactional leaders tend to be categorized as contingently rewarding (provide rewards), active in managing by exception (monitoring performance and take actions) and non-transactional passive leaders (wait for problems and then make decisions). Rewards and punishments are codified by the leaders and leaders inform subordinates of the rules, rewards and punishments. Coaches might use playing time in a game as a reward and running laps as a punishment. Teachers might consider extra credit to be a reward and extra readings as a punishment.

What is considered an effective and appropriate leadership styles depends, in part, on the context, the situation, and the individuals involved. In their everyday lives in college, student-athletes deal with both coaches and teachers. The leadership styles valued in a coach may differ from those leadership styles valued in a teacher. As a result, the following research questions were advanced:

RQ1: Which coaching styles will student-athletes identify as the most ideal?

RQ2: Which teaching styles will student-athletes identify as the most ideal?

RQ3: Is there a significant difference between student-athletes' ideal coaching styles and their ideal teaching styles?

Argumentativeness and Verbal Aggressiveness

Two aggressive communication behaviors that exist in interpersonal, instructional, and organizational interactions are argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness (Infante, 1987; Infante & Rancer, 1996; Rancer, 1998; Wigley, 1998). Argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness are considered aggression communication traits. While argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness both involve individuals being aggressive, verbal aggressiveness usually leads to negative outcomes while argumentativeness often leads to positive outcomes (Anderson & Martin, 1999, Rancer, Whitecap, Kosberg, & Avtgis, 1997). Verbal aggressiveness involves attacking self-concepts of people instead of, or in addition to, their positions on situations (Infante & Wigley, 1986). Argumentativeness involves arguing about controversial issues with others as well as refuting others' points on position (Infante & Rancer, 1982, 1996). Additionally, verbal aggressiveness is considered to be a type of hostility while argumentativeness is considered to be a form of assertiveness.

Argumentativeness is a constructive aggressive communication trait. People who are argumentative like to argue; they are likely to initiate arguments and they are unlikely to avoid arguments that others initiate (Infante & Rancer, 1996). These arguments focus on a topic versus a person. For example, if two people in an organization are trying to figure out what model of a computer to purchase, each individual might argue for a different model. In the argument, if both individuals make arguments using evidence and reasoning and are assertive in pointing out the strengths and weaknesses in both models, one would say that both individuals are being argumentative. Research shows that this type of argumentative behavior leads to better decision-

making (Rancer, 1998). However, if the individuals start making personal attacks against each other, instead of focusing on the merits of the topic of the discussion, the individuals are becoming verbally aggressive (and verbally aggressive behavior leads to a host of negative task and relational outcomes).

In organizational and group settings, when people are argumentative, they are more satisfied and committed (Anderson & Martin, 1999; Rancer, 1998). In part this is because argumentative people are more assertive and cognitively flexible, two important characteristics of competent communicators (Martin & Anderson, 1996). At the same time, there is some evidence that being argumentative does not always result in positive outcomes. For instance, Martin and Anderson (1997) reported that individuals' argumentativeness was not related to their satisfaction with their roommates. In the classroom, students do not always view teacher argumentativeness positively (Myers, 2001; Myers & Knox, 2000). Less is known about the role of argumentativeness in the coach-player relationship.

When people are the target of verbally aggressive messages, they often experience mental pain. Receivers of verbally aggressive messages can feel "embarrassed, inadequate, and depressed" (Martin, Rocca, Cayanus, & Weber, 2009, p.230). Verbally aggressive messages include: character attack, competence attacks, physical appearance attacks, maledictions, teasing, ridicule, threats, swearing, and nonverbal emblems (Infante, 1987; Infante et al., 1990; Infante, Riddle, Horvath, & Tumlin, 1992). Sources often make others feel bad about themselves. Other possible explanations for using verbal aggressive include reciprocating other's use of verbal aggressive or being socialized to believe that using verbally aggressive messages are appropriate (Martin & Anderson, 1997). Verbally aggressive messages inflicted by close friends are more hurtful than receiving verbal aggressive messages from casual acquaintances (Martin, Anderson,

& Horvath, 1996). Research has provided extensive evidence that verbal aggressiveness in relationships brings negative outcomes (Infante, Myers, & Buerkel, 1994; Martin & Anderson, 1995; Martin, Anderson, Burant, & Weber, 1997).

