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Challenging the status quo for a marginalized group in higher education: knowledge sharing with female student-athletes who aspire to a career in college athletics

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**CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO FOR A MARGINALIZED GROUP
IN HIGHER EDUCATION: KNOWLEDGE SHARING WITH
FEMALE STUDENT-ATHLETES WHO ASPIRE TO A
CAREER IN COLLEGE ATHLETICS**

by
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A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Department of Education Leadership
College of Education
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at
Rowan University
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Dissertation Chair: MaryBeth Walpole, Ph.D.

Dedication

To my parents Edward and Joan Raube, I know we always didn't have everything but what you gave me was enough. To my five fabulous Aunts, each one of you have taught me something different and supported me along the way. To all my coaches, athletic trainers, athletic administrators and teammates throughout the years, you are the reasons sports are my passion and my inspiration to conduct this research. Especially, Ade, Allissa, Bevy, Dena, E, Maria, Meredith, Nat, and Nic, we came in together and stayed together and GC soccer would not have been the same without you!
Lastly, my husband and best friend, John, you came into the game at half-time but without your love, encouragement and support I would never have been able to finish and win the game!

Acknowledgments

There were rough roads during my dissertation and Dr. MaryBeth Walpole, my dissertation chair, provided me patience and guidance through the process which made me stay the course. Her support and understanding of my passion for my topic was critical in the success of my dissertation. I cannot thank you enough for your excellent "coaching." I would also like to thank Dr. Carol Gruber and Dr. Ed Streb, my committee members, who also challenged and pushed me to strive to be my best. I have grown and know I will keep growing from all of your guidance and support.

I want to thank all the coaches, athletic staff, administrators, and student-athletes who took time out of their busy schedules to let me interview them and participate in the panel. Your insight and contributions were invaluable and I very much appreciate the interest you took in my research.

I would like to thank my cohort classmates, the long weekends and late nights will also be remembered and the support of my "critical friends," Lesley, Trisha, and Leslie will never be forgotten. Again, to my family and friends, without your support, pep talks, editing, and love, this dissertation would never have been completed and I would have never even had the courage to attempt to obtain a doctorate!

Abstract

Patricia Anne Raube Keller
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IN HIGHER EDUCATION: KNOWLEDGE SHARING WITH
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2009/11
MaryBeth Walpole, Ph.D.
Doctorate in Educational Leadership

Using an action research paradigm, this study explored the perceptions of

coaches, athletic staff, and female student-athletes at X University, a four-year public

Division III institution, regarding female student-athletes pursuing careers in college

athletics. Title IX has increased the number of women student-athletes; however, the

percentage of women coaches and women working in athletic departments has declined

in comparison to the percentage of males, which has grown (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010).

This decline in the number of female coaches is problematic, especially since the number

of women in other male dominated professions, such as law and medicine, has been

steadily increasing since the 1970s (Knoppers, 1987; Swaton, 2009).

Hinchey (2008) defined action research as a "process of systematic inquiry

usually cyclical, conducted by those inside a community with the goal to identify action

that will generate improvement" (p.4). In an attempt to create knowledge sharing

opportunities, I created a workshop and panel presentation about working in college

athletics. Fullan's (2001) change model implies that sharing knowledge with the female

student-athletes about employment in college athletics is essential to their perceived

ability to obtain careers in college athletics. Sharing knowledge is a key element to the successful implementation of my change initiative because, as Fullan believes, "information becomes knowledge only when it takes on a social life" (Fullan, 2001, p.78).

In addition to the action research portion, this project was also a broad examination of my leadership. It was my goal to examine my leadership through both qualitative and quantitative means to see to what extent I exhibited the qualities of a transformational, feminist, and servant leader, and to what extent my leadership motivated female student-athletes to pursue careers in college athletics.

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Chapter I

Introduction

I have always loved sports. They have been a source of satisfaction and happiness

throughout my life. I have always excelled at sports, which offered a place where it was

all right for me to be just who I was: a tall, strong girl, which helped my overall self-

esteem. My decision to make college athletics my career was because of the joy being

involved in college athletics brought me as a student. My goal is to provide that same joy

to other students, especially female student-athletes, by enhancing their experiences as

college athletes and sharing knowledge with female student-athletes about pursuing

careers in collegiate athletics.

Area of Interest

Counterintuitively, the number of women coaches and athletic administrators has

fallen since Title IX was established in 1972. Title IX of the Education Amendment Act

banned sexual discrimination in education programs that received federal funding. In the

realm of athletics, Title IX required institutions receiving federal funding to provide

equitable athletic opportunities for men and women. College and universities are

considered to be compliant with the Act under one of the following three conditions:

1. When the institution can show that the intercollegiate participation opportunities for male and females students are provided in numbers proportionate to their respective enrollments; or
2. When the members of one sex have been and are underrepresented in intercollegiate athletes but the institution can show a history and continuing practice of program expansion which is demonstrably responsive to the developing interests and abilities of the members of that sex, or
3. When the members of one sex are underrepresented in intercollegiate athletes and the institution cannot show a continuing practice of program expansion such as that cited above, but the institution can demonstrate that the interests

and abilities of the members of that sex have been fully and effectively accommodated by the present program. (Rhode & Walker, 2007, p. 7)

Although Title IX increased the number of women student-athletes, the percentage of women coaches and women working in athletic departments has declined in comparison to the percentage of males, which has grown (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). This decline in the number of female coaches is problematic, especially since the number of women in other male dominated professions, such as law and medicine, has been steadily increasing since the 1970s (Knoppers, 1987; Swaton, 2009). This decrease occurred because Title IX changed athletic department structures, which, in turn, led to the decrease in women coaches and athletic administrators (Kamphoff & Gill, 2008). Additionally, when women leave positions, they are less likely to be replaced by other females (Kamphoff & Gill, 2008). Furthermore, female student-athletes are often not educated about issues not directly related to game outcomes, such as gender disparities in sports and career related discussions because of the emphasis placed on winning (Blinde, Taub, & Han, 1994).

In response, the goal of this study is to help educate female student-athletes regarding the lack of female coaches and administrators in college athletics. My change initiative is designed to help the female student-athletes at X University acquire the necessary education, motivation, and skills to pursue careers in collegiate athletics. My study is important because college athletics is significantly lacking women working in the field. Historically, women have fought hard for equality in participation and funding in athletics, and now, 35 years later, women are still losing the battle in securing competitive positions within coaching and athletic administration. The small percentage

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of females working in college athletics is not enough to exemplify strong female role models for the future generations of young women who are participating in those sports.

I believe the situation of women not choosing or obtaining careers in college athletics will be detrimental to the future generations of female athletes. If men disproportionally hold the vast majority of leadership positions in athletic departments, then there could be several repercussions resulting from the lack of female leadership, including: gender inequity, lack of female role models and mentors, possible reversal of Title IX, and greater issues of sexual harassment.

Furthermore, I believe that female students are not pursuing coaching or athletic administration positions because they lack female role models in the field and because knowledge sharing with female student-athletes about careers in college athletics is not on the forefront of current coaches and athletic staff agendas. Because there are few females in the current field, one bad experience a female student-athlete has with a female coach or administrator can be memorable; in many cases that bad experience may be the only experience that student-athlete has with a female in collegiate athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). If female student-athletes are not seeing female coaches and athletic staff members working in college athletics, then they may not consider working in college athletics themselves.

Through this research process it is my plan to try and impact female student-athletes' career goals by initiating discussion and through presenting an information workshop and panel presentation about working in college athletics. Through my leadership skills, my goal is to create a positive working, learning, and networking environment that could foster an eventual change in the perceptions and career choices of

the female student athletes at the University. I also plan on sharing the results of my study with athletic conferences and with other administrators within the NCAA. I also hope that through my leadership I am able to inspire other females and males working in collegiate athletics to share knowledge about working in college athletics with females who may be interested in working in collegiate athletics. Additionally, it is through my leadership ability that I will emphasize to coaches the importance of becoming more cognizant of the issue of females entering the collegiate athletic domain. I will also facilitate more purposeful knowledge sharing with female student-athletes about collegiate athletic careers at X University.

Throughout the majority of the study I worked at a public institution within NCAA Division III membership that sponsors 18 sports, with 10 of those sports dedicated to women. There was also a physical education major that was very popular with the student-athletes. I have come to realize through observation that our athletic department staff members did not seem to encourage and inform female student-athletes about possible careers in athletics. I also noticed that many female student-athletes seemed to think that once their playing careers concluded, their involvement in collegiate athletics ended as well. My goal was to find female student-athletes who were interested in coaching or working in collegiate athletics, so I could use the information I have gathered from my research to conduct workshops with these female students.

Thus, the purpose of my study was to establish workshops and a panel presentation that included a networking opportunity for female college students who were interested in working in college athletics. It is extremely difficult for females to obtain positions in collegiate athletics; therefore networking can be a useful and powerful tool

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that can be utilized to help move through the ranks in intercollegiate athletics (Whisenant, Vincent, Pedersen, & Zapalc, 2007).

This action research project, which focuses on female student-athletes, takes place within a university athletic department. This university is one of the very few universities in the nation that, at the time, was comprised of a female dominated athletic department. My goal is to use the knowledge and experiences of the female athletic staff and coaches to aid in sharing knowledge with female student-athletes who are interested in coaching or working in collegiate athletics. I plan to use my leadership abilities to educate female student-athletes about the various types of positions within collegiate athletics, the skills required to become effective athletic administrators, and the strategies for attaining employment in college athletics.

Research Questions

1. What motivates current female coaches and athletic staff members to pursue careers in college athletics?

2. What motivates female student-athletes at X University to pursue or not pursue careers in college athletics?

3. What are current female X University student-athletes' attitudes toward working in collegiate athletic positions?

4. How do information workshops on careers in college athletics affect this institution's female student-athletes' interest in choosing collegiate athletics as a career?

5. How will my leadership affect the female student-athletes with whom I work?

6. How will my leadership change and grow through this action research project?

In the following chapters I further discuss the research literature regarding women working in collegiate athletics and the obstacles they face. I discuss the importance of sharing knowledge with female student-athletes about careers. The methodology of the study as well as the cycles are described and illustrated in order to give the reader a clear vision of the action research that I conducted. Because I am leading this project, my leadership and change philosophy are explained in the next chapter.

Chapter II

Leadership Platform/Theories-in-use

At the time of the study I was an assistant athletic director at a mid-size public National Collegiate Athletic Association division III university. I was responsible for the academic and athletic eligibility of approximately 450 student-athletes, and I served as an advisor and counselor to the student-athletes. I am also a woman. As a woman, I am a role-model to female student-athletes and I hoped to demonstrate a positive view of a woman working in college athletics. I also consider myself a leader, and it is also important that my leadership positively influences my co-workers and the student-athletes, so they feel supported and valued. My dissertation focuses on educating female student-athletes about possible collegiate athletic career choices and it also highlights my leadership.

This action research project took place at the institution where I was employed within the athletic department and focused on female student-athletes. This particular institution has one of the very few situations in the nation in which the athletic director and many of the coaches and staff are female. I used the knowledge and experiences that the female coaches and athletic staff had to offer to create workshops and a panel presentation of women working in college athletics for the female student-athletes who had an interest in coaching or working in collegiate athletics. My goal was to improve the knowledge that female student-athletes had about obtaining a career in college athletics and to establish an opportunity to network with other women who work in athletics outside of our university. One of the major factors in any employment process involves

understanding a potential candidate's perceptions of the skills and abilities necessary for preparation and practice in the chosen field (Mensch & Mitchell, 2008). As an educational leader, I educated female student-athletes about the various types of positions within collegiate athletics, what skills those jobs require, how to obtain employment in college athletics, and detailed information about Title IX.

Through my experience of being a student-athlete and working in college athletics, I have seen and experienced effective leaders. These leaders provide a direction; they set goals by having a vision of the future. Leaders additionally build psychological and social environments that are conducive to achieving the group's goals (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Leaders instill values, in part, by sharing their philosophy of life. Leaders motivate members of the group to pursue goals of the group. Leaders confront members of the organization when problems arise, and they resolve conflicts. Finally, leaders communicate effectively (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Throughout the rest of this chapter, I elaborate on these basic foundations and explain the ways in which I demonstrate these leadership qualities.

Leadership theories define the ways people lead. It is important to understand how I lead, and how it affects the people with whom I work. It is also important to identify how others lead. This knowledge will help me become a better leader, team player, and communicator. By understanding the leadership theories that apply to my style, I have been able to explore better ways to lead my student-athletes.

Leadership Theories

In order to understand my own leadership, I began to explore several leadership theories, and came to the conclusion that transformational leadership is the base of my

leadership. Additionally, feminism and servant leadership are part of my leadership theory. I will begin with an explanation of transformational leadership and elaborate on feminist and servant leadership.

Transformational leadership. The definition that I use to describe a transformational leader is "one who commits people to action, who converts followers into leaders, and who may converts leaders into agents of change" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 3). Transformational leadership is not one-sided; it is an impressive yet subtle passing of energy back and forth between the leader and the group. I use this approach to leadership with the student-athletes. I encourage them to become more accountable and have more control over their work. I believe my approach has helped them obtain skills that have allowed them to lead (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

This transformational leadership is positive and makes athletic departments productive and successful (Yusof & Shah, 2008). As a transformational leader, I have motivated my student-athletes to complete tasks through empowerment and encouragement. I also have discovered ways to lead the student-athletes in order to influence their values and aspirations (Yusof, 1998). As a transformational leader I believe I had a positive impact on the student-athletes' satisfaction, productivity, and organizational effectiveness (Weese, 1994). This is important to the success of the organization. As a transformational leader I also have employed a visionary and creative style of leadership that inspired the student-athletes to make independent decisions and evolve in their development (Nielsen & Munih, 2009).

As a transformational leader, I must remain visible all the time (Bass, 1985). The student-athletes want to see me out there leading them. I must lead by my positive

attitude and actions so the student-athletes follow and take similar positive actions. I need to constantly motivate and rally the student-athletes as I listen, counsel, and build enthusiasm within the group. No victory or success is considered small or unimportant. All people are valued and cared about within the group. As a transformational leader I must shape, alter, and elevate the motives, values, and goals of my student-athletes (Couto, 1993).

As a transformational leader, there were three main goals I wanted to achieve with the student-athletes. The first was to increase their awareness of the importance of their tasks and the importance of performing well (Bass, 1985). Second was to make the student-athletes aware of their own needs for personal growth, development, and accomplishment. Finally, I worked to motivate them to work for the good of the organization, rather than exclusively for their own personal gain or benefit (Bass, 1985). When I adhered to these goals and promoted interpersonal relationships with the student-athletes, I demonstrated transformational leadership and believe that I was successful in my journey as an effective leader, as I detail further in Chapter IX. As I worked with the female student-athletes in my study, my leadership focused on valuing and inspiring the student-athletes, focusing on their wants and needs. As I demonstrate in a later chapter, consistent with transformational leadership, my leadership also stimulated them to go beyond their own self interest for the sake of the organization (Yusof & Shah, 2008).

Michael Fullan (2001) has stated, "Leaders should have good ideas and present them well while at the same time seeking and listening to doubters. They must try to build good relationships even with those who may not trust them" (p. 42). This is something I had to keep in mind especially when I was starting out as a leader. Many

people might not have had confidence in me or trusted me as a young leader, so I had to be conscious of their feelings regarding me as a leader. I observed that when transformational leaders empower their staff, the staff was more likely to believe they are making a difference. They learned new skills that enhanced their personal development. They felt more committed to the group, which increased their motivation (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

My leadership contains numerous aspects of transformational leadership. As a transformational leader and a former student-athlete I experienced my first transformational leadership role when I was team captain. The team captain must help motivate the team toward its goal, encourage everyone to contribute and listen to everyone's insight (Burton & Peachey, 2009). I have been honing these skills for years by playing sports. As a leader, I do not want to do the work of my followers. I try to encourage the coaches and student-athletes to do their own work and take care of their own responsibilities. Every time I have a student do something for herself, she gains confidence in doing things on her own.

I was also the advisor of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). As a transformational leader I think it is imperative that the student-athletes organize their own meetings and learn to take leadership roles within the group (Genett, 2004). These meetings encouraged teamwork and professionalism that was illustrated by effective communication and respect for others. The key example of this type of transformational leadership is that a good leader is a facilitator and participative manager who supports and empowers others (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Another example of my transformational leadership was when I delegated work among the team. As the leader, I had to inspire a vision for the student-athlete to make commitments, use resources, and to take all actions necessary to perform their duties (Genett, 2004). I had to share a vision for the team I am leading (Bolman & Deal, 2003). This vision had to be realistic and attainable, thus creating an inspirational focal point to which the team could aspire (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). I also created an obligation on the student-athletes' part to perform the duties satisfactorily and be proud of their work. This step was achieved when the student-athletes bought into the vision that I created (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). As a transformational leader, I created a vision for the organization that inspired the student-athletes (Bass, 1995). The vision was well communicated to the student-athletes and it illustrated the overall mission of the group and where the group needed to be (Genett, 2004).