Numerous researchers have investigated the use of verbal aggressiveness in sport. The frequency and impact of verbal aggression differs depending on the sport and those involved (Lemiux, McKelvie, & Stout, 2002). For instance, Digelidis and Sakellariou (2006) found that athletes who play in a noncontact sport perceived less verbal aggressiveness from their coaches than athletes in contact sports. Digelidis and Sakellariou also noted that volleyball players perceived less verbal aggressiveness from their coaches than basketball players. Kassing and Infante (1999) found that when coaches used verbal aggression to push their athletes to perform better, athletes perceived their coaches as “unfriendly, less credible in terms of character and expertise, and as having less desirable communicator style in terms of less attentiveness, unfriendliness, not relaxed, and conveying a less favorable communicator image” (Kassing & Infante, 1999 p. 115). Also, athletes who viewed their coaches as being high in verbal aggression also conveyed having lower satisfaction with and less understanding from their coaches (Martin, Rocca, Cayanus, & Weber, 2009).

While argumentativeness is often related to positive outcomes in group and organizational context, little is known about argumentativeness in the player-coach relationships (Rancer & Avtgis, 2010). Given that individuals’ trait argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness often play a role in their perceptions, feelings, and behaviors, this study examined student-athletes’ argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness would be related to their ideal coaching and teaching leadership styles.

RQ4: How are student-athletes' trait argumentativeness and trait verbal aggressiveness related to their ideal coaching styles?

RQ5: How are student-athletes' trait argumentativeness and trait verbal aggressiveness related to their ideal teachings styles?

Method

Participants

The participants (N=67) in this study were student-athletes at a Mid Atlantic university, playing at the NCAA Division I level. There were 13 male athletes and 54 female athletes surveyed. The average age of the participants was 19.97 (SD=1.38). The majority of the participants were white (n=84.4%), 12.5% reported being African-American. Participants also reported on their year in school: first year =34.8%, second year =22.7%, third year =19.7%, fourth year =21.2%, fifth year=1.5%. When asked about their sport, 3.2% participated in baseball, 3.2% participated in basketball, 3.2% participated in cross country, 5.3% participated in gymnastics, 18.1% participated in swimming/diving, 4.3% participated in track, 7.4% participated in volleyball, 1.1% participated in wrestling, 20.2% participated in rowing, and 4.3% participated in rifle. Participants reported playing their sport for an average of 8.36 years (SD=5.43).

Procedure

A convenience sample was used to obtain participants. The questionnaire was created and posted online and hosted by Survey Monkey, a commercial online survey development and hosting company. The link to the survey and instructions was sent in an email to the academic counselors who were prompted to forward the survey to all of their student-athletes. The participants voluntarily chose to fill out the survey. Survey Monkey reported the results. Participants could complete the survey only once. The questionnaire consisted of 6 questions about coaching leadership behaviors, 6 teaching leadership behaviors, 20 questions about personal communication traits, and 8 questions about demographics. Leadership behavior items

used a 7-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 (Not at all Ideal) to 7 (Completely Ideal). The personal communication trait questions used a 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 (Almost never true) to 5 (Almost always true). Demographic questions asked the participants about their sex, age, race, year in school, sport, and years in sport.

Data analysis

Data was gathered through Survey Monkey and collected by the researcher. To answer RQ1 and RQ2, an average of each questions' responses was calculated and compared to others of the same leadership behavior. To answer RQ3, a paired samples t-test was conducted comparing the coaching styles and the teaching styles. RQ4 and RQ5 were investigated using Pearson correlation coefficients.

Instruments

Six leadership styles were investigated in this study: authoritarian, paternalistic, democratic, laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational. Several sentences were created to describe each of the leadership styles. For example, for a coach with an authoritarian style, the description was: *Coach A dictates policies and procedures, controls all activities and makes decision with little input from the other members of the group. Coach A basically makes choices based on his/her own ideas and judgment.* A similar description was created to describe a teacher with an authoritarian style: *Teacher A is strict towards his/her students. Teacher A is highly involved and very controlling in the students' work. There are a lot of consequences for not following the rules.* The six items describing the ideal leadership styles for coaches are in Appendix A. The six items describing the ideal leadership styles for teachers are in Appendix B.

The means and standard deviations for the six ideal coaching leadership styles and the six ideal teaching leadership styles are in Table 1.

Student-athletes' argumentativeness was measured using a 10-item version of the Argumentativeness Scale (Infante&Rancer, 1982). Participants responded to each item by saying how true each item was for them, from *Almost Never True* =1 to *Almost Always True* = 5. The coefficient alpha for this study was .89. Scores ranged from 12 to 46 ($M = 29.36$, $SD = 7.79$).

Student-athletes' verbal aggressiveness was measured using a 10-item version of the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale (Infante&Wigley, 1986). Participants responded to each item by saying how true each item was for them, from *Almost Never True* =1 to *Almost Always True* = 5. The coefficient alpha for this study was .90. Scores ranged from 10 to 40 ($M = 19.42$, $SD = 7.24$).

Results

Research Question One set out to discover the ideal coaching style of student-athletes. The highest average response was for transformational coaching style ($M=6.21$, $SD=1.07$). The paternalistic and democratic coaching styles received the second highest average response ($M=5.71$, $SD=1.16$; $M=5.71$, $SD=1.23$). The transactional coaching style received the fourth highest average response ($M=3.71$, $SD=1.64$). The authoritarian coaching style was the fifth most preferred and laissez- faire coaching style was least preferred ($M=2.74$, $SD=1.64$; $M=1.81$, $SD=1.17$). The most ideal coaching leadership style for student-athletes was transformational leadership.

Research Question Two set out to discover the ideal teaching style of student-athletes. The highest average response was for transformational teaching style ($M=5.95$, $SD=1.16$). The democratic teaching style received the second highest average response ($M=5.32$, $SD=1.54$). The paternalistic teaching style received the third highest average response ($M=4.95$, $SD=1.40$). The transactional teaching style was the fourth highest average response ($M=4.90$, $SD=1.49$). The laissez-faire teaching style was the fifth the most preferred and authoritarian teaching style was least preferred ($M=3.22$, $SD=1.46$; $M=2.97$, $SD=1.59$). The most ideal teaching leadership style for student-athletes was the transformational leadership style.

Research Question Three investigated how student-athletes' ideal coaching leadership styles differed from their ideal teaching leadership styles. Six t-tests were conducted with five of the analyses being statistically significant. There was no significant difference for the authoritative leadership style $t(77) = -1.13$, $p > .05$. For the styles of paternalistic $t(76) = 4.26$, $p < .01$, democratic $t(75) = 2.65$, $p < .05$, and transformational $t(77) = 2.21$, $p < .05$, student-athletes rated the coaching leadership styles higher than the teaching leadership styles. For the

styles of laissez-faire $t(77) = -7.99, p < .01$ and transactional $t(76) = -5.39, p < .01$, student-athletes rated the teaching leadership styles higher than the coaching leadership styles.

Research Question Four asked how student-athletes' trait argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness were related to their ideal coaching leadership styles. Student-athletes' trait argumentativeness was not significantly correlated to any of the ideal coaching leadership styles. Student-athletes' trait verbal aggressiveness was significantly correlated to the ideal coaching leadership styles of laissez-faire ($r = .42, p < .01$), transactional ($r = .33, p < .01$), and transformational ($r = -.28, p < .05$). All of the correlations involving this research question can be found in Table 2.

Research Question Five investigated how student-athletes' trait argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness were related to their ideal teaching leadership styles. Student-athletes' trait argumentativeness was significantly correlated to the ideal teaching leadership style of laissez-faire ($r = .44, p < .01$). Student-athletes' trait verbal aggressiveness was significantly correlated to the ideal teaching leadership styles of authoritative ($r = .32, p < .01$), laissez-faire ($r = .39, p < .01$), and transformational ($r = -.26, p < .05$). All of the correlations involving this research question can be found in Table 3.