I have extremely high aspirations for myself and I have usually been an overachiever, so it can be difficult for me to realize that not everyone views the task at hand as I do. If I want to be an effective transformational leader, I have to use my symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 2003) side to help show the group members the objective and let them get there on their own with some direction from me as the leader. Symbols provide direction and anchor pride and beliefs (Bolman & Deal, 2003). In college athletics, some indicators of symbols are easily seen such as the mascot or the school colors, while others such as accountability and discipline are not so easily recognized. These manifestations are equally important in attaining a successful organization.

In college athletics, women do not commonly hold leadership positions (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). As a woman, I have found it is sometimes difficult to be accepted as a

leader while working in college athletics. Women are at a disadvantage in achieving leadership positions because they are perceived as not having the stereotypical abilities required to be leaders. Also, if women are in leadership positions, they often are not positively evaluated in those positions because they are going against stereotypical gender norms applied to women (Burton & Peachey, 2009; Eagly & Karau, 2009). I hope my authenticity and success as a leader will be how I am evaluated, rather than being evaluated on the type of leader I am, because as a woman, feminist leadership is a strong part of my leadership.

Feminist leadership. Feminism is a word that causes many men and some women to cringe. People associate feminism with burning bras and Susan B. Anthony's crusade to earn women the right to vote. Yet, feminism is more than that; it is the equal opportunity for men and women to live productive lives (Klenke, 1996). As a female athlete born in the banner year of Title IX, I have been fortunate to experience some of the changes forged by the women ahead of me have forged. I have been able to enjoy a memorable and successful career as a student-athlete, which has led to my professional career.

Women tend to lead differently than men, and Rosener (1990) combines the definitions of feminism and transformational leadership as getting subordinates to transform their own self-interest into the interest of the group through concern for the broader goal. Feminist leaders encourage participation and share power and information because they have learned that people perform best when they feel good about themselves and their work (Klenke, 1996; Rosener, 1990). Feminist leaders try to create environments that contribute to that feeling (Klenke, 1996; Rosener, 1990). Women

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leaders often demonstrate an inclusive, team-building leadership style of problem solving and decision-making. Also women leaders are more likely to ignore rules and take risks than men (Caliper, 2005). I believe I have demonstrated all of those traits. Although I am a rule follower, I do believe I take risks by being creative and thinking out of the box. Moreover, in Bolman and Deal's (2003) Leadership Orientation, I was balanced on three different leadership roles. The highest of the three was the Human Resource Leader. In this leadership role I emphasized the importance of people; I help developed a good fit between people and organizations, and I also recognize the importance of coaching, participation, motivation, teamwork, and good interpersonal relations. These traits are also descriptive of feminist leadership (Klenke, 1996). Moreover, feminist leaders recognize how gender, race, and class all affect the work environment. I have a positive view of leadership, which emphasizes morality and care, and I give a voice to the people who are working with me (Blackmore, 1999; Klenke, 1996).

As a feminist and transformational leader, I generally see the positives of people typically outweighing the negatives (Blackmore, 1999; Couto, 1993). I believe I am an effective communicator. I like to involve everyone in decisions and try to get everyone's input and information before I have to make a decision myself. I encourage everyone to participate, and I share authority and information and encourage others with whom I work to do the same. I empowered the student-athletes to be independent and free thinkers. The student-athletes needed to be able to express ideas and be creative. As a feminist leader I facilitated the group by attending to the process as a way of fostering productivity (Klenke, 1996; Kouzes & Posner, 1995). I also learned multiple ways of motivating the group by connecting to their spiritual, creative, and emotional levels.

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As a feminist leader I found that I have to be prepared to critically examine and reflect on the approaches and systems that are currently in place. In many instances, female student-athletes and females working in college athletics are marginalized. In the past, and also currently in some places, professionals associated with college athletics treat women's programs with indifference at best (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010; Bower, 2009). Thus, women's college sport professionals and female student-athletes have been marginalized and isolated as colleagues and leaders in some athletic departments (Bower, 2009). By understanding feminist leadership, I was able to become more influential in creating a climate more conducive to the acceptance of women leaders and increased the interest in working in college athletics (Klenke, 1996).

I want my student-athletes to feel good about themselves, their work, their teammates, and the university that they attend and play for. I want them to feel that their contributions are important and that they make a difference. I also want my student-athletes to be able to be independent and work problems out on their own. I hope that when the student-athletes have self-efficacy, they will have the confidence and motivation to be problem solvers and quick thinkers. All of these goals are consistent with transformational and feminist leadership.

Fullan (2001) shares with us that communication is a major part of the whole leadership process and it is also a trait of feminist and transformational leadership (Bass, 1995; Klenke, 1996). The job of the transformational leader is to imagine the future direction and to communicate that vision effectively to others. One of my best skills is my communication, and I believe that it is one of the strengths on which I rely the most. The student-athletes want to be informed and they feel hurt when they are left out of

something. The student-athletes and the team start to collapse and the student-athletes berate each other if communication is not used effectively.

As a feminist leader I have to have strong communication skills, and part of communication is listening (Fullan, 2001; Johnson, 2002; Klenke, 1996; Rosener, 1990). I have learned to listen. It is amazing what I hear when I listen. I have learned by listening that communication is more than the words spoken and includes emotions such as: frustrations, fear, apprehension, joy, love, and passion. Some of the students and coaches I worked with just needed someone to listen. They did not always need advice or guidance but someone who would just let them vent or talk.

In the past I was quick to jump in with some advice or information, and I never let the student or coach finish talking. Although I felt like I helped them by giving them advice or information, they left my office feeling exactly like they came in because they were unable to be heard. Because communication is an important part of feminist leadership, I have worked to improve in this area (Fullan, 2001). I believe that by recognizing my strengths and weakness I became a better leader and listener.

As a feminist leader I am motivated by fairness, justice, equity, and by the need to keep issues of gender, race, social class, sexual orientation, and ability at the head of what I do every day. I also have a strong desire to bring marginalized voices to the center of the conversation, and one of my goals is taking risks as I strive to enact a transformative agenda (Barton, 2006; Bond & Mulvey, 2000).

It is my goal to be an athletic director. As a feminist and transformational leader I want my future athletic department to be an environment in which men and women feel comfortable working and the environment is conducive to building success and

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supporting the staff (Burton & Peachey, 2009). The athletic department needs to communicate effectively, and it also needs to be a family-oriented environment (Turner & Chelladural, 2005). I typically work 10 to 12 hours a day and the office is my second home. I spend more time with the people with whom I work than my own family. When I reach my goal of being an athletic director I want my staff to feel comfortable bringing their children and pets to work sometimes. The athletic department that I want to manage will definitely have the philosophy that it takes a village to raise a child. This philosophy falls in line with being a feminist and transformational leader (Bass, 1995; Klenke, 1996).

Servant leadership. I want the student-athletes to be supported and be able to do their best. As a leader I must be able to help them be their best by supporting them and serving them. I base part of my leadership on being a servant leader. Servant leadership has been described by Shugart (1997), "as putting people and ethical consideration intentionally ahead of short term institutional or personal self-awareness" (p. 4). Spears (1998) believes that the servant leader "emphasizes increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, promotes a sense of community and the sharing of power in decision making" (p. 4). This leadership philosophy has helped me in my position within the athletic department at X University because of my actions of encouraging collaboration, trust, foresight, listening, and ethical use of the power and empowering others. The servant leader model developed by Greenleaf (1976) and enhanced by Spears is one based on teamwork and community. The servant leader seeks to involve others in decision-making, while being conscientious of ethical and caring behavior, and attempts to enhance the personal growth of subordinates, while improving the caring and quality of the organization (Greenleaf, 1976; Spears, 1998). The end result of an organization

lead by a servant leader is a work environment in which relationships are cultivated, everyone is valued, standards are upheld, and productivity is enhanced (Rieke, Hammermeister, & Chase, 2008).

I also know a large part of being a servant leader is being able to help others realize their own talents and distinctions (Greenleaf, 1976). I believe I did this by being open to others and promoting their strengths and helping them improve their weaknesses by pushing them to strive to be the best and not accept mediocrity for greatness. According to Greenleaf, servant leaders place other people's desires, aspirations, and interests above their own. As a servant leader my main motive, ironically, is to serve first as opposed to leading first. My goal as a leader is to work with people rather than having them work for me.

I believe that being aware of my capabilities as the leader has led me to incorporate servant leadership into my leadership theories. It has never been my goal to be a servant leader, but I believe that it is something I unconsciously do. Servant leadership is part of my character. I get satisfaction from others' success, and if I am part of their success, then I am more satisfied. I want others around me to be successful because it makes our organization stronger (Spears, 2004).

Servant leadership is a long-term transformational approach to leadership. Being a servant leader is not something that occurs overnight. It is part of my character and I have to be authentic in order for the people I am leading to believe in me. Servant leadership is a type of leadership that has to be lived day in and day out (Spears, 2004). Having servant leadership as one of my leadership theories has helped me create positive change within

my organization because I assisted the staff and student-athletes in doing their best and built confidence in them and the organization.

As a transformational, feminist, and servant leader I am committed to the growth of the student-athletes. As I led them, I empowered, encouraged, and motivated them to achieve their goals and the athletic department's goals (Bass, 1985; Greenleaf, 1976; Klenke, 1996). I believe I am an effective leader by genuinely constructing new systems of organizing and leading the ignited student-athletes' creativity and zeal to pursue their goals (Dicicco & Hacker, 2002). Although leading the student-athletes to achievement seems to be easy for me, understanding their perceptions and resistance to change is what challenges me in my leadership (Schein, 2004). I believe I have strengthened this part of my leadership through my action research project.

Change Theory

My action research study promoted knowledge sharing and communication with female student-athletes about possible careers in college athletics. I realized that I must not only change the individuals, but also the environment. As I worked with the female student-athletes, and through interviewing the coaches and athletic staff, I raised awareness about the lack of knowledge sharing that college athletics provided to our female student-athletes about working in the field. I did this through knowledge sharing and communication. If I was going to be successful as a change agent and leader, I had to not only change the female student-athletes' perceptions, but the whole athletic department as well (Fullan, 2002).

One of the goals in my study was to change the current attitudes of the female student-athletes regarding working in college athletics. If I wanted to be an effective

leader, I first had to redefine resistance within the organization. The resistance female student-athletes had to working in college athletics in my athletic department was reflective of the national college athletic environment as well. Female student-athletes are often not mentored by their coaches or athletic staff into careers in athletics (Bracken, 2009; Lough, 2001; Mensch & Mitchell, 2008). As an effective leader I tried to change the lack of knowledge sharing that occurred. The data will show that through providing knowledge sharing opportunities and through my leadership I was able to change some of the attitudes of the female student-athletes. I used Fullan's (1993, 1999, 2001) theory of change as I implemented my action research study.

Fullan (2001) identifies three phases of the change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization. In my first phase, initiation, I investigated why there is a lack of women working in college athletics. From that research I was able to determine several reasons women are not working in college athletics. I chose the main result of my research, the lack of knowledge sharing, to implement a change in my athletic department. In this phase I explored why women choose college athletics as a career choice and why there has been a decline in women working in college athletics (Fullan, 2001). With this information, as the data will show, I made a difference by sharing that knowledge and implementing change, which is Fullan's second phase. The change I wanted to implement included creating workshops in which I could share knowledge with the female student-athletes on my campus who were interested in pursuing a career in college athletics (Fullan, 2001). Through sharing my passion with the other female coaches and athletic department staff, I inspired some of them to join the workshops about working in college athletics. In the last phase, which is

institutionalization, I hoped to continue the workshops and share what we did on my former campus with other campuses (Fullan, 2001).

The change that was implemented was challenging. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000) state that change proceeds along a continuum. "Initiation might involve conceptualization, awareness, and commitment. Implementation might include development, experimentation, adaptation, and refinement. Finally, institutionalization might involve refocusing, refining, and possibly consolidation" (p. 235). The change process was not easy, and I had to be ready to face challenges and strived to keep change going in a positive direction.

To create positive change in this organization I had to make the coaches, athletic staff, and student-athletes aware of the lack of knowledge sharing about working in college athletics. Sometimes this made them feel uncomfortable because they did not want to discuss it, or felt that knowledge sharing was not a reason female student-athletes were not interested in working in college athletics (Johnson, 2002). I tried to make sure everyone felt comfortable speaking with me and assured them that their information they had to share was valuable. In order to create some kind of change in the coaches' and athletic staff's perception of knowledge sharing with the female student-athletes, I had to make sure I listened to everyone's thoughts and valued their opinions. Fullan (2001) tells us that "effective leaders understand the value and role of knowledge creation; they make it a priority and set about establishing and reinforcing habits of knowledge sharing exchange among organizational members" (p. 87). To accomplish knowledge sharing in my study, I set up workshops and a panel presentation and I also looked for positive

examples that reflected knowledge sharing. I also constantly developed and identified

knowledge sharing opportunities for maximizing the value of sharing (Fullan, 2001).

Sometimes when people become comfortable they begin to lack creativity,

initiative, and drive. I pushed my student-athletes to be the best they could be at all times.

Each student-athlete had specific strengths and I had to find them and cultivate them

because an organization's strengths come from the different ideas members have. An

effective leader, Coach Anson Dorrance, the University of North Carolina Women's

soccer coach has stated "what happens to great coaches who are not as effective at the

end of their career is they lose their willingness to take the required stress and emotional

confrontation that they did have when they were younger" (Dorrance & Nash, 1996,

p. 20). Coach Dorrance was discussing the energy required to create change and to

challenge the status quo. College athletics is an extremely competitive world and the

"leaders in this profession sometimes no longer have the energy or willingness to make

the emotional commitment to motivate people to attain the standard required of them to

compete successfully at the highest level" (Dorrance & Nash, 1996, p. 21).

I have learned through transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1995) that I had

to create a vision for my student-athletes to follow and believe in. Through creating a

vision with my student-athletes, they were able to accomplish the goals they set out to do.

Through feminist leadership, I empowered student-athletes through sharing the task of

creating a vision for the athletic department (Rosner, 1990). As a transformational leader,

I included the student-athletes participation in the change process, shared the vision with

them, and had them assist in creating the goals and outcomes (Bass, 1985). Having the

student-athletes create the change for themselves as a group increased their self-worth

and self-efficacy (Nielsen & Munih, 2009). The student-athletes were more positive

because they were able to be a part of the vision and were more willing to follow. Giving

the student-athletes an opportunity to have input and work on shared goals created an

environment of collaboration and empowerment. I hoped through this process the

student-athletes within the organization would learn to listen and be respectful of other

people's viewpoints and ideas and take them into account when they were making

decisions and creating policy (Klenke, 1996).

   Sharing knowledge with other organizations is also beneficial (Fullan, 2002). In

college athletics, effective coaches learn from other effective coaches even though

competition is high; the knowledge sharing is also high for these coaches. Coach

Krzyzewski, Duke University men's basketball coach, states that

> There is a tendency for a coach to get stuck in his own little world and think that
> he is doing just fine. Well maybe he is not, maybe he is doing worse than okay,
> maybe he is doing better than okay. But how will he ever know unless he checks
> out what is going on elsewhere in similar programs? One of the ways to do that is
> to ask the advice of professionals who are exposed to other similar organizations.
> (Krzyzewski, 2000, p. 230)

Other colleges and universities are competing on the field, but they can be supportive

colleagues when it comes to building a successful organization.

   I have always thought that sharing knowledge was important, but until recently I

did not know why it was important and how it created strength in an organization. As a

leader I implemented change by sharing knowledge with staff and student-athletes

(Fullan, 2001). I felt it was important to share my knowledge to help benefit others to

become successful in their endeavors.

Conclusion

As a leader I acted to stimulate people to be aware or conscious of what they felt and thought. The reaction that I tried to create had to be strong and be a definition of their values that was so meaningful that they made the move to act on it. Sometimes to discover this, I needed to listen to people and really reflect on what they said while looking for hidden wants and goals (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). I hope that the people I led appreciated that I took the time to empathetically listen to them and help them become successful.

Understanding the background and experiences of others is a part of leadership. To assist me in being an effective leader and to facilitate the change process in this action research project, I researched women working in college athletics. The following chapter is the literature review, which focuses on women working in college athletics and perceptions of student-athletes regarding careers in college athletics. I believe by researching women working in college athletics and perceptions of student-athletes regarding careers in college athletics, I was able to ask strategic interview and focus group questions that generated information that was applicable to use in the workshop.