Discussion

This study aimed to compare coaching and teaching leadership styles based on student-athletes' preferences. Results from this study showed that student-athletes preferred transformational leadership styles from both their coaches and their teachers. Avolio and Bass (2002) suggested that transformational leaders encourage others to achieve their goals and ambitions, even beyond expectations. For student-athletes, being successful in their sport is very important, which is one likely reason why they would prefer the transformational leadership style. These results can help coaches understand that sharing with student-athletes their vision for their both the teams' success and the individual athlete's success could be beneficial to the coach, the player, and the team.

Research question one asked which coaching leadership styles student-athletes will identify as most ideal. Results showed that the most preferred leadership style for coaches was transformational, followed by the styles of paternalistic and democratic. A preference for these styles indicates that student-athletes want to be part of the decision-making process and need to know that their coaches care about them. Not surprisingly, student-athletes do not prefer authoritarian or laissez-faire leadership style. This supports Surujlal and Dhurup's (2012) finding that athletes do not prefer autocratic behavior because athletes don't like to feel as though they are being ordered around by their coaches without any consideration of their needs and preferences. Student-athletes who are part of high level competition would not find the laissez-faire leadership style attractive because a coach with this style would be perceived as not involved or caring. Student-athletes must have goals to which they strive; coaches with the laissez-faire leadership style would likely play an insignificant role in assisting and motivating their students in achieving those goals.

Research question two asked which teaching leadership styles student-athletes would identify as most ideal. Once again, student-athletes preferred the transformational leadership style. Students prefer charismatic teachers who challenge them and collaborate with them (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2011). Teachers with the transformational leadership style are student-centered and their behaviors express a genuine interest in their students. The second most preferred leadership style was democratic. Teachers with the democratic leadership style would involve their students in the decision-making process and would allow students to voice their opinions and dissent. On the other hand, teachers with an authoritarian leadership style, which was the least preferred style, would be much less likely to allow students to voice their opinions and dissent. Students want to play an active role in their education and teachers with the preferred leadership styles, transformational and democratic, are more likely to invite and encourage students to participate (Nussbaum, 1992).

Research question three asked if student-athletes differed in their preferences for leadership styles between their teachers and their coaches. Student-athletes rated the three leadership styles of paternalistic, democratic, and transformational as more attractive for coaches with the biggest discrepancy for preferences involving the paternalistic leadership style. When student-athletes go away to college, coaches often play a paternalistic role. Coaches spend considerably more time with their student-athletes (i.e., players) than teachers spend with those same student-athletes. Often this relationship is more intimate (e.g., more communication, more self-disclosure, and more expression of feelings). Coaches challenge their players to become the best possible athletes, but players also look to a coach for encouragement, support, and affection. Student-athletes might prefer (and expect) their coaches to have a more paternalistic leadership style than their teachers.

Student-athletes rated the leadership styles of laissez-faire and transactional as more attractive for teachers with the biggest discrepancy for preferences involving the laissez-faire style. This result does not indicate that student-athletes want their teachers to possess the laissez-faire style, but that this style would be a more acceptable leadership style for their teachers than for their coaches. Many student-athletes focus on being an athlete first and a student second. A coach who is laissez-faire would not be providing the player with direction and guidance to succeed, which would frustrate the player. A teacher who is laissez-faire might not be viewed favorably by all student-athletes, but some students might actually *like* a teacher with this style. Teachers with the laissez-faire leadership style might require less effort and work from their students and student-athletes might enjoy the extra time this would provide for them to focus on their athletics. These teachers would communicate less with them and might have lower academic expectations for all of their students. Once again, this does not indicate that student-athletes want their teachers to have a laissez-faire leadership style, but that when comparing preferred styles for coaches and teachers, this style is more acceptable for teachers.

Research question four asked whether student-athletes' trait argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness were related to their ideal coaching leadership styles. Student-athletes' trait argumentativeness was not significantly correlated to any of the six coaching leadership styles. Student-athletes' trait verbal aggressiveness was positively related to their preferences for the laissez-faire and transactional leadership styles and was negatively related to their preferences for the transformational leadership style. Laissez-faire coaches most likely care little about their athletes and they give them independence to do what they want to during practice. Possibly student-athletes who are verbally aggressive prefer laissez-faire coaches because they can easily be verbally aggressive without any negative consequences or repercussions.

Transactional coaches use awards and punishments which help student-athletes know what their coaches are expecting from them, which eliminates miscommunication. Student-athletes who are verbally aggressive may find it beneficial to know when and to what extent they could communicate aggressively. Student-athletes high in verbal aggressiveness might not prefer transformational coaches because these coaches try to challenge and push their athletes which could cause conflict. On the other hand, student-athletes low in verbal aggressiveness might respond favorably to the interest shown and involvement required by the transformational coach.

Research question five asked whether student-athletes' trait argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness were related to their ideal teaching leadership styles. Student-athletes' argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness were both positively related to their preferences for teachers with the laissez-faire leadership style. Given that teachers with a laissez-faire leadership style may be less ego-involved and interested in their own classes and students, student-athletes that are more argumentative and verbally aggressive might believe that they could communicate more aggressively (e.g. challenge grades, justify late work). Student-athletes' verbal aggressiveness was negative correlated to their preferences for teachers with the transformational leadership style, a relationship that also existed with coaches in research question four. Students who are highly verbally aggressive will avoid transformational teachers because those teachers will challenge and push them which could cause conflict.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations that should be considered about this research. The results of this study are based on a sample of college student-athletes at one university and at one level of play. The research was also limited by the number of respondents who were male athletes, because many student-athletes are male. Additionally, no football players took the

survey, which is the largest group of student-athletes on campus. Besides the need for more participants overall, a better representation of all sports on campus may make a stronger case for the findings of student-athletes' preferred leadership styles. Another limitation was that the measures for the ideal leadership styles were created for this study. There was no prior reliability and validity for this measure. While these measures may appear to be measuring the six leadership styles, future studies are needed to establish that these measures are reliable and valid.

Future Research

Future studies should examine a broader sample to support the findings in this study. For example, one should include more schools from different geographic areas and different divisions of NCAA. While there are student-athletes at all levels of competition that believe they are working towards playing professionally in their sports, student-athletes at the Division I level (and at a major conference university) might have greater expectations. These expectations might impact their preferred coaching and teaching leadership styles. Student-athletes in individual sports might also differ from student-athletes in team sports in their preferred coaching and teaching leadership styles (e.g., there might be a preference for more individualized attention and direction by student-athletes in individual sports both from their coaches and from their teachers).

Future studies should examine the relationships between ideal leadership styles and actual leadership styles. When student-athletes report that their coaches are exhibiting a leadership style which they prefer, are they more productive (e.g., work harder, more motivated, perform better, win more)? In the classroom, effective leadership style is viewed as "behaviors of the teacher that are related directly either to positive student outcomes or positive evaluations of teaching" (Nussbaum, 1992, p. 167). When student-athletes report that their teachers are

exhibiting a leadership style which they prefer, are they more productive (e.g., study harder, more motivated, score higher on exams, give better presentations)? When there is not much difference for student-athletes between the actual leadership style and the preferred style, student-athletes are likely more committed and satisfied. However, when there is a vast difference between the actual leadership style and the preferred style, student athletes could not only be less committed and satisfied, but might underperform and eventually quit the team.

The current study asked student-athletes about their preferred leadership styles, as well as their trait argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness. A future study could ask coaches to report on their own coaching styles and their own trait argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness. Do coaches with more aggressive personalities differ in their leadership styles than coaches who possess less aggressive personalities? Do coaches with different leadership styles (self-report) differ in their perceptions of what leadership styles are appropriate and effective? What is the relationship, if any, between coaches' leadership styles and the leadership styles they remember their own coaches using in the past? All of these questions would allow us to learn more about leadership styles in the coaching profession.