Chapter III

Literature Review

Title IX/Introduction

The rise of the contemporary women's movement created a new sensibility among female athletic leaders and coaches. Many of these women had managed, despite substantial obstacles, to experience the rewards of intercollegiate competition and were committed to bringing such opportunities into mainstream athletic programs (Rhode & Walker, 2007). In 1974, Congress amended Title IX to make explicit its coverage of revenue-producing athletics, and directed the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) to develop implementing regulations. In 1975, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of HEW promulgated regulations for college athletics. It provided:

> No person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation or be denied the benefits of, be treated differently from another person or otherwise be discriminated against in any interscholastic, intercollegiate, club or intramural athletic offered by a recipient, and no recipient shall provide any such athletics separately on such basis (Rhode & Walker, 2007, p. 6).

Title IX has increased the number of females who have participated in athletics from approximately 16,000 individuals at its inception in 1972 to about 180,000 in 2010 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). Currently there are 9087 women's intercollegiate athletic teams, 8.64 per school; this is the highest ever in the history of sport. The five most frequently offered sports for women are, in order: (1) Basketball, 99.1% of schools have a team, (2) Volleyball, 96.8%, (3) Soccer, 91.2%, (4) Cross Country, 90.9%, and (5) Softball, 88.2% (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010).

Although the number of women's teams and female athletes has grown since Title

IX was enacted in 1972, the number of women leaving professional positions in college

athletics or not going into the coaching profession has increased. This unintended and too

often neglected by-product of Title IX has left opportunities for women in coaching or

administrative roles in athletics departments unfilled. There has been a massive growth in

participation for female athletes, but there has been a concomitant massive decrease in

the representation of females as coaches and athletic staff members (Acosta & Carpenter,

2010; Bracken, 2009; Pastore & Meacci, 1994; Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999). Acosta and

Carpenter (2010) have documented the absence of women coaching or working in

athletic departments over the past 33 years. Their findings show:

- 42.6% of women's teams are coached by a female head coach.
- 57.4% of women's teams are coached by a male head coach.
- Less than 3% of men's teams are coached by a female head coach.
- 20.9% of all teams (men's and women's) are coached by a female head coach.
- 28% of certified head athletic trainers are female
- 11.9% of sports information directors are female

This chapter will review some of the literature exploring the absence of women in

coaching and athletic administration and why many female student-athletes do not seem

interested in pursuing college athletics as a career choice. The chapter begins with an

overview of structure of athletic departments and pathways of career advancement. I then

review the empirical evidence that finds that women coaches are typically more qualified

than their male counterparts in terms of training, experience, and achievement (LeDrew

& Zimmerman, 1994). The literature also suggests that women's underrepresentation

may be more attributable to unconscious biases, exclusionary recruiting networks, and

inflexible working structures as opposed to objective qualifications (Pastore & Meacci,

1994; Rhode & Walker, 2007; Weiss & Stevens, 1993). The research also provides an

alternate argument, that women remain committed to their occupations and university even if they received differential treatment at work and at home, as compared to their male counterparts (Turner & Chelladural, 2005).

Athletic Department Structures and Career Pathways

Since the passage of Title IX of the Educational Amendment of 1972, the formerly common dual structure of separate men's and women's athletic departments has been largely replaced with combined structures in which women have been pushed out of key leadership positions of coaching and directing athletic programs (Kampoff & Gill, 2008; Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999). Women face unique and inevitable challenges in pursuing coaching and athletic administration positions, including the male-dominated nature of the field, a lack of social networks and role models, inequalities between men's and women's sports, a general lack of administrative support, and conflicting interests between work and non-work realms (Bracken, 2009; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999).

This demise in the number of coaches is problematic, especially since the number of women in other male dominated professions such as law and medicine has steadily increased since the 1970s (Knoppers, 1987; Swaton, 2009; Weiss & Stevens, 1993). The decline in female coaches and athletic administrators is also due to women leaving the profession for various reasons and not being replaced by other female coaches and athletic administrators (Kamphoff & Gill, 2008).

The decline in women coaches does not appear to be attributable to an absence of women's interest in coaching positions, because the percentage of female assistant coaches has remained constant since the 1990s and is currently at an all-time high. Of the

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11,726 paid assistant coaches of women's teams, 6,745 (57.6%) are female (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010; Rhodes & Walker, 2007). The increased presence of paid assistant coaches of women's teams is a positive development. When an institution provides more fully for the needs of its female athletes by hiring female assistant coaches, it signals a commitment to a stronger program (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010).

It is also important to note, however, that for women who desire to become head coaches, it has been typical for assistant coaches to first gain experience and build a supportive network prior to becoming head coaches. However, in several studies female assistant coaches have discussed reasons why they do not want to be head coaches (Fitzgerald, Sagaria, & Nelson, 1994; Knoppers, Meyer, Ewing, & Forrest, 1991).The main reasons why female assistant coaches did not want to become head coaches were: they liked the current team situation and did not want to leave it, the head coaches were under too much pressure to win, assistant coaching brought less stress than head coaching, and the assistants were loyal to the current head coach or team (Cooper, Hunt, & O'Bryant, 2007). Female assistant coaches also indicated in one study that they tended to have less interest in becoming head coaches as compared to their male counterparts (Cooper et al., 2007). One coping strategy women use for balancing family role conflict is to decline to seek head coaching positions and remain as assistant coaches (Kilty, 2006). Whatever the reason, many women have been entering the ranks of the coaching profession, but the professional finish line seems to elude even those who are trying to reach the head coach position (Rhode & Walker, 2007).

Acosta and Carpenter (2010) showed that men hold 65.1 % of athletic administrative positions compared to 34.9 % for women. The greatest increase for

women working in NCAA college athletic departments has been in the positions of business manager, athletic student services, and administrative assistant. These positions have been historically considered positions that are of a nurturing role, with the exception of business manager, and women are in these positions within college athletic departments because most women are perceived as nurturers by society (Barton, 2006; Bond & Mulvey, 2000; Kilty, 2006). Additionally, it is not easy to move out of these positions to higher level athletic administrative positions, because in these positions it is difficult to get experience in sport oversight, budgets, decision making, and contract negotiations, which the higher level positions require (Blinde, Taub, & Han, 1994; Bower, 2009; Bracken, 2009; Fitzgerald et al., 1994). Research suggests that the decline of women in coaching and in the athletic director position is not about women's lack of perceived competence or desire (Knoppers, 1987; Sagas & Cunningham, 2001; Stangl & Kane, 1991; Welch & Sigelman, 2007). Rather, it is about powerful structural and institutional forces that systematically keep women out of head coaching and top-level administrative positions.

Statistics

In 2010, 42.6% of head coaches of women's teams were females. This percentage of female coaches of women's teams was the second lowest in history. In 1972, 90% of women's teams were coached by women. By 1978, the year of mandatory Title IX compliance, the percentage of women coaches dropped to 58.25%. Some of the large changes in the early years from 1972 to 1978 were due to the massive increase in the number of teams offered for women (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). Since 2000 however,

women have earned only 10% of head coaching positions for women's intercollegiate teams (Cooper et al., 2007).

The average size of administrative staffs has grown by more than 60% in the last two decades. Furthermore, because most schools now offer athletic programs, the total number of jobs in athletics administration have more than doubled in the last 20 years from 1,613 in 1988 to 3,946 in 2010 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). By 1995, women held 35% of the athletic administration positions at NCAA member institutions. The number of women employed in intercollegiate athletics was at an all-time high with 14,742 in 2008, but dropped to 12,702 in 2010 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008, 2010). The positions women held were classified as athletic director, associate athletic director, senior women's administrator, business manager, faculty athletic representative, assistant athletic director, compliance coordinator, academic advisor, and head and assistant coach.

Although women are working in athletic departments in larger numbers, women do not have departmental control of women's intercollegiate sports programs. Before Title IX, most women's athletic departments were separate from men's athletic departments; now almost all are merged with the men's, with less than a fifth of the top administration positions going to women (Pastore & Meacci, 1994; Rhode & Walker, 2007). Male athletic directors outnumber female athletic directors by 5 to 1, making it more difficult for women coaches to get hired because male athletic directors typically hire male coaches (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010; Kilty, 2006; Sagas & Cunningham, 2001; Stangl & Kane, 1991).

In 1972 when Title IX was enacted, females served as athletic directors in over 90% of programs for women, now in 2010, female athletic directors make up 19.1% of

the population of athletic director across all three divisions (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). Division III schools have the highest percentage of female athletic directors at 29.9%, yet some schools have no female, at any level, in the athletics administrative structures, and in some cases the administrative assistant is considered the senior women's administrator, a position required in all NCAA member institutions (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). The percentage of schools totally lacking a female voice has dropped from 14.5% in 2006 to 13.2% in 2010; this decrease shows some positive improvement in women gaining ground in athletic administrative advancement. However, the most common administrative structure remains three administrators: a male athletic director, one female assistant/associate director, and one male assistant/associate director (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010).

Despite the increasing number of women in athletic administrative positions, the statistics indicate that women are definitely underrepresented in one of the most powerful positions in intercollegiate athletics – the athletic director position (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010; Quarterman, DuPree, & Willis, 2006; Stangl & Kane, 1991). Findings indicate that when the athletic director in Division II or Division III schools is a woman, the percentage of female head coaches increased from 44% to 48%. The difference was even more pronounced in Division I schools, where the percentage of women head coaches increased from 44.4% to 53.4% when females occupied the athletic director position as opposed to a male athletic director (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008). NCAA Division III institutions are most likely to have a female athletic director (29.9%) and Division I institutions are the least likely (9%) (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010).

Why Women Go into Coaching

Women go into the coaching profession for several reasons: to become role models for young aspiring athletes, to help female athletes reach their potential, to work with advanced and motivated athletes, to maintain their love of sport, and to teach sport and life skills (Barber, 1998; Bracken, 2009; Kampoff & Gill, 2008; Weaver & Chelladurai, 2002; Weiss & Stevens, 1993). Women coaches perceive themselves as stronger teachers than their male peers, especially in teaching mutual respect and good sportsmanship (Marback, Short, Short, & Sullivan, 2005). Women coaches believe that they are role models for the athletes they coach, and they serve a function for female student-athletes that goes beyond the technical aspect of coaching (Knoppers, 1987; Weiss & Stevens, 1993). Women coaches place a greater importance on improving athletes and improving their own coaching skills than male do coaches (Marback et al., 2005).

Reasons Women Do Not Go into Coaching

The absence of women coaches may occur because fewer women consider coaching as a career, but also because fewer women are able to continue their sport involvement once their own college participation is over (Bracken, 2009; Knoppers, 1987). Female student-athletes have stated in studies that they would not go into coaching as a profession because of: lack of administrative support for female coaches, conflicts with having a family life, inadequate and unequal salaries, negative attitudes of co-workers, lack of professional role models, lack of professional connections/networks, negative attitude of athletes, perceived lack of self-confidence, and homophobia (Bracken, 2009; Kampoff & Gill, 2008). Furthermore, athletes of both sexes have

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indicated they prefer a male coach and perceive them to be more competent than their female counterparts (Kamphoff & Gill, 2008; Knoppers, 1987; Sagas & Cunningham, 2001). These perceptions by female student-athletes show a very negative image of women coaches, which may affect student-athletes' career aspirations, leading them away from coaching.

Studies have also shown that the majority of student-athletes' career planning is delayed and that male student-athletes' career planning is even more delayed than female student-athletes' (Lally & Kerr, 2005). Student-athletes who delay their career planning probably do not explore or give proper consideration to the variety of existing careers. However, student-athletes with well-developed interests in a particular career path will be unlikely to pursue that path if they perceive extensive barriers to entering or advancing in that career (Bracken, 2009; Brown & Lent, 1996; Fitzgerald et al., 1994). In fact, Brown and Lent (1996) have shown that student-athletes who perceive opportunity in college athletics will be more likely to have an interest and intent to enter college athletics as a career.

Reasons Women Do Not Stay in Coaching

Even when women become coaches, they often do not stay in this career path for a variety of reasons which include: hegemonic masculinity, power/lack of control, lack of opportunity, family role conflict, gender differences, and lack of administrative support (Bracken, 2009; Inglis, Danylchuck, & Pastore, 1996, 2000; Pastore & Meacci, 1994; Stangl & Kane, 1991; Turner & Chelladural, 2005; Weiss & Stevens, 1993). Women also indicated that they were more likely to withdraw from coaching due to negative perceptions of their competence in the coaching role. One possible explanation is that

while these women perceive themselves to be competent in their individual coaching

skills, they are influenced by subtle and sometimes not so subtle messages from

administration and society regarding women's effectiveness in the coaching role (Barber,

1998; Bruening & Dixon, 2008; Pastore & Meacci, 1994).

Coaches often leave the profession when they feel incapable of accomplishing

goals due to personal and situational constraints (Barber, 1998; Bracken, 2009; Weiss &

Stevens, 1993). External and internal barriers impact women's ability to perform as

coaches. Internal barriers such as perfectionism can lead to women not applying for

positions because they feel they should know much more and should be better in a

number of areas (Kilty, 2006; Marback et al., 2005). This perception of one's self is not

demonstrated by male coaches. External barriers that interfere with female coaches'

professional opportunities include: unequal assumption of competence, hiring from a

principle of similarity (homologous reproduction), homophobia, and lack of female

mentors (Kilty, 2006; Weaver & Chelladurai, 2002). There is a need to understand the

general nature of the problems women encounter in intercollegiate coaching and

administration and the visible underrepresentation of women in the field (Inglis et al.,

2000; Weiss & Stevens, 1993).

Hegemonic Masculinity

One reason women do not stay in coaching is due to hegemonic masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity refers to the systemic barriers (in both the minds and actions of

the participants) in sport that sustain the institution as a stronghold of men while

marginalizing women (Stangl & Kane, 1991; Whisenant et al., 2007). It manifests itself

when women are systemically deprived of the opportunity to compete in male dominated

enterprises (Stangl & Kane, 1991; Whisenant et al., 2007). Unequal assumption of competence can be linked to hiring from a principle of similarity. People will hire someone similar to themselves, as it is the easiest, most comfortable thing to do. Some researchers have found that women feel excluded from coaching opportunities for two reasons: for being a woman in a male dominated profession and for exhibiting an atypical, unfamiliar leadership style (Kilty, 2006; Stangl & Kane, 1991).

The influence of hegemonic masculinity is evident through evaluating the proportion of female to male head coaches within women's intercollegiate athletics in relation to the gender of the athletic director and the prestige of the university (Kilty, 2006; Stagle & Kane, 1991). Only 20.6% of intercollegiate athletic teams have a female head coach. Another way to represent that number is to state 79.4% of all intercollegiate teams are coached by males (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008). One consequence of the male domination is that the opportunity for homologous reproduction on the part of males is much more prevalent than it is for females (Lovett & Lowry, 1994; Sagas, Cunningham, & Teed, 2006). Homologous reproduction is when the dominant group in the hierarchy keeps promoting or hiring people similar to themselves (Sagas et al., 2006). Homologous reproduction, then, maintains the status quo of hegemonic masculinity within the managerial structure of organizations (Stangl & Kane, 1991; Sagas et al., 2006; Whisenant et al., 2007). Previous research has demonstrated that the prevailing group (men) in power within sport systematically reproduces itself by hiring more men than women for coaching and administrative positions (Stangl & Kane, 1991; Sagas et al., 2006; Whisenant et al., 2007).

Female administrators have also been effective at homologous reproduction, as seen in Division III institutions when they were the dominant group. When a female was the athletic director within any of the administrative models, there were more female coaches than male coaches than in institutions that had a male athletic director (Lovett & Lowry, 1994; Stangl & Kane, 1991). Administration has the power to determine who is employed within the athletic department. When male administrators keep hiring male coaches, it culminates in a disproportionate ratio of male to female coaches (Lovett & Lowry, 1994). Hegemonic masculinity is a result of three interacting structural determinants: power, opportunity, and proportion.

Power

The high value placed on sport in the United States gives coaches an aura of power, prestige, and status as well as visibility as decision makers. The opportunity for decision-making gives power to a coach because power amasses the formal and informal resources necessary to be successful in the work environment (Stangl & Kane, 1991; Whisenant et al., 2007). The second leading predictor of female coaches leaving the profession is lack of control, because they are not able to make decisions in their own programs; in other words, they lack power (Knoppers, 1987). Male coaches consider the decision-making component more important than do female coaches. Males also considered having autonomy in making decisions more important than females (Pastore, Goldfine & Riemer, 1996). Those who have not experienced such autonomy may not realize what they were missing and could benefit from having power.

Coaches with little power are those who have a say but not a final say. They must continually plead for budget items and approval for implementing decisions. They learn

about the athletic department news from the newspaper and their only contact with the athletic director is when their contract is up for renewal (Knoppers, 1987; Marback et al., 2005). The absence of women in administrative positions reinforces the gender stereotyping traditionally associated in the sports world and for women in general (Knoppers, 1987). Research involving the domination of power by selected groups (men) in business organizations suggests that those in power maintain their control and influence by allowing those who share common characteristics, such as gender, to enter their circle of influence (Stangl & Kane, 1991; Whisenant et al., 2007).

Women coaches described the power struggle in intercollegiate athletics as someone else making decisions and controlling resources and a climate that does not offer desired levels of respect or recognition (LeDrew & Zimmerman, 1994). Often the losses of control women feel are related to male domination and feelings of a general lack of women being valued (Inglis et al., 2000). The effects of lack of opportunity, power, and proportion on women in coaching include sex discrimination, limited access to head coaching positions, family role conflicts, and occasionally sexual harassment (Stangl & Kane, 1991; Whisenant et al., 2007).

Opportunity

Female college students are more likely to select occupations with good job opportunities for women. Similarly, female student-athletes may avoid the coaching profession because they may have noticed the gender-related difference in opportunity (Knoppers, 1987; Whitaker & Molstad, 1988). To have opportunity in any occupation, including working in college athletics, means to have viable career options, to have

access to information about the profession, and to receive informal training (Knoppers et al., 1991).

Female student-athletes will most likely demonstrate a lack of interest or desire to work in college athletics because they are excluded from this type of knowledge sharing about careers in college athletics, lack exposure to female role models, and lack networks in college athletics. It is important to share information with female student-athletes about careers in college athletics; this knowledge sharing can help generate interest and through the knowledge sharing relationships can be built, which can possibly turn into mentoring or networking (Fitzgerald et al., 1996). Creating opportunities for men and women currently working in college athletics to share knowledge with female student-athletes can break down homologous reproduction (Knoppers et al., 1991; Stangl & Kane, 1991; Whisenant et al., 2007).

Proportion

Schneider (2009) states that the convention of gender discrimination against women in college athletics occurs through the large proportion of males working in college athletics and obstacles that they have created to prevent the advancement of women working in college athletics. It is at the administrative level that men have the power and opportunity to determine who gets hired or fired. This in turn can directly influence the proportion of individuals occupying specific work positions (Stangl & Kane, 1991). In 1972, just after the passage of Title IX, 90% of athletic directors for women's programs were female. As a result of Title IX, a majority of the separate women's and men's college athletic programs merged into one athletics department with one athletic director. In 2010, 19.3% of athletic directors were female, which is

approximately one of five athletic directors. There were 201 programs that had a female

Athletic Director, a decrease of 23 since 2008 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008, 2010). Also,

13.2% of institutions had no women in their college athletic administration (Acosta &

Carpenter, 2010). These statistics support a disconcerting conclusion that college athletic

leadership positions are properly connected with masculinity and that women do not

belong in these leadership positions. This disproportionately low presence of women

working in leadership positions results in women becoming tokens in the world of

college athletics (Swaton, 2009).

Downgrading women to support positions and distancing them from being

involved in decision-making is one way women have been marginalized in college

athletics. Although women hold a wide range of positions in athletic departments, the

creation and filling of what eventually became the Senior Women Administrator (SWA)

position was a huge step forward in the professional advancement of women in athletic

departments. The SWA is the highest ranking female in each NCAA athletic department

when the Athletic Director is a male (Schneider, Stier, Henry, & Wilding, 2010). The

SWA in some cases has power and authority in athletic departments, but in the majority

of college athletic departments, the designation of a SWA is a small token that shows

women have diminutive voices in the athletic department (Schneider et al., 2009; Swaton,

2009). Men proportionally hold the power in the athletic departments, thus continuing the

cycle of homologous reproduction throughout college athletics.

Family Role Conflict

Women functioning in male-dominated environments might have more difficulty

negotiating their multiple roles because they are not given power to control their daily

work schedules, and they might feel extreme pressure to perform well at work in order to prove themselves worthy of the profession (Bruening & Dixon, 2008). The organizational and structural factors of an athletic environment and the amount of travel coaches carry out make balancing family responsibilities uniquely difficult (Bracken, 2009; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Pastore, 1991). The women coaches' own values and personalities, as well as their individual family supports, influenced their feelings of work-family conflict (Bracken, 2009; Bruening & Dixon, 2008).

Family role conflict is a leading cause for women to drop out of coaching (Knoppers, 1987; Pastore, 1991). Furthermore, coaching is not often considered a career option by married women or by women who wish to have children due to a lack of administrative support and the amount of time needed to coach (Bracken, 2009; Knoppers, 1987). Traditionally, coaching has been a two-person single career for men with wives primarily responsible for raising the children, entertaining recruits and other coaches, doing the housekeeping, and attending the games. The number of husbands or partners who are willing to do the same for a coaching spouse is limited (Knoppers, 1987; Pastore & Meacci, 1994; Quarterman et al., 2006). The conflict and time for family responsibilities impact the careers of both women and men coaches. Research also suggests that females tend to leave the coaching profession sooner than their male counterparts to start families (Kamphoff & Gill, 2008).

Consequences of the work-family conflict are lower job satisfaction, lower family satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, higher organizational and occupational turnover, higher stress, lower overall health, and lower overall family well-being. Although female coaches value both work and family, their families have often been

sacrificed more than their work. Work tends to interfere more with family than family with work, especially for those who have difficulty compartmentalizing (Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Pastore 1991).

Among male dominated professions, like coaching, there is often the assumption that the person employed has a significant external support system, resulting in fewer internal support structures. This idea coupled with women usually having greater responsibilities for childcare, can unduly burden women who attempt to manage career and families in the athletic industry (Dixon & Bruening, 2007). Women who have successfully managed to combine having a family and a coaching career mention the importance of a very supportive spouse or partner, a close network of friends, and a family willing to help. They also mention the need to prioritize and modify standards and expectations for both their job and their family. Learning to delegate tasks and asking for help are examples of the essential coping skills female coaches discussed in one study (Kilty, 2006). These women stated they could not see their lives as being complete without both family and coaching (Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Pastore, 1991).

Gender Differences

Men's teams have one and a half times as many coaches as women's teams, and the coaches for the men's teams are paid more than twice the amount paid to coaches for the women's teams (Rhode & Walker, 2007). Expectancy and value in coaching is often taken into consideration in salaries and program support and reflects assumptions about ability. Such messages reinforce perceptions that sport competence is gender linked (Barber, 1998; Swaton, 2009). There is an unequal assumption of competence in which a male coach is automatically regarded as more competent than a female coach (Bracken,

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2009, Kilty, 2006; Patore & Meacci, 1994; Sagas & Cunningham, 2001). These perceptions are confirmed by student-athletes and intercollegiate athletic administrators who identify concerns regarding women's coaching abilities. Perceptions of competence are consistently critical to motivation, and female coaches' self-perceptions about their ability are usually lower than male coaches (Barber, 1998). Women who perceive that they are inadequate are more likely to avoid or discontinue their coaching career, but female coaches who positively evaluate their own abilities in coaching are more likely to continue coaching, put forth greater effort, and continue their intercollegiate athletic careers (Barber, 1998; Marback et al., 2005; Pastore, 1993).

Gender differences include women's perceptions that they are not as capable as men in professional positions related to athletics, particularly coaching (Barber, 1998; Kilty, 2006; Marback et al., 2005). Due to the lack of support and lack of confidence from their peers and administrators, female coaches are less confident than males about game strategy efficacy, coaching during competition, knowledge of strategies and tactics, and ability to motivate their athletes (Marback et al., 2005). Female coaches constantly feel the need to prove themselves as capable female coaches, while male coaches' abilities are accepted based on their credentials alone (Kilty, 2006).

The types of obstacles encountered in the coaching profession that affect the degree of opportunity also vary by gender. One obstacle common to women in all-male-dominated professions is sex discrimination (Knoppers, 1997). Between the years 2000-2002, men received 9 out of 10 new head coaching jobs of female sports (Kamphoff & Gill, 2008). The decline in the number of women coaches means there are fewer and fewer visible role models for females in sports, and this could eventually have a

detrimental effect on female athletes (Knoppers, 1987). There are fewer female coaches in Division I and Division II than in Division III, and only 38% of head coaches in the WNBA are women (Kampoff & Gill, 2008). These female athletes may not see others like themselves in Division I, Division II, or professional level coaching positions. Male student-athletes are more likely to indicate interest in entering the coaching profession than female student-athletes (Kampoff & Gill, 2008; Whitaker & Molstad, 1988).

Administrative Support

One of the primary reasons cited by female coaches for leaving a program is lack of administrative support (Pastore et al., 1996). Male athletic administrators perceive that women do not possess certain traits or behaviors conducive to being good head coaches or senior level athletic administrators, so they do not support their advancement. Areas in which there is a lack of support by the administration were: orientation to the institution and position; professional development; recognition for a job performed well; recognition for new proposals; lack of ideas and policy; lack of resources for the team; and recognition for individual and team achievements (Inglis et al., 2000). Studies showed that supervisors who did not guide or encourage women coaches' career progression showed a lack of support for women to rise into their current or higher positions (Quarterman et al., 2006; Weaver & Chelladurai, 2002).

Successful athletic programs depend upon an established and nurturing relationship between members of the coaching staff and athletic administrators (Pastore et al., 1996; Weaver & Chelladurai, 2002). Athletic administrators play a key role in creating positive working environments in athletic departments; when the top-level supervisors are not held accountable for developing and advancing women, satisfaction

and a positive work environment are undermined. Support is needed for all coaches to grow and become successful in their position; however, women seem to receive less support from male athletic administrators, which can lead to unfavorable job performance and negative job satisfaction (Pastore et al., 1996).

Networks and Mentoring

At the college level, 93% of the individuals surveyed at NCAA member institutions agreed that qualified women were not selected for positions due to an "old boys" network, which negatively impacted hiring practices involving women (Lopiano & Zotos, 2009; Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999; Whisenant et al., 2007). The use of networks and engaging in networking activities has positive influences on career progression in sport. Female athletic administrators have attributed the demise in the number of female coaches to the success of the "old boy" network, failure of the "old girl" network, and discrimination on the part of the male administrators doing the hiring (Knoppers, 1987). The ineffectiveness of the "good old girls" club is reflected in the scarcity of administrative structures with female personnel, rather than a lack of success in reproducing oneself in one's own image (Lovett & Lowry, 1994). Networking can be a powerful tool, which can be used to move up the ranks in intercollegiate athletics. It can also work against those women not privileged to its power (Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999; Whisenant et al., 2007). Many head coaches "train" their assistant coaches and use their own networks to find them head coaching positions, and they in turn rely on the recommendation of friends when they select a coach for their team (Kilty, 2006).

Networking is considered important to success in obtaining a career in college athletics because it acts to encourage career advancement through access to information

and resources and the delivery of organizational or career related support (Sagas & Cunningham, 2001). Women trying to obtain a career in college athletics must have a quality network to support and provide information to them. Career success is most influenced by the quality of network; however, a women's network size can also prove helpful and has been shown to connect positively to outcomes such as career obtainment and satisfaction (Sagas & Cunningham, 2001).

Access to female role models in positions of decision-making and leadership is particularly important to females. Females have fewer such role models in their lives than their male counterparts. Women coaches' poor success rates may also partly reflect lack of mentoring and institutional support (Lopiano & Zotos, 2009; Rhode & Walker, 2007; Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999). Intercollegiate athletics is a very intense and challenging enterprise for participants and having female role models available within such an enterprise is even more beneficial (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008). Role models are needed not only for female student-athletes, but for females working in intercollegiate athletics.

Empowerment, guidance, facilitated networking, and contacts come from mentors; these are valuable assets to females in intercollegiate athletics. It has been noted in several studies that the positive benefits of mentoring is one of the best ways to retain a female coach (Inglis et al., 2000; Kilty, 2006; Lopiano & Zotos, 2009; Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999). It is also a critical component of career success for assistant coaches when the head coach gives support and provides mentoring (Kilty, 2006; Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999). The value of mentoring for women in their personal and professional accomplishments highlights the importance of ensuring a large number and diverse range of women employed within the ranks of athletic positions with whom mentoring

relationships can be nurtured among staff and student-athletes (Inglis et al., 2000; Lopiano & Zotos, 2009; Weaver & Chelladurai, 2002). Sagas and Cunningham (2001), have indicated that individuals typically prefer to function in groups of similar others, rather than in those with dissimilar others, so having role models of the same gender assist in providing a positive experience that can be of substantial support to females trying to obtain a career in college athletics.

The findings in the literature give a wide range of reasons why women are no longer going into coaching, including desiring a higher salary, time requirements, and preference of a 9 to 5 job. Bracken (2009) revealed that 90% of female student-athletes surveyed are not interested in pursuing a career in college athletics. This small number of female student-athletes interested in pursuing a career in college athletics is a possible result of lack of knowledge sharing about different positions in college athletics, lack of female role models, and a lack of quality networks (Bracken, 2009; Sagas & Cunningham, 2001).

Applicable Solutions to Retaining Women Coaches

The findings from the literature provide a variety of reasons why women do not stay in coaching, but the literature also suggests some applicable solutions to retaining women coaches. Creating networks for women and providing administrative support were two of the main solutions that were given to assist in retaining coaches (Knoppers et al., 1991). Retaining employees, such as coaches and administrators in athletic work environments, is critical in preventing undesirable employee turnover, maintaining a consistency in work flow, and avoiding the high costs associated with new employee

recruitment and training (Inglis et al., 1996; Lopiano & Zotos, 2009; Pastore & Meacci, 1994; Turner & Chelladural, 2005).

Creating positive and supportive work environments is vital to retaining female coaches and maximizing their potential (Inglis et al., 2000). Acknowledging the unique challenges that women coaches encounter and supporting them are initial steps to retaining them in an intercollegiate athletics program. There must be a cultural change within a majority of intercollegiate athletic departments in the country in order to ensure the advancement of females in intercollegiate athletics. Structural changes include: giving women opportunities for decision-making, adjusting workloads to respect that women and men can be equally capable of coaching and administrative responsibilities, and providing opportunities to women similar to those provided to men in their pursuit of meaningful work (Inglis et al., 2000).

Intercollegiate athletic department administrators also need to change the ways in which they direct their programs, beginning with their hiring practices and implementing measures for accountability. They also need to meet regularly to allow input from all coaches as well as to provide feedback and performance appraisals (Pastore, 1993; Pastore & Meacci, 1994). An overall respect for women in the intercollegiate athletic department and harsh repercussions for violations of sexual harassment and gender equity violations need to be implemented as well. Through effective leadership, administrators change the work climate and attitudes of others (Inglis et al., 2000; Lopiano & Zotos, 2009).

Women coaches experience isolation and disconnection at different points in their coaching careers, particularly as they advance to the position of head coach (Kilty, 2006).

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Intercollegiate athletic administrators need to provide coaching education programs for women structured around principles of fluid expertise and mutuality, and provide female coaches the opportunity for reflection within their social context (Pastore, 1993). Female coaches who have attended conferences have repeatedly recognized the value of interacting with other female coaches as well as sharing ideas and common experiences (Kilty, 2006). Opportunities for this type of interaction need to become more of the norm and less of an annual event as means for reinforcing female coaches' experiences and learning (Barber, 1996). The skills obtained at these conferences give women coaches confidence and a sense of worth and personal growth which then can be carried back to their campuses and applied to their daily lives of coaching (Inglis et al., 2000).

Summary

Although there have been ample proposals for reform of Title IX, almost none have focused on the barriers for women in coaching and their implications for athletic leadership. The failure to acknowledge a loss of professional opportunities for women in athletics as a serious problem is one of the main reasons achieving gender equity in intercollegiate sports is so difficult (Rhode & Walker, 2007). More research needs to be conducted to fully understand the unique challenges that female coaches encounter. Also, there are few studies that address current female college student-athletes' attitudes with regards to working in college athletics (Bracken, 2007; Cooper et al., 2007). This is especially important because these students are the future of intercollegiate coaches and administration.

More research also needs to be conducted regarding the work-family conflict of coaches. These insights can provide valuable background as to why women do or do not

choose to coach, why they leave or stay, and how those decisions and behaviors impact the next generation of women in sports. Further research might also provide valuable information regarding the potentially unique nature of working in intercollegiate athletics and extend the knowledge of work-family conflict in an ever-changing industry (Dixon & Bruening, 2007). Turner and Chelladural (2005) recommend from their findings that future research needs to investigate the extent to which lack of commitment contributes to the exit of individual women from coaching; they also suggest that this be conducted as a longitudinal study.

Furthermore, Pastore (1991) suggests that further studies are needed to determine whether socialization adversely affects women in their decision to enter or leave the coaching profession. Finally, female student-athletes comprise the largest pool of candidates for future coaching and athletic staff positions. Their current perceptions regarding working in college athletics is negative, and providing workshops, internships, and mentoring programs would be helpful in changing perceptions and establishing strong networking foundations in the female student athlete population to make a collegiate athletic career a positive career choice (Bracken, 2009; Fitzgerald et al., 1994).

The percentage of women in administrative positions is the highest percentage since the inception of Title IX; however, the career trajectory for women to become an administrator in college athletics is by first becoming coaches. The current all-time low percentage of women coaches is not a positive sign for the future of intercollegiate athletics. The lack of women currently coaching could possibly lower the percentage of future women in administration positions in college athletics. Additional studies need to be conducted to explore the different reasons and applicable solutions to stop the decline

of women coaches as it negatively correlates to the percentage of women who do not go into administration. The lack of women working in college athletics show the current female student-athlete that working in college athletics is not something women should do (Knoppers et al., 1991).

Methodology

Introduction

While Title IX has increased opportunities for female participation in collegiate athletics, the percentage of women working in various capacities in college athletics has decreased since its inception, especially women coaches (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). In response, this research study was conducted at a NCAA Division III University to gain insight into undergraduate female student-athletes' decisions to enter or not enter collegiate athletics as a career choice. The study examined current female student-athletes' perceptions of different career roles and responsibilities in collegiate athletics, as well as provided workshops to inform them about career options. I also examined my own leadership and how it affected female student-athletes' perceptions regarding working in college athletics.

Rationale for Action Research

This study used action research to explore changes in student-athletes' perceptions of the collegiate athletic profession and to explore my leadership as I implemented workshops to inform female student-athletes about career options in college athletics. Action research is defined as "a form of self-reflective problem solving, which enables researchers and practitioners to better understand and solve pressing problems" (McKernan, 1988, p. 6). This method of research was appropriate for this study because I attempted to solve on a micro-level, within the institution where I worked, what is a major concern in college athletics. As the researcher, I examined and followed the

changes in students' understanding and perceptions as I worked through the cycles of the

program, consistent with action research, which is conducted by a researcher inside the

community rather than by experts (Hinchey, 2008). Furthermore, action research tracks

improvements or enhances understanding of the problem the researcher is working on

through systematic investigation, which included information collecting, analysis, and

reflection. Once information was collected, an action plan was devised, implemented, and

evaluated. The data from the evaluation were then used to create further changes and

improvements, thus creating a cyclical process that was continuous (Hinchey, 2008).

Other characteristics of action research involve "planning a change, acting and observing

the process and consequences of the change, reflecting on these processes and

consequences, and then replanning, observing, and reflecting and then continuing the

process all over again" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000, p. 595).

Research Questions

This action research study is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What motivates current female coaches and athletic staff members to pursue

   careers in college athletics?

2. What motivates female student-athletes at X University to pursue or not

   pursue careers in college athletics?

3. What are current female X University student-athletes' attitudes toward

   working in collegiate athletic positions?

4. How do information workshops on careers in college athletics affect this

   institution's female student-athletes' interest in choosing collegiate athletics as

   a career?

5. How will my leadership affect the female student-athletes with whom I work?

6. How will my leadership change and grow through this action research project?

Population

At the time of the study I was a member of the athletic department as the NCAA compliance officer and an advisor to student-athletes, and so was directly involved with the population I was studying. As a result, my accessibility to the student-athletes as well as my examination of the literature helped me determine the factors that contributed to female student-athletes' decisions to choose or not choose a career path in college athletics. The population sample consisted of female student-athletes, coaches who coach female student-athletes, and female athletic staff members at a four-year public institution. I recruited students to participate in this study through e-mail and by talking to them at practices and athletic department meetings. The sample of this study was relatively small and selective, thus providing the few female student-athletes at the university who were interested in careers in collegiate athletics a more personalized experience. There were approximately 25 female student-athletes, 1 athletic female administrator, 1 male head coach, 4 female head coaches, 2 female assistant coaches, and 2 athletic staff members participating in the study.

Data Collection and Techniques

For my data collection I used semi-structured interviews, observations, focus groups, personal journaling, questionnaires, field notes, and Kouzes and Posner's (2008) Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) in the study. The first cycle of this study took place in the spring 2010 semester (January-March 2010). In the first cycle, I conducted semi-structured interviews (Appendix A) with 1 male coach, 6 female coaches, 1 athletic

administrator, and 2 female athletic staff members regarding what motivated them to join the profession, how they obtained their college athletic positions, their mentoring experiences, and their thoughts on current female student-athletes' perceptions about working in college athletics. The second cycle included recruiting female student-athletes in the athletic department where I worked. I was able to recruit 20 female student-athletes and conducted two focus groups (Appendix B). The focus groups lead to additional information and findings, which I used to create evaluative questionnaires for the assessment of the workshops, which I conducted in the third cycle of the study. Moreover, the insights that emerged from my semi-structured interviews assisted me in discovering information to provide to female student athletes and methods to create change throughout the cycles. Finally, in the third cycle I initiated workshops for female student-athletes and collected data to evaluate them. I also collected journal data on my leadership throughout the study and administered the LPI in cycle three.

This descriptive study was designed to explore the perceptions of female student-athletes regarding working in collegiate athletics and to provide information about careers in college athletics. I used action research to explore why female student-athletes are attracted to or discouraged from careers in collegiate athletics (Hinchey, 2008). This research design offered a rationale to better explain behaviors, interactions, and perceptions that are grounded and developed through data collection. I, as the researcher, was the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis, which occurred simultaneously throughout the cycles and included observations I conducted (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Toma, 2005).

I also included the information from my field research in the workshops. This information is important to share, because my change initiative was based on Fullan's (2001) knowledge sharing paradigm, thus knowledge sharing was essential to the success of my study. Fullan (2007) states, "change has to occur in practice along the three dimensions in order for it to have a chance in affecting the outcome" (p. 31). The three elements of successful change that I applied to my project were: creating an awareness of the lack of females going into college athletics as a career choice, communicating information about possible careers in college athletics, and measuring changes in student-athletes perceptions following the workshops. As I show in the results section, through action research at my former institution, I created a degree of awareness regarding the lack of females working in college athletics, and provided information about professional options for female student-athletes. The workshops were carefully and thoughtfully planned in order to positively impact participants' perceptions about pursuing careers in college athletics. The last element of success as related to the development of my leadership was my vision for the workshops; how I communicated my vision to others affected student-athletes' understanding about careers choices in college athletics.

Fullan's (2001) change model implies that sharing knowledge with the female student-athletes about employment in college athletics is essential to their perceived ability to obtain careers in college athletics. Fullan's knowledge sharing paradigm (see Figure 4.1) gives a framework for understanding the change in my study. Sharing knowledge is a key element to the successful implementation of my change initiative because, as Fullan believes, "information becomes knowledge only when it takes on a social life" (Fullan, 2001, p.78). The informational workshops provided the medium for

the information to be transformed into knowledge. The workshops offered an opportunity

for the female student-athletes to give and receive information, and according to the data,

through my leadership the information was transformed into applicable knowledge.

Responsibility

Receiving   Knowledge   Giving

Opportunity
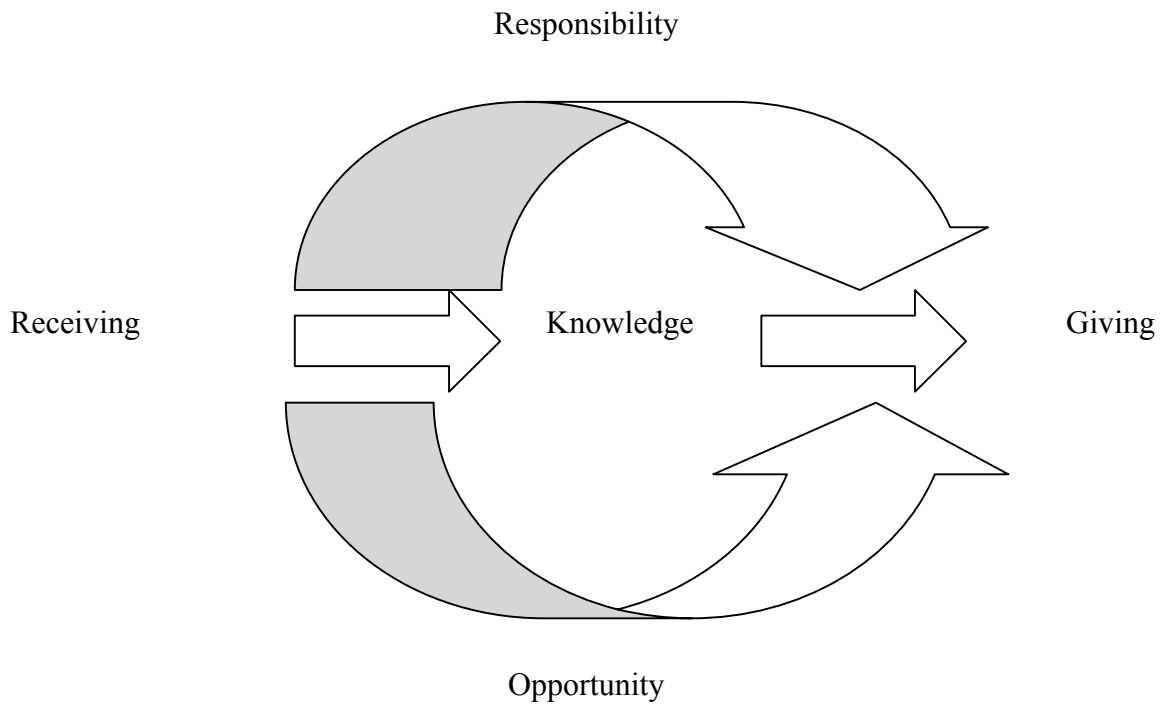
Figure 4.1

Fullan's Knowledge Sharing Paradigm

Coding and Analyzing Data

My initial qualitative data analysis throughout the study placed single sentences

or thoughts from the semi-structured interviews and focus groups into specific common

categories, called open coding (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Initial categories were then

examined and compared to see if they were interrelated, known as axial coding (Bogdan

& Biklen, 2007). These common, or interrelated categories, were authenticated by

identifying the total number of participants whose responses were coded within the common category (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The next step in the analysis, called selective coding, involved integrating the common categories from the data into a larger theoretical framework, which explained the perceptions of female student-athletes regarding careers in college athletics. This allowed me to use the knowledge gained to create, design, and implement athletic career-related workshops for the female student-athletes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

The last step in the analysis is called triangulation. As part of the analysis, triangulation assisted in finding patterns throughout the data collection that increased confidence in the research findings (Glense, 2006; Gratton & Jones, 2010). The use of various data collection methods also contributed to the trustworthiness of the data I collected (Glense, 2006). By using different data collection techniques, such as the interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, Kouzes and Posner's (2008) Leadership Practices Inventory, and journaling, my objective was to strengthen the validity of my research.

Research Cycles

This study used action research as the primary method of research. Action research is an interactive investigation method that balances problem solving actions employed in a shared context with data collection to understand the underlying causes of the problem and enabled me as the researcher to use my leadership to create change (Hinchey, 2008). Within the research process, I analyzed my individual practices for my espoused leadership theories, expanding the knowledge base of leadership and change (Argyris, 1990; Schein, 2004).

This study used the combined research methods of evaluation questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups to collect data. In Cycle I, I used semi-structured interviews with current coaches and athletic department staff members at the university to explore their journeys to their current positions within athletics (Appendix A). Hinchey (2008) describes semi-structured interviews "in which the researcher asks some predetermined questions but also allows interviewees' time and opportunity to explore other areas they think are relevant" (p. 99). The interviews allowed the coaches and staff members to share their experiences in obtaining careers in college athletics and why they thought female student-athletes choose or do not choose careers in college athletics. I then e-mailed all the female student-athletes in cycle II, asking them if they would like to participate in the focus groups (Appendix B). Hinchey (2008) describes focus groups as "a form of group interview in which representative persons are brought together to explore their various thoughts on a specific topic" (p. 99). I was able to secure 20 females student-athletes to participate in the two focus groups. Through the focus groups I was able to understand the sporting experiences of female student-athletes, as well as their experiences with female coaches and/or athletic department staff members during their high school or college years. I then used the information from the interviews and focus groups to shape the workshops I conducted in Cycle III.

As the former Assistant Athletic Director and NCAA compliance officer, I met with all the teams at the beginning of the fall semester to disseminate pertinent information regarding eligibility requirements that all student-athletes must be mindful of through the academic year. During the 2010-2011 academic year, I explained my study to all the women's teams and passed out a sheet for them to sign to participate in the

workshops. I had 56 female student-athletes sign up for the workshops. I had the information workshops in April of 2011, followed by a panel presentation conducted by a group of women working in various positions within college athletics. This panel of women was able to share their personal stories of working in college athletics. Studies have shown that when women are empowered at the group level, they are in a better position to facilitate their advancement at the shared level (Blinde et al., 1994). The purpose of the workshops was to assist female student-athletes in identifying careers in college athletics, share resume writing tips, and provide useful information about internships, graduate positions, and other resources in searching for careers in collegiate athletics. When I interviewed the athletic department staff members, some expressed interest in assisting with the workshops and being involved in the presentation.

Cycle I

  Data collection. The first cycle of this study took place in the winter of 2009-2010. For the first cycle, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 1 athletic female administrator, 1 male head coach, 4 female head coaches, 2 female assistant coaches, and 2 athletic staff members regarding their own personal athletic experiences and college athletic careers (Appendix A). Semi-structured interviews are an appropriate strategy because the format provides interviewees with a high level of comfort (Hinchey, 2008), and I wanted staff members to feel comfortable speaking with me about their experiences. I felt confident that I would get more information from them by letting them openly share information they thought was relevant to the topic, which may have not been addressed in the specific questions I had prepared (Creswell, 2007). I also asked questions in the semi-structured interviews that were topical. These topical questions

focused on the coaches and staff's opinions and attitudes about working in college athletics and sharing that knowledge with their female student-athletes (Creswell, 2007; Glense, 2006). I used this information in Cycle III. Prior to the interviews I had all the coaches and athletic staff members sign a letter of consent (Appendix C). I taped the interviews and I also took notes while I conducted them. I transcribed all the interviews and had the interviewees review the transcriptions for accuracy, which is called member checking (Glense, 2006).

Documents. The main documents I collected for this research were the athletic department web site biographies of the people I interviewed. I would like to note that the athletic trainer, two assistant coaches, and an athletic staff member did not have a biography on the website. I asked them for a copy of their resume instead. The resumes and biographies provided me a chronological listing of the professional experiences that the subjects had.

It was important that I collected the coaches and athletic staff biographies and resumes for my qualitative research because they assisted in helping me determining their career trajectory that I may have missed from the interviews on their experiences (Hodder, 2002). The biographies and resumes also provided rigor in determining the factual information that was related to me about the subjects' professional work experience. I was able to compare and find different patterns from the experiences from the subjects' resumes to each other.

Data coding. Next, I coded all the data, which allowed themes to emerge from the data as described earlier (Creswell, 2007). I also created word clouds from the interviews using the websnip website. The word clouds helped me with creating themes

for my coding. The word clouds showed the dominant words used in the interviews and this assisted me in finding the words in the context in which they were used and enabled me to discover themes and categories (A. Johnson, personal communication, September 20, 2009).

I used this information in creating the workshops for the female student-athletes. As the data will show, through this cycle I generated interest about the lack of females going into college athletics as a career choice and how student-athletes' actions are positively or negatively affected because of that. Through the interviews with the coaches and staff, I brought up the topics of knowledge sharing about obtaining careers in college athletics and the lack of females choosing college athletics as a career choice. A number of female coaches and staff expressed interest in participating in the workshops. As I shared with the coaches and staff the concept of knowledge sharing, I began to see the coaches and staff becoming more cognizant of the lack of females working in college athletics.

Leadership

I assessed my leadership throughout the cycles by journaling. Self-reflection adds to the validation of the study (Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Creswell, 2007). Through journaling I was able to reflect on the project, assess my own understanding of the topic, connect my data with what other sources were stating, and document the process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2007). One of the ways I was able to assess my leadership was through my growth and demonstration of leadership principles and how my reflective thinking, information gathering, and processing contributed to the success and development of the workshops.

Cycle II

  Data collection. The second cycle occurred in March of 2010. During this cycle, I conducted two focus groups with a total of 20 female student-athletes (Appendix B). Hinchey (2008) describes focus groups as "a form of a group interview in which representative persons are brought together to explore their various thoughts on a specific topic" (p. 99). I believed focus groups were important to use in this study because being in a group "encourages people to speak more freely" (Hinchey, 2008, p. 82).

  I e-mailed each female student-athlete to explain my research and asked for volunteers to participate in the focus groups. In response to my e-mail, 30 female student-athletes expressed interest, although only 20 were able to participate due to scheduling conflicts. I conducted two focus groups. One group included 9 female student-athletes, and the second included 11 female student-athletes, which combined for a total of 20 female student-athletes in the focus groups. Prior to conducting the focus groups I had the student-athletes sign a letter of informed consent (Appendix D). In the focus groups, I posed questions regarding career choices in collegiate athletics in an effort to try and find out the female student-athletes' perceptions of the roles and duties women have in collegiate athletic careers. I taped the focus groups and I had an impartial observer who also took notes while I conducted them. I transcribed all the focus groups and had the focus groups participants review the transcriptions for accuracy, which is called member checking (Glense, 2006).

  The focus groups centered on numerous topics. First, participants were asked about their knowledge of the various careers and responsibilities in collegiate athletics. Second, they were asked whether or not they would enter into collegiate athletics as a

career choice. Questions in the focus group identified specific attraction and barriers for careers in collegiate athletics. The focus groups also discussed participants' knowledge of the various career choices in collegiate athletics and the responsibilities associated with them. At the conclusion of the focus groups, I shared information on Title IX by passing out a handout that explained the law, as well as a handout that included different athletic job search sites and two women's athletic organizations that had useful information about working in college athletics. I continued to keep a journal to collect data and to assess my leadership through Cycle II.

Cycle coding. I used thematic coding (Glesne, 2006) to analyze the data from the focus group. The focus group transcripts were analyzed in sentences or groups of sentences reflecting categories. These categories were given a code to reflect the idea or concept (Glesne, 2006). I also created word clouds from the focus groups using the websnip website. The word clouds helped me with creating themes for my coding. The word clouds showed the dominant words used in the focus groups and this assisted me in finding the words in the context in which they were used and enabled me to discover themes and categories (A. Johnson, personal communication, September 20, 2009). The categories that emerged from the coding were: experience, relationships, networking, advance education, passion, time, push/support, competence, family/work conflict, opportunity, and role model. The initial categories were examined and compared to see if they were interlaced. The common interrelated categories were authenticated by identifying the total number of participants whose responses were coded within the common category. The categories were broken down into the following sub-groups: barriers that female student-athletes' perceived in working in college athletics, attractors

that student-athletes perceived in working in college athletics and lack of knowledge

contributing to low number of female student-athletes pursuing a career in athletics. The

last step in Cycle II involved analysis to integrate the common categories from the focus

groups into a larger theoretical framework to help explain the perceptions of the female

student-athletes' attitudes regarding a career in college athletics (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007;

Glesne, 2006). The themes that emerged from the data were: lack of knowledge,

attractors, and barriers.

In order for the workshops to be effective I had to have the correct and pertinent

information presented at the workshop for the female student-athletes. I was able to use

the information from the emerged themes from the focus groups in Cycle II and the

interviews in Cycle I to create the knowledge sharing workshop. I used the emerged

themes as topics in the workshop and Chapters VII and VIII will discuss the effectiveness

of the workshop from the use of the analyzed themes.

Cycle III

Data collection. For Cycle III, I used information I gathered from the interviews

and focus groups to design a workshop and panel presentation, and I also developed two

questionnaires for the female student-athletes to gather background information and to

assess the workshop (see Appendices E & F), in keeping with the action research

(Hinchey, 2008). Through the workshop during Cycle III, the female student-athletes

explored what is required to work in collegiate athletics and could consider the extent to

which their own attributes matched the expectations of the job. The interviews and focus

groups were essential to the workshop designs because initial descriptions of how female

student-athletes perceive the profession were essential to identifying misconceptions as

well as determining what attracts some and discourages others from entering collegiate

athletics as a career (Mensch & Mitchell, 2008).

The third cycle in my study occurred in April 2011. In the fall 2010 NCAA

compliance meetings, I asked the female student-athletes to sign up for the workshops. I

personally e-mailed and called each of these students who signed up to encourage them to

come to the workshop. I also e-mailed all the female student-athletes about the

workshops and I posted flyers (appendix G) throughout the gymnasium, women's locker

room, athletic training room and in the Health and Exercise Science Department. Finally,

I e-mailed all the coaches who coached women's teams to inform them about the

workshop, invited them to attend, and asked them to encourage their players to come.

I had one workshop conducted at three different times to allow as many interested

female student-athletes to attend. I had a workshop on a Sunday night at 7:00 p.m., a

Monday night at 7:00 p.m. and a Monday night at 5:30 p.m., all in the month of April. I

also had a separate session that followed the second Monday night workshop that

included a panel of women working in college athletics that started at 7:00 p.m. At the

start of each workshop and the panel, I outlined the workshop and the panel and the

responsibilities and rights of the students who were participating. This discussion covered

informed consent, the right to withdraw from the program at any time, and an overview

of the research that I was conducting.

I used these workshops to educate female student-athletes who were interested in

obtaining careers in college athletics. Topics included: types and descriptions of jobs in

college athletics, internships, graduate positions, athletic job search sites, Title IX and its

effects, resumes, and networking. I also invited the female coaches and athletic staff

members to come to the workshops to share their stories of how collegiate athletics

became a career option for them. I also had a panel of women who work in college

athletics outside of X University. There were five women on the panel from outside the

University and two from X University who expressed an interest in participating. This

panel discussed their college athletic career obtainment and their current responsibilities.

I had some time after the panel for the female student-athletes to socialize with the

women on the panel which provided them an opportunity to network. This panel gave the

female student-athletes another opportunity to receive knowledge about athletic career

obtainment and also provided a networking opportunity.

The workshop and panel were assessed to determine the extent to which the

female student-athletes developed an interest in working in college athletics or were

discouraged, and to examine the knowledge they gained through the workshops. The last

part of the assessment evaluated my leadership abilities in understanding and assessing

the needs of female student-athletes in regards to working in college athletics.

I collected the data by administering a background questionnaire at the beginning

of the workshops to determine the interest level as well as the knowledge of the group

(Appendix E). Another evaluation questionnaire was administered after the workshops

concluded to collect further data on whether students gained or lost, on their interest

knowledge level, and my leadership (Appendix F). The questionnaires were distributed

before and after the workshops. The questionnaire used before the workshop was a

background questionnaire and the evaluation questionnaire used after the workshop was

an evaluation of the workshop questionnaire. The questionnaires asked questions

regarding the participants' demographic information, major, and sport. There were a total

of 15 female student-athletes who attended the workshops and out of those 15 female student-athletes, 10 also attended the panel presentation. There were six sophomores, four juniors, and five seniors in attendance at the workshops. Of the 15 participants, nine participants had a female coach and six of the participants had a male coach. The breakdown of participants by sport was: one cross county, four basketball, two field hockey, two soccer, four softball, and two track and field. The breakdown of participants by major was: two biology, two business administration, two communications, one education, six health and exercise science, and two listed other as their major.

Evaluation questionnaire. I used SPSS computer software to analyze the background and evaluation questionnaires. SPSS is a computer program used for questionnaire analysis (Cronk, 2006). There were 15 questions on the background questionnaire and 13 questions on the workshop evaluation questionnaire. There were eight questions asked in both the background questionnaire and the workshop evaluation questionnaire so I could compare and contrast the answers the participants gave before and after the workshop. I uploaded the questions and responses in the SPSS software, which produced statistics on the responses of the evaluation questionnaires. I then used the statistics to analyze the evaluation questionnaire questions. Those questions and the statistical results will be discussed further in Chapters VIII and IX.

This evaluation questionnaire asked questions about me as a facilitator, which assisted me in identifying whether I was effective as a transformational, feminist, and servant leader (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Bolman & Deal, 2003; Greenleaf, 1976; Klenke, 1996; Rosener, 1990; Yusof & Shah, 2008). The facilitator questions explored whether I was approachable and knowledgeable about the topic. The evaluation questionnaire also

asked if the facilitator encouraged interest in pursuing a career in college athletics. The questionnaires assisted in my analysis of my effectiveness as a leader through this research project. I have identified myself as a transformational, feminist, and servant leader; as will be discussed in detail in the results, the feedback from the evaluation questionnaires identified the traits found in those leadership styles and confirmed my leadership styles. As a transformational, feminist, and servant leader it is important that I am considered approachable and encouraging by the female student-athletes (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Bolman & Deal, 2003; Greenleaf, 1976; Klenke, 1996; Rosener, 1990; Yusof & Shah, 2008).

I also conducted two focus groups with student-athletes following the workshops; there were four participants in the first Sunday night workshop and six participants in the second Monday night workshop (Appendix H). My intentions were for female student-athletes to learn new information that would help them obtain positions in collegiate athletics. I also kept a journal throughout this cycle to collect data on my leadership. I used thematic coding (Glesne, 2006) to analyze the focus groups from the workshops in the same method I used with the focus groups in Cycle II.

Cycle Analysis

The data analysis of the observations, interviews, documents, and focus groups was guided by thematic analysis as described by Glesne (2006). The intent of thematic analysis is a "process that involves coding and then segregating the data by codes into data clumps for further analysis and description" (Glesne, 2006, p. 147). I used thematic analysis as a systematic approach that connected the thoughts, themes and categories

derived from the observations, interviews, documents, and focus groups into patterns. This approach enabled me to discover common themes and categories from the research.

I used thematic codes to analyze the data (Glesne, 2006; Creswell, 2007) Coding is essential to qualitative analysis. Codes act as labels to mark off text in a group for later retrieval and indexing (Glesne, 2006; Creswell, 2007). The results of this study reflected the experiences of women who work in college athletics and the perceptions of female student-athletes regarding careers in college athletics.

Leadership Assessment

To assess my leadership during Cycle III, I used the evaluation questionnaire at the end of the workshop as previously discussed (Appendix F) and information from the two focus groups. Prior to the focus groups student-athletes completed a letter of consent form (Appendix I). The evaluation questionnaire inquired about my capabilities as a facilitator, which I tied to my leadership theories, and how I contributed to the female student-athletes' overall learning and success. The focus groups with the female student-athletes were used to assess my leadership and my change initiative. My purpose in using a focus group in addition to the evaluation questionnaire was to hear additional feedback about the workshops. Focus groups enable people to build on others' thoughts and ideas, unlike evaluation questionnaires (Hinchey, 2008). I taped the focus groups and I also took notes while I conducted them. I transcribed all the focus groups and had the participants review the transcriptions for accuracy, which is called member checking (Glense, 2006).

Learning Practices Inventory (LPI)

I used the Learning Practices Inventory (LPI) as the main assessment of my leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2008). I chose to use the LPI to assist in assessing my espoused leadership theories of transformational, feminist, and servant because the questions in the LPI focused on the traits that these leadership theories demonstrated. The LPI is an online evaluation questionnaire that assesses leaders in five leadership practices: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart.

The three leadership theories to which I espouse – transformational, feminist and servant leadership – all share the traits that the Kouzes and Posner's (2008) LPI measures (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Greenleaf, 1976; Klenke, 1996). Those traits include: positivity, empowerment, vision, motivational, value, participation, teamwork, communication, promoting a sense of community and sharing power in decision making (Bass, 1995; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Blackmore, 1999; Greenleaf, 1976; Klenke, 1996; Rieke et al., 2008; Rosener, 1990; Yusof & Shah, 2008).

Kouzes and Posner's (2008) first leadership practice, model the way, addressed the significance of a leader's understanding of how their words and actions represent their values. This part of the evaluation questionnaire explores how leaders find their voice, build and affirm shared values, and inspect the constancy of their actions. The second practice, inspire a shared vision, investigates how leaders reflect upon their experiences, produce a vision by listening to others and then form a shared purpose, vision, and future. Communication, listening, and empathy are required to achieve a shared vision. This also builds relationships, which are essential for a leader to be

successful. The third practice, challenge the process, analyzes the leader's ability to initiate and encourage others to create change, provide motivation to face challenges, and to provide a strategy. Also within this practice a leader must be able to create an environment in which people can try ideas, be able to fail, and learn from their mistakes. Enable others to act is the fourth practice and this practice focuses on building credibility, accountability, and cooperation. This practice also creates an environment in which power and information is shared, which creates pride and a sense of ownership. Lastly, encourage the heart addresses the leader's ability to focus on clear principles, positivity, and attentiveness. Also, this practice provides support and encouragement which builds morale and creates a model for others to follow and to share leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

In the LPI questionnaire instrument, both the leader and the observers are asked to evaluate the leader's ability in 30 leadership behaviors that each relate to one of these five practices. The rating scale on each statement of the LPI ranges from one *almost never* through 10 *almost always*. The rating for each of the five leadership practices were totaled and provided a score for each leadership practice. Thus the total score had the potential to range from 6 to 60 for each leadership practice.

The LPI questionnaire included 30 items that allowed the observers to assess my leadership behaviors. I distributed 23 evaluation questionnaires and 13 were completed. I was a little disheartened that I only had a 53% return on the evaluation questionnaire. I believe had I been still working at the institution where the study took place I would have had a slightly higher return rate, because I would have been able to encourage the participants to complete the LPI questionnaire in person rather through e-mail.

Validity of the LPI

I used the LPI to assess my leadership because it was an instrument directly related to Kouzes and Posners' book (2006) *The Leadership Challenge.* The LPI is a product of Kouzes and Posner and reflects the main statements of the book. Also, according to the leadershipchallenge.com website the LPI has a

> Very strong reliability and validity and it is one of the most widely used 360-degree leadership assessment instruments available. More than 250,000 leaders and nearly one million observers have completed it. Since the LPI was first used in 1985, they have analyzed evaluation questionnaires from more than 100,000 respondents to determine the relationship between The Five Practices and a variety of measurable outcomes. In addition, more than 250 doctoral dissertations and master's theses have used the LPI in their research. The LPI had ongoing analysis and refinements of the instrument continue. (http://www.leadershipchallenge.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-131089.html)

Participants in the LPI

I e-mailed the LPI questionnaire to all the people I interviewed for my research, two student-athletes who participated in the workshops and with whom I worked closely on the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, and the two female interns who worked with me this past academic year in the athletic department and also participated in the workshops. I also asked the other coaches and athletic staff who I did not interview, but with whom I had discussed my research.

I believe the LPI definitely assisted me in evaluating my leadership. In order to improve and be a successful leader, I must accept that criticism is given to help me. Accepting constructive criticism is something I have struggled with since I was a child. If I did not agree with the criticism I usually ignored the advice. I always felt I was hard enough on myself; I did not need someone else criticizing me. However, as I have grown

as a leader I have learned to embrace the criticism and really reflect on how I can use it to improve.

Validity

All research must be valid and credible. Validity of the study occurred when the measurements of the study actually reflect the experiences of what was being studied (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Credibility related to how believable the findings and the interpretations of the study were. I had to be cognizant that I accurately reflected the participants' experiences and gave an accurate representation of them through member checking (Gratton & Jones, 2010). These strategies were crucial in making certain the accuracy of my findings and thus ensuring their credibility (Creswell, 2007).

In order to conduct my research under ethical standards, I obtained approval from the X University Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee in December of 2009. This approval permitted me to conduct the research I proposed; and I sought additional approval for my Cycle III evaluation questionnaires and focus groups protocol. It was my intention to conduct a valid, reliable, and ethical study; therefore, every effort was made to uphold confidentiality. All participants signed an informed consent form (Appendices B, D, & I). Additionally, IRB approval was obtained in November 2010 for use of the evaluation questionnaire instrument.

I spent as much time as possible at my research site, and I was vigilant with my persistent observations, which I recorded in my journal. In addition, trustworthiness was established through accuracy and member checking. Member-checks consisted of consulting with the participants in the study to review interview transcripts for accuracy and provide any corrections (Creswell, 2007; Glense, 2006). Using various multiple

forms of data collection ensured triangulation, which in action research was utilized to provide validity (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Gratton & Jones, 2010).

I was open to change within my research and in the cycles. As I moved through the research, my knowledge and understanding of leadership theories grew and became more defined. As I gained a better understanding of my own leadership, I used my leadership strengths to assist in the change process. I also needed to adjust to new and changing information. I anticipated that my action research would evolve and as the research evolved, I identified the effects of the intervention (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

I needed to be conscious of researcher bias because I mentored many of the research participants, and their personal and professional success is related to my own. I was aware that my immersion in the study could lead to researcher bias in the data analysis and could adversely affect the validity of my research (Toma, 2005). Being aware of this potential researcher bias helped me establish guidelines to prevent problems. These guidelines included assigning two people who are professionally related to my research topic to assist in examining the research process and product through inspection of my field notes and research journal to ensure validity (Glense, 2006). Hinchey (2008) describes peer debriefing as "the process of a researcher sharing preliminary data analysis and interpretation with a peer or colleague, to determine whether he or she finds the researcher's analysis is credible or convincing" (p. 99). The peer debriefing gave me multiple perspectives and tacit knowledge that confirmed information and established rigor in my research (Altheide & Johnson, 1994).

Limitations

There are, of course, limitations to this study. The research participants who I interviewed are all from the same university. The athletic director at this university is female, which is uncommon in collegiate athletics; only 18.9% of athletic directors are female (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). The majority of athletic directors at colleges in the United State are male, so the perceptions and attitudes of the female staff members at those institutions with a male athletic director could be very different than the sample I used (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). It was possible that the participants from this university were not representative of the majority of female student-athletes in the country interested in pursuing careers in collegiate athletics. With this knowledge I was cognizant that my research and my action plan may only be effective at my specific research location.

The responses from the female student-athlete evaluation questionnaires could have been misleading because the student-athletes might not have understood or interpreted the questions as I intended. I was in the room when the evaluation questionnaires were distributed and answered questions when clarification was needed.

Also, I was the compliance officer in the Athletic Department and this position required me to report any NCAA infractions to the Athletic Director. The participants might not have felt fully comfortable discussing the interview and focus group questions with me because they may have been afraid that I would report them to the athletic director, which could have resulted in consequences mandated by the athletic director and/or the NCAA. Although the questions in the interview did not ask about NCAA rules

and regulations, a staff member or student-athlete might have felt that the information they were sharing would have risked their integrity through self-disclosure.

Conclusion

I hoped through my leadership, vision, and passion that I inspired other women in my department to participate in the workshops. Research has shown that professional mentoring and knowledge sharing is very important for current female student-athletes to gain motivation and inspiration to pursue a career in collegiate athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). It was my desire that, through this change initiative and my leadership in the workshops, I had a positive impact on female student-athletes possible career attainment in college athletics and the creation of a culture of knowledge sharing on my campus.

I felt through initiating the workshops for the female student-athletes at X University that the female students who participated would benefit from increased knowledge and interest. I also hoped through my leadership that other members of the athletic department would take part in the program, and that this program might inspire females working in collegiate athletics in other athletic departments to begin sharing knowledge with female student-athletes.

Chapter V

Cycle I Analysis

Overview

Cycle I consisted of my observations within a Division III Department of Athletics. The observations assisted me in identifying knowledge sharing practices and perceptions of the female student-athletes and coaches regarding their thoughts about working in college athletics. I also interviewed 10 athletic department coaches and staff members who worked with female student-athletes. The interviews were used to gauge the experiences the athletic staff members had as student-athletes, their strategies for obtaining careers in athletics, mentoring relationships they may have had professionally, and whether at the time of the study they were involved in sharing knowledge about obtaining careers in college athletics with their female-student athletes. Lastly, I collected documents in the form of biographies and resumes from the interview subjects.

Observations

I began my research by observing daily occurrences in the athletic department. There were several incidents that occurred that were directly related to the topic of my research. One of the most distinctive observations occurred one day when I was walking out of the library carrying books that I needed for my research. A group of female student-athletes were walking by and asked if they could help me carry the books back to my office in the gym. As we walked back to the gymnasium one of the student-athletes asked me what all the books were for. I told them that I was doing research for my dissertation. Another student-athlete asked me what the topic of my dissertation was. I

gave the student-athletes a brief description of what I was studying and this caused a flurry of opinions from the student-athletes. One of the student stated, "I don't like women coaches!" This opinion was stated from a soccer player who had a male head and assistant coach at the college. One of the other student-athletes in the group who was a field hockey player said she liked having a women coach and never really had a male coach to compare it to. So I then asked the women's soccer player, "How many women coaches have you had in your athletic career?" and she replied with, "I had one and I did not like her because she was mean." I then asked her, "How many male coaches have you had?" and she stated, "I have had about five male coaches." I then asked her if she liked all of them, and she replied with, "No, I actually really did not like one of them, even more than the woman coach I had."

By this time we had arrived at my office and I thanked the student-athletes for their help with carrying my books. I parted with them at this moment and I could hear the five female student-athletes discussing the merits of having a female coach. The discussion the female student-athletes were having made me smile because that conversation is exactly what I hoped my action research would do – make female student-athletes aware of the lack of female coaches and why it is a possible career option. As I sat down at my desk, I had a monumental thought. The student-athlete who stated she did not like women coaches played a sport that was dominated by male coaches and her exposure to women coaches was limited. Additionally, the one experience she had with a woman coach was not a positive experience, possibly forming her negative opinion of all women coaches. I sat there and wondered how many other student-athletes were possibly having the same thoughts and if they were having these

negative thoughts of women who coached. I then began to wonder how that affected their perceptions of working in college athletics as females.

I started thinking, if the female student-athletes were having limited contact with women coaches, then their perspectives could be skewed depending on the experiences they had with the female coaches. Also, if the female student-athletes did not see women coaching, they may not consider going into coaching as a career choice as a female. These thoughts helped me develop questions for the focus groups I created for the student-athletes and later for the workshop's content. Kamphoff and Gill (2008) have shown that there is a bias in sport due to sport being perceived as a male domain, to female gender socialization, as well as to the patriarchal nature of sport. These factors tend to devalue women in sport; therefore, female student-athletes may also devalue women as professionals in the sporting world.

I also purposefully set up times to observe three practices of female teams with female coaches. When I set up the observation times with the coaches they were very willing to have me come and observe. I believe it was important for me to observe the practices so I could see the interaction been the female student-athletes and their coaches.

Two of the practices were outside with various distractions around the stadium, but one day was a calm and sunny and the other day was chilly, and extremely windy, which made it very difficult to hear what the coaches and players were saying to each other. The coaches were very different in their approach to coaching, however, I was able to notice different behaviors exhibited by the coaches that showed passion for the team and the sport, knowledge of the game and positive support of the players. After one of my

observations I asked the coach her thoughts on a particular player who seemed to lack

both skills and conditioning. I wrote in my field notes,

> I asked the coach if she was going to cut her. The coach said she was going to wait to see until the traditional season in the spring because she wanted to give the player a chance since she was so passionate about lacrosse. She was hoping by participating in the fall season and learning what was expected of her she would come into the spring season in better shape and with better stick skills from practicing over the winter.

Passion was something that a majority of the interviewees noted as the reason they

decided to pursue careers in college athletics and it was something they looked for in

student-athletes who they decided to mentor. A coach stated,

> In regards to mentoring a player to become a coach. I look for the player that exhibits the most passion and drive [because] that player will usually be a successful coach and that player usually is not the star athlete.

> Another athletic staff member stated, "To make it in this field you have to be

passionate about what you are doing." I thought it was interesting that the coach was

giving the player an opportunity to improve due to her passion for the sport. I noted in my

journal, "How does the exhibition of passion help build a solid foundation for a future in

college athletics?"

> There were also several occasions of knowledge sharing regarding skills and

providing guidance from not only the coaches, but from upperclassman and alumni

players as well. I noted in my journal on October 18, 2010 that an alumni player who

stopped by practice to watch went over to the one group of players and gave them some

positive feedback and direction.

> The next practice I observed was women's basketball. The indoor practice was

much easier to observe because it was located in the gym. There were very few

distractions and I could hear everything that was being said. There were two coaches

there at the time, the very experienced head coach and the other a first-year assistant. I did not observe the head coach guiding or mentoring the assistant coach during practice, but the head coach did provide quality instruction with passion to the players. Also during this practice a former player came by the gym. She was a senior and I asked her why she was not playing this year. She said, since she was never a starter she knew that she would not have much court time so she decided not to play. She was interested in coaching but she felt since she was not as fast or as skilled as the other players that she could not coach. I encouraged her to ask the head coach, telling her "You never know until you ask and just because you were not as fast or as skilled as some of the other players do not mean you do not have the knowledge or desire to coach." Research has shown that female student-athletes perceive a lack of self-confidence in being able to coach and they are influenced by subtle and sometimes not so subtle messages from administration and society regarding women's effectiveness in the coaching role (Barber, 1998; Bracken, 2009; Kamphoff & Gill, 2008; Pastore & Meacci, 1994). Career labels that develop out of gender categories are major barriers to women seeking positions in college athletics. The normally lower self-confidence that female student-athletes hold, as compared to males, often result in self-limiting behaviors that are expressed in phrases such as "I can't" or "I wonder if I am qualified" (Kamphoff & Gill, 2008; Pastore & Meacci, 1994).

Through my observations of the practices, observing and discussing coaching desire and potential in an alumna and a current student-athlete, I was able to observe how passionate the coaches and the student-athletes were about their sports. There was a positive attitude among the players and coaches and if a player showed any signs of

negativity, the coaches and the other players quickly encouraged them, which in most cases turned the negativity into productive and positive behavior.

A direct link to my research and what I was able to observe in the athletics department occurred when the NCAA created a Career Forum for student-athletes interested in careers in college athletics. In my position I was responsible for disseminating the information to the coaches to recruit student-athletes to attend the Career Forum. I sent an e-mail out to all the coaches asking them for nominations for the Career Forum. Only two coaches of the women's teams nominated female student-athletes for the NCAA career forum, however, all the male coaches of the male teams nominated student-athletes for the forum. There were two possible reasons why the women's coaches of women's team did not have female student-athletes to nominate. One reason may have been lack of interest from the female student-athletes. The literature shows that female student-athletes are not interested in working in college athletics (Bracken, 2008). The second reason the coaches of the women's teams may have not discussed with their players the topic of working in college athletics could have been their lack of awareness of any players' interest in working college athletics. I noted in my research journal that I was concerned about the lack of nominations from the coaches of women's teams and wondered how I could create interest among the female student-athlete population to attend the forum and consider possible careers in college athletics.

The observations were beneficial to my research on why females are not going into collegiate athletics as a career choice. I wrote in my journal on April 4, 2010, "I need to discover what motivates some coaches and athletic staff to become involved with their

student-athletes' aspirations outside of athletics and how can I encourage the coaches and athletic staff that are not involved to become involved?" As I reflect back to that point, I knew I had to be careful in how I planned to motivate the coaches and athletic staff to become involved with their student-athletes' career aspirations and to share knowledge with them about working in college athletics.

I also reflected on my leadership theories and thought that if I was going to become an agent of change I had to build trust with the coaches and athletic staff about my research project and I thought the best way to do that was to include them in the process and to give them the opportunity to give advice. I thought interviewing them individually would give me the best opportunity to learn from them and to make them feel included, while also educating them about the research I was doing and why I felt it was important. As a leader I had to develop credibility with the people with whom I work. I believe I developed credibility by following through with what I said I was going to do and by making sure that I shared knowledge with the female student-athletes about careers in college athletics (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Interviews

 I conducted semi-structured interviews with one athletic female administrator, one male head coach, four female head coaches, two female assistant coaches, and two female athletic staff members regarding their own personal athletic experiences and college athletic careers. I provided an informed consent form for all the subjects and each interview was taped and then later transcribed.

Not all the coaches and athletic staff members I asked to be interviewed for my research project agreed to participate. One of the athletic staff members said, "No one

wanted to hear what I had to say." Because I worked with her for the past five years, I felt that her interview would have been very insightful. I asked her twice to participate in the research project and she declined both times. I was very much disappointed that I could not convince this staff member to participate. I also had some coaches show indifference towards me when I inquired about interviewing them. They were vague in their responses and we could never set a date and time for the interviews. I believe that the interviewees who participated felt like they were given a voice when they were interviewed and one interviewee stated, "I feel like you have empowered me by letting me share my information with you and my views could make a difference with the student-athletes with whom we work."

The interviews provided me with rich descriptive information. This information lead me to find more research to support my theory on how knowledge sharing can help in the goal of increasing interest and awareness for female student-athletes as it pertains to a career choice in college athletics. The interviews also provided me with insight and information as to how to structure the workshops and it also gave me the idea to create a speaker's panel for the workshop participants. Lastly, the interviews also created awareness among the coaches and staff that knowledge sharing may be beneficial to inspire more females to pursue a career in college athletics.

Interview Results and Analysis

The interviews were analyzed as previously described in my methodology. I used several methods to search for themes. The three themes that emerged from the data were: female college athletes' attitudes, positive effects of knowledge sharing with female student athletes, and barriers for female student athletes.

Female college athletes' attitudes. This theme showed the subjects' perceptions regarding female athletes' attitudes of obtaining careers in college athletics. These data also suggested that some of the coaches thought that female student-athletes did not consider careers in college athletics, because they only thought of coaching as the primary role and sometimes the only role in the field. As one coach stated,

> No, I don't think they [female student-athletes] actually see college athletics as a career option. I don't know if it is because they come here for teaching but I don't think they even look to it. I don't think they realize there are so many options out there in college athletics. We don't have them here at [X] University; we have coaching and the compliance/academic role, and sports information. I don't think they [female student-athletes] necessarily want to be a college coach but I don't think they understand how many other positions are out there in college athletics because they don't see them.

The results from the interviews showed that educating the female student-athletes on the various roles could bring about more interest in working in college athletics. However, in some cases the coaches and staff did not discuss careers with the female student-athletes at their institution so they were unable to give a statement on how they thought their female student-athletes perceived a career in college athletics. An administrator stated in her interview,

> As far as talking to all the student-athletes about working in college athletics I don't do it but individually I do when some [student-athletes] come up here and interview for papers. They will come and ask me for information and I always have the Title IX information to share with them. But I do not make it a priority to talk to kids about their career choice or working in college athletics.

Another coach stated, "I do not think it is my responsibility to discuss my student-athletes' future career with them regardless if it is working in college athletics or something else." The lack of knowledge sharing from the female athletic staff members and coaches regarding career obtainment or career trajectory in college athletics could be detrimental to the progression of female student-athletes seeking a career in college

athletics. Through the interviews, an administrator stated, "We could do a lot better job in introducing some programs in introducing some kids to different aspects in a career in athletics. We could bring in some speakers or people who are in the field." This particular comment prompted my thoughts of not only having workshops on college athletic careers obtainment but to also have a panel of women from other colleges to speak to X University's interested female student-athletes.

The lack of women in positions within college athletics is of serious concern to many who are committed to increasing sport opportunities for girls and women. A female coach stated, "Opportunities for women have increased over the years but effectively maintaining and further increasing opportunities for women is a concern that every woman working in college athletics needs to be aware of and keep in the forefront of their mind." This question of why women are choosing to not enter into collegiate athletics as a career choice must be further researched. The answers to this question and others like it may contribute to a better understanding of the increase or decrease in the number of women going into the collegiate athletics profession (Cooper et al., 2007).

Positive effects of knowledge sharing with female student-athletes. The results of this theme indicated that knowledge sharing and the use of networking were perceived as important by the coaches and athletic department staff members as they obtained a career in college athletics. One of the coaches stated,

> It is important for networking, professional development and to share your experiences with others. You have to go in with everything with an open mind, you are always learning something. The minute you are not learning or don't want to learn something it is the time to get out of the profession. You can always learn something, new idea or a new way to do something.

It is important that coaches, athletic department staff, and female student-athletes participate in knowledge sharing regarding careers in college athletics. The coaches and athletic department staff members, by being available to help other females in their professional and personal development, could potentially affect the role of females working in college athletics through knowledge sharing and mentoring.

Overall, the interviewees participating in knowledge sharing viewed the person sharing the knowledge with them as a mentor. The mentor was generally regarded with respect, appreciation, loyalty, admiration, and friendship. The coaches stated throughout the interviews that the mentor provided a push to work in college athletics and support and knowledge sharing in obtaining a position. The passion that the mentor provided for the profession was instrumental to the motivation and inspiration of the mentee. Earlier research (Young, 1990) as well as the data from this research, specifically from the interviews, supported the idea that an individual who has a mentor is more likely to become a mentor in later years. One of the subjects stated about her mentors, "Without a doubt I would not have gone to grad[uate] school if it was not for my mentors encouraging me. It was always from them 'what are you doing next? What are you working on now?' It was that push I needed to do it." According to Young (1990), the discussions and conversations between coaches, athletic department staff members, and female college student-athletes while a female student-athlete is in college are instrumental to the progression of working in college athletics.

The data from this theme also imply that knowledge sharing with female student-athletes is essential to not only careers in college athletics, but for any career they may want to pursue. An athletic staff member said to me during our interview,

I feel like it is part of our jobs to talk to them [student-athletes] about it [careers]. It is not just athletics. I think that this is sometimes overlooked by certain coaches in areas. We are DIII, it is part of our job is to counsel these student-athletes on their futures and being a well-rounded person and the ways of the world and life.

Knowledge sharing experiences can provide an initial link in the development of a network system for the individual. The value of knowledge sharing for women in their personal and professional accomplishments highlights the importance of ensuring a large number and diverse range of women employed within the ranks of athletic positions with which mentoring relationships can be nurtured for the staff and student-athletes (Inglis et al., 2000; Lopiano & Zotos, 2009; Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999). Research has also shown that student-athletes, when compared with the general student population, delay career planning and exploration, therefore knowledge sharing by coaches and athletic staff can be beneficial to their future careers (Lally & Kerr, 2005).

Barriers for female student-athletes. The participants were asked what they thought were barriers to females working in collegiate athletics and what the female student-athletes have related to them regarding why they would not enter into a career in athletics. One barrier was the amount of time that coaches and athletic staff put into their job. The time factor deterred many females from considering a career in athletics. One of the athletic staff members said that the "[student-athletes] they see the hours are demanding, they see how much work has to go into it. Working weekdays, week nights and weekends is unappealing to many female student-athletes." Another coach stated, "Some [female student-athletes] realize how time consuming it is and many sacrifices you make especially socially and other [student-athletes] don't realize the amount of time it takes to run a program the way you want the program to run."

Also, money or compensation was a large factor that was considered a deterrent.

One of the coaches said. "Why work all the time and receive small salaries?" Men's

teams have one and a half times as many coaches as women's teams, and the coaches for

the men's teams are paid more than twice the amount paid to coaches for the women's

teams (Rhode & Walker, 2007). An administrator stated,

> I would recommend anyone to get involved in the area [college athletics] but you also have to let them know what is involved in with it too. It is not a 9-5 job. Nowadays students want to get out and make big money and have as much fun and vacation time as possible; this career does not allow that.

One of the coaches also stated,

> I don't really encourage it [working in college athletics] that much; it is really hard to get a career in college athletics, especially if you are not prepared with the right major and internship opportunities. Students think they are just going get out of college and immediately have a full-time college coaching job. They don't realize they have to start off little and work their way up.

Another issue was family obligations. One participant said,

> It is very difficult to work in college athletics and raise a family. The husband does not usually help with the family obligations. You are trying to be the best at your career and the best Mom you can be, but usually one takes precedent over the other and then you are either doing less with your team or less with your family and the guilt becomes too great. You just can't drop your family so you wind up leaving the athletic profession and finding a 9-5 job.

Another interviewee stated,

> I am generalizing but most women who have families do not have the time to spend at their time at their jobs, they have family responsibilities. It's ok for men to be at their jobs all the time and put that first above everything else because he is the man. You have to sacrifice. It is very difficult to be a women coach and a Mom. Your husband has to be ok with that because your family schedule will be around your coaching schedule. You can't go away. January through July, I can't go anywhere. I can't have 2 days off in a row, or sometimes you go a month without a day off. It is difficult and challenging with a family. This is where women start to drop out [of coaching]. It [coaching] is just unacceptable to their husbands and it is unacceptable on how they feel to be a mom. They feel guilt. So you feel guilty you are not giving enough to your team when you are home and you feel guilty when you are with your team and not giving enough to your family

The last barrier that was salient throughout the research was the issue of gender. Women thought that they were perceived as less competent in working in college athletics and not strong enough mentally and sometimes physically to handle the demands of the job by some men in their profession and society in general. One of the coaches stated,

> I think it [gender differences] is the same but more so in athletics than the general population [because society] feels that men can do a better job in college athletics than females can, especially in the NCAA DI football schools. I think it is true in regular business and then you add sports in with that and it is even more so. People think especially in those big D I schools that women just don't get it and can't do the job. I think there is still that stigma that men can do the job better than women. The men already have more connections because in most cases the athletic directors are male and they played a sport together or they know of each other through their sport. The women are not going to have that networking advantage. Most people get a job because they knew someone and the networking within the men is strong and usually shuts out the female.

The comments in the interviews were similar to the findings of Pastore and Meacci (1994), Rhode and Walker (2007), and Weiss and Stevens (1993), who suggest that women's underrepresentation may be more attributable to unconscious bias, exclusionary recruiting networks, and inflexible working structures than objective qualifications. Another athletic staff member stated,

> There is that chauvinism that is still there underlying, even after Title IX and everything else. I think there will always be that underlying factor for women. People think women are too caring, we are mentally not tough enough, we don't have the guts or whatever you want to call it to be in college athletics, I think that is false but people still think that… and that makes it tough.

The research also indicates an alternate argument that women might still be very committed to their occupations and university even if they received differential treatment at work and at home in comparison with their male counterparts (Turner & Chelladural, 2005). As one of the coaches stated,

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> Of all the things I have ever done, coaching is the hardest thing but seemed the least like a job. I love every aspect of it, I love working with the kids. Every year your job is different because you have a whole new team with new personalities. I love watching the kids grow.

The interviewees routinely expressed passion for the profession throughout the data collection. The passion that the current coaches and athletic staff members displayed for their careers in college athletics was evident in their description of the experiences and maintaining success in their positions. The people who I interviewed all noted that some people have that passion and can "make it" in college athletics. One coach stated, "It takes someone who is determined, thick skinned and extremely motivated to garner a job in college athletics and it takes an even stronger and more passionate person to continue their career in athletics." Another coach stated,

> Most of them [student-athletes] have the burning passion for the game and a lot of players have hard time letting it go at the end of the four years. Coaching gives them that opportunity to keep being involved and following their passion.

Leadership

Cycle I gave me an opportunity to share with the coaching and athletic staff the topic of my research. For the most part they were interested in the topic and the topic made them become more aware of the knowledge sharing that they were or were not doing. Several coaches and staff members stated that the interview made them reflect on how much knowledge sharing they were doing with their student-athletes and if they should be doing more to build an interest among their players regarding working in college athletics. In most cases the coach or athletic staff member only shared knowledge with the student-athlete if the student-athlete communicated an interest in working in college athletics to them. However, some coaches and athletic staff members felt that it required a certain type of person to work in college athletics and they did not believe that

many of the student-athletes had what it takes to work in college athletics, and this was a reason they did not push a majority of their student-athletes in the career direction of working in college athletics. As one of the interview participants stated,

> I think sometimes you see the person, you see it on an individual basis, you see that person has it in them to work in college athletics so you share information about working in college athletics on an individual basis when you see it in them. They have a little bit tougher of an outer shell. So I see that in some people that they have the potential to make it in college athletics. You see that they will make a difference and do well and you see that so they are the ones I talk to about working in collegiate athletics. You kind of guide them and tell them the steps they need to take.

I noted in my journal that I was sad to hear that some of the coaches and athletic staff members only talked to student-athletes about careers in college athletics if they thought they could be successful at it. These thoughts are known as self-fulfilling prophecy theory, which is "the expectations coaches and athletic staff members form about the ability of individuals student-athletes can serve as prophecies that dictate or determine the level of achievement each athlete will ultimately reach" (Sternberg, Horn, Lox, & Labrador, 2006, p. 83). Therefore, the coach or athletic staff member forms an expectation of certain student-athletes that could influence the student-athletes' career aspirations. In my journal, I reflected on whether I do this with my student-athletes as well. I wrote, "Do I perceive student-athletes in certain ways by the way they act?" I know I did with certain student-athletes and I have been trying to be more cognizant of my perceptions of student-athletes and not to create expectations of them too quickly.

The data from this cycle also showed me that knowledge sharing could build relationships (Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). The interviews provided me an opportunity to get to know the coaches and athletic staff in a different light from the previous interactions I had with them in the four years prior. I felt that the interviews

opened a door to building relationships with the people I interviewed. The interviews gave a voice to the people I interviewed and it also allowed them to see the vision of my research project. I was also trying to create a climate of collaboration by interviewing the coaches and athletic staff. We had a common purpose in seeing the student-athletes succeed and seeing other women in our profession succeed (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). I was also trying to determine through the interviews what knowledge needed to be shared with the female student-athletes that could create interest for them to pursue careers in college athletics.

The results of this cycle were extremely beneficial in the development of the next cycle, which was the focus groups with the female student-athletes, in keeping with action research (Hinchey, 2008; McKernan, 1988). The data from the interviews and the literature I reviewed provided me with insight to create questions for the focus groups. I believed focus groups with the female student-athletes would be the best way to gather information for the next cycle in this action research project, because they would enable me to get a lot of information from many subjects in a short amount of time (Hinchey, 2008). The following chapter will discuss results of the focus groups with the female student-athletes and how the results contributed to the creation of the workshops and panel presentation in Cycle III.

Chapter VI

Cycle II Analysis

Introduction

During Cycle II, I conducted two focus groups. The focus groups were used to explore the perceptions that female student-athletes had regarding working in college athletics, their collegiate athletic experiences, their understanding of Title IX, and the extent of relationships with any mentors they have had. I reached out to the female student-athletes to participate in the focus groups by e-mailing them and asking them in person to participate when I encountered them in the athletic office. Prior to the focus groups, all the participants were given an overview of the purpose of the study as well as a confirmation of the right to leave the focus group at any time. All participants signed consent forms. The focus groups were divided into two separate sessions to accommodate the times the student-athletes could participate. One group included nine female student-athletes, the second included 11 female student-athletes, which combined for a total of 20 female student-athletes in the focus groups. I taped the focus groups and I also had an impartial observer take notes. Questions in the focus groups assisted in identifying specific attractors, barriers, and possible mentors for careers in collegiate athletics as well as participants' knowledge of the various career choices in collegiate athletics and the responsibilities associated with them. I used the same coding mechanism for the focus groups that I implemented for the interviews in Cycle I. The themes that emerged from the data were: lack of knowledge, attractors, and barriers.

Lack of Knowledge

When I asked the female student-athletes what types of positions there were in college athletics, the majority responded, "coach and athletic director," and some also mentioned "athletic trainer and sports information director." Not one student-athlete mentioned a compliance officer or academic advisor, which are the positions I have held. The student-athletes were unaware of other positions in college athletics and these positions could be viable career options for them if the student-athletes knew they existed. The student-athletes were also asked if they knew avenues for obtaining careers in college athletics and a student-athlete stated,

> If there is an opening you apply for it, I am not really sure how that works. Maybe if you have experience. I don't know, but I plan on getting experience by assisting with the team now that my eligibility is up. I guess any experience or networking would be helpful.

Another student-athlete stated, "Working with your coach and the administration while you are in college to gain experience." Additionally some of them mentioned that becoming an assistant coach is a way to become a head coach or work the way up the ladder in an athletic department. A student-athlete stated, "[by] gaining experience while we are in college, in the summers and in the off season, networking and [then] coming back as an assistant [coach]." Another student-athlete stated, "I don't know where to even start to pursue a job in college athletics, it is not really a normal job." Another comment expressed by a student-athlete was, "I have no idea where to look for a job in college athletics." The lack of knowledge about careers in college athletics among the student-athletes demonstrated the need for information to be shared provided information about the various careers in college athletics and the strategies to obtain them.

I also asked the student-athletes to share what they knew about Title IX. The majority of the student-athletes' knowledge of Title IX was very limited. One student-athlete stated, "It's about gender equality, you are supposed to have the same number of female sports as male sports and a level playing field." Another student-athlete stated,

> Equality for women and men in athletics, ensuring they have the numbers in sports, equipment, facilities and make sure one is not superior over another. This is what the law is intended to do but I don't believe it is always happening and enforced.

A third student-athlete remarked, "I really have no idea what Title IX is except that I think it is a law." The majority of the student-athletes in the focus group knew it meant that there had to be equality in athletics and they gave examples of where they thought there should be equality in athletics. The student-athletes did not know how Title IX was started and they were also unaware that the law was not just for athletics, but covered all of education as well.

Attractors

The student-athletes were very positive about their student-athlete experiences. A student-athlete commented, "[participating in college athletics] was one of the best experiences and I don't regret anything, I learned a lot as a person, as an athlete, and even as a student. I could not imagine going through college without playing." Another student-athlete stated, "Very busy, time consuming, but definitely fun, it makes up the majority of my memories and experiences in college and it taught me good characteristics I can use towards life."

When asked what the attraction of working in college athletics was they gave several reasons. A student-athlete shared with me, "The attraction for me to coach in college athletics is the players' dedication to the sport and the level of competition is just

better. I played in college and I know what it is about and I do like it." Another student-athlete commented,

> I would love to coach on the college level because the mentality of the athletes is different. They are all motivated and want to do well and be the best. The passion and drive is higher at the college level. I would like to start at the high school level to learn how to build that motivation and drive so when I do have the opportunity to coach [at the] college [level], I know what the athletes went through to get there and what pushed them to get them to the next level.

The most salient of the reasons was being able to stay involved in their sport and or athletics in general. Many of them stated their passion for athletics and how much they liked the competitive atmosphere of college athletics. One student-athlete stated, "I love all sports and I love my coaches and my teammates, I really can't imagine what it is going to be like when I can't play anymore."

Some of the student-athletes also stated that if given an opportunity they would work in athletics, because many of them felt they could give back to others. A student-athlete commented, "I want to coach because I want to give back the way my coaches did for me." Some of the student-athletes also mentioned that their coach was an inspiration to them and also a role model and their push to help them succeed in college athletics carried over to succeed in life. As one student-athlete stated,

> My coach constantly pushes me to do better, not only playing my sport but in school too, she really cares about me as a person and I feel I work harder because I know she cares and I don't want to let her down.

Barriers

Results from the focus groups showed that one of the biggest barriers to working in college athletics was a lack of interest. A majority of the student-athletes were not interested in coaching in college athletics. A student-athlete stated, "I am not really interested in working in college athletics, I see the time my coach puts in to the job, and I

would rather have a career where I did not work all the time." They felt that working in

college athletics, particularly coaching, demanded a huge time commitment and they also

felt that it would be difficult to have a family while working in college athletics. One of

the participants said, "Depends on where I am in my life but I can see coaching college as

very time consuming, the travel and recruiting, it is year round, you would never get a

break much less have time for a family." Other student-athletes stated that they did not

have enough experience and lacked competency to coach. A student-athlete told me, "I

always wanted to work in high school but if I felt comfortable working my way up to

college athletics I would." Some of the female student-athletes felt that they did not have

the knowledge to teach the skills required to have successful teams. Another student-

athlete commented, "I [would] rather teach the younger kids and work with them on the

basics of the game. I feel that because I was a walk on and I am not as skilled as other

people I would be more confident coaching younger kids than college kids."

Some of the other participants mentioned the lack of pay that coaches receive as a

deterrent in working in college athletics. A student-athlete commented,

> I know it takes a long time to make money when you work in college athletics and
> I see that women coaches make less than men coaches and I don't want to work
> all those hours and not be compensated for it.

Another student-athlete shared with me, "I want to make money, I need to support

myself and I know coaching is not going to do that right away." A third student-athlete

stated, "I see all the hours that coaches put in and they do not get paid overtime, so they

must be really love coaching because the coaches I know are definitely not in it for the

money."

Female student-athletes in some cases had a male coach and had few contacts with female coaches in their high schools and college careers. A student-athlete stated,

> I don't have a female coach now and I never really had one except for a couple of assistant coaches, I have never thought of being a coach, I guess that's because I never had a woman as a coach.

The lack of women role models as coaches may have been responsible for a lack of interest in pursuing a career in college athletics. The female student-athletes also commented on how hard they perceived a coaching career would be if they wanted to be a mother. One female student-athlete stated,

> I see women coaches who have families and they have a very strong family support to be successful in being a good mother and coach, if they do not have strong family support then they struggle in being both a good mom and a good coach. I look at it and think would I be able to successfully do both and knowing that is unlikely, I would steer my career towards something I could do successfully and be a good mother.

Another student-athlete stated,

> My coach is a Mom and she sometimes brings her kids to practice and I don't have a problem with it but some of my teammates feel that if we had a male coach then we would have a better team because a male coach would not bring his kids to practice.

Leadership

As I worked with many student-athletes throughout the year in the athletic department, I did not always have the opportunity to build strong relationships with many of them because I am not someone they saw on a daily basis like their coach. When I had the opportunity to talk with female student-athletes, I made a point to ask them about what their career plans were, and I also asked if they would be interested in working in college athletics. Authentic discussions were created by bringing up the topic of career planning and working in college athletics. I felt because I asked questions and took an

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interest about what the female student-athletes were possibly planning for their career

they opened up to me. I noted in my journal,

> I have been making it a point to ask the female student-athletes what their career
> plans are and what they were doing to prepare while they were in college. Some
> of the student-athletes were very focused on what they wanted to do but others
> seem to be a little lost but discussed some ideas they had. Many of the student-
> athletes asked me how I got my job at [X] University and what made me decide to
> work in college athletics.

These discussions created dialog about working in athletics that would not

normally have occurred had I not made a point to ask the female student-athletes. I

created knowledge sharing opportunities in casual ways by discussing careers in college

athletics with student-athletes while they socially interacted with me and other athletic

department staff members. The other athletic staff members usually also joined in on the

discussion, which helped create another avenue of shared knowledge. I wrote in my

journal,

> Today in the athletic office there were a couple of student-athletes hanging out
> with me and two of the coaches, we started talking about what their career plans
> were. One of the student-athletes was a fifth year senior who was helping out with
> the soccer team and she was an English major who had planned to teach high
> school English but she was thinking about coaching instead. We talked about how
> she was a great student and she should apply to be a graduate assistant soccer