Summary

This study compared ideal coaching and teaching leadership styles of collegiate student-athletes. Six leadership styles were investigated: authoritarian, paternalistic, democratic, laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational. Student-athletes preferred the transformational leadership style for both their coaches and their teachers. The transformational leader is charismatic and a visionary; this person is constructive and concerned about others' self-worth and self-esteem. In contrast to an authoritarian leader (e.g., do it my way or else) or a laissez-faire leader (e.g., I don't care that much about what you do and there are few consequences for

your behavior), the transformational leader will want the student-athlete to be highly involved and will work with the student-athlete to achieve success. Student-athletes are students and athletes. Only a small fraction of these individuals will earn a living playing professionally. Although there is some importance in individuals performing at a high level when competing in college, the education student-athletes receive might produce greater personal and professional rewards in their lives. Hopefully learning more about student-athletes' preferred leadership styles in the classroom and on the court will benefit both the *student* and the *athlete*.

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*Table 1**Leadership Styles: Means for Coaches and Teachers*

Leadership Styles	Coaches	Teachers	t
Authoritarian	2.74	2.97	-1.13
Paternalistic	5.71	4.95	4.25*
Democratic	5.71	5.32	2.65*
Laissez-faire	1.81	3.22	-7.99*
Transactional	3.71	4.90	-5.39*
Transformational	6.21	5.95	2.21*

Note. * Students' leadership styles for coaches and teachers differ at the $p < .05$ level.

Table 2

The Relationships between Students' Argumentativeness and Verbal Aggressiveness with their Ideal Coaching Leadership Styles

Leadership Styles	Argumentativeness	Verbal Aggressiveness
Authoritarian	-.10	.00
Paternalistic	-.09	-.23
Democratic	-.20	-.10
Laissez-faire	.20	.42*
Transactional	.14	.33*
Transformational	-.10	-.28*

*Note. Correlations are significant at the * $p < .05$ level.*

Table 3

The Relationships between Students' Argumentativeness and Verbal Aggressiveness with their Ideal Teaching Leadership Styles

Leadership Styles	Argumentativeness	Verbal Aggressiveness
Authoritarian	.13	.32*
Paternalistic	.29	-.14
Democratic	.09	-.09
Laissez-faire	.44*	.38*
Transactional	.06	-.01
Transformational	-.08	-.26*

*Note. Correlations are significant at the * $p < .05$ level.*

Appendix A – Coaches Ideal Leadership Styles

The following questions deal with your views of the characteristics of **YOUR IDEAL COACH**. There are six descriptions below. After reading each one, place your rating of how ideal you believe this **coach** would be, from **1 Not At All Ideal** to **7 Completely Ideal**, by circling the appropriate number.

Coach A dictates policies and procedures, controls all activities and makes decisions with little input from the other members of the group. **Coach A** basically makes choices based on his/her own ideas and judgment.

Not Ideal- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7- Completely Ideal

Coach B takes care of his/her athletes like a parent. Athletes are loyal to and trust their coach because they know that their coach wants the best for them. **Coach B** is very demanding of his/her athletes and particular about how they perform.

Not Ideal- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7- Completely Ideal

Coach C involves all the team members in the decision- making process. **Coach C** openly communicates with each athlete. Input from each member is valued and respected but in the end **Coach C** still makes the final decision.

Not Ideal- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7- Completely Ideal

Coach D is hands off and athletes do not perceive much power from their coach. **Coach D** does not give too much direction to his/her athletes, giving the athletes freedom to make decisions about what they want to do during practice.

Not Ideal- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7- Completely Ideal

Coach E uses rewards and punishments as motivational tools. In most cases **Coach E** uses punishments for not meeting standards and rewards for doing well. A punishment is less personal and is based on his/her athlete's performance.

Not Ideal- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7- Completely Ideal

Coach F challenges and motivates his/her athletes to perform better. **Coach F** helps the athletes achieve their goals by sharing a vision for how they can get there. **Coach F** guides and supports his/her athletes by being available to them when needed.

Not Ideal- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7- Completely Ideal

Appendix B – Teachers Ideal Leadership Styles

The following questions deal with your views of the characteristics of **YOUR IDEAL TEACHER**. There are six descriptions below. After reading each one, place your rating of how ideal you believe this **teacher** would be, from **1 Not At All Ideal** to **7 Completely Ideal**, by circling the appropriate number.

Teacher A is strict towards his/her students. **Teacher A** is highly involved and very controlling in the students' work. There are a lot of consequences for not following the rules.

Not Ideal- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7- Completely Ideal

Teacher B takes care of his/her students. **Teacher B** exerts power over students and has rigid classroom policies. The students are loyal and obey their teacher because they know their teacher want them be better students.

Not Ideal- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7- Completely Ideal

Teacher C seeks out input from students when making decisions that affect the entire class. **Teacher C** provides information about class activities. Students are expected to be involved and be responsible for their own work.

Not Ideal- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7- Completely Ideal

Teacher D does not get overly involved with their students work. **Teacher D** provides directions needed for assignments and gives his/her students autonomy to figure out their own questions.

Not Ideal- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7- Completely Ideal

Teacher E uses positive and negative feedback in the classroom. A rubric makes it clear what is expected of the students and how they will be evaluated. The punishments and rewards are less personal, reflecting back to the work of the students.

Not Ideal- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7- Completely Ideal

Teacher F pushes his/her students to do new things. **Teacher F** is very encouraging and provides a lot of helpful feedback because he/she believes in his/her students. **Teacher F** is available outside of class time and works with students on their assignments.

Not Ideal- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7- Completely Ideal

Appendix C – Argumentativeness Scale and Verbal Aggressiveness Scale

The following questions ask about your general communication behaviors. For each statement, **WRITE** the appropriate number in the blank. None of the statements has a right or wrong answer.

**Almost never true = 1 Rarely true = 2 Occasionally true = 3
Often true = 4 Almost always true = 5**

- ___ 1. I enjoy avoiding arguments with others.
- ___ 2. I am energetic and enthusiastic when I argue with others.
- ___ 3. I enjoy a good argument over a controversial issue.
- ___ 4. I enjoy defending my point of view on an issue.
- ___ 5. I am happy when I keep an argument with others from happening.
- ___ 6. I prefer talking with others who rarely disagree with me.
- ___ 7. I consider an argument with others to be an exciting intellectual challenge.
- ___ 8. I am unable to think of effective points during an argument with others.
- ___ 9. I have the ability to do well in an argument with others.
- ___ 10. I try to avoid getting into an argument with others.
- ___ 11. When individuals are very stubborn, I use insults to soften the stubbornness.
- ___ 12. When people refuse to do a task I know is important without good reason, I tell them they are unreasonable.
- ___ 13. If individuals I am trying to influence really deserve it, I attack their character.
- ___ 14. When people behave in ways that are in very poor taste, I insult them in order to shock them into proper behavior.
- ___ 15. When people simply will not budge on a matter of importance I lose my temper and say rather strong things to them.
- ___ 16. When individuals insult me, I get a lot of pleasure out of really telling them off.
- ___ 17. I like poking fun at people who do things that are very stupid in order to stimulate their intelligence.
- ___ 18. When people do things that are mean or cruel, I attack their character in order to help correct their behavior.
- ___ 19. When nothing seems to work in trying to influence others, I yell and scream in order to get some movement from them.
- ___ 20. When I am unable to refute other's positions, I try to make them feel defensive in order to weaken their positions.

Appendix D – Demographic Questions

Please **CIRCLE** the option that most defines you.

Sex	Male	Female				
Age						
Academic year:	1	2	3	4	5	Other
Sport:	Baseball	Basketball	Cross Country	Football	Gymnastics	Soccer
	Swimming/ Diving	Tennis	Track	Volleyball	Wrestling	Other
Race:	Caucasian	African- American	Asian	Latino/ Hispanic	Other	

How many years have you played competitive sport?

Coach sex:

Coach age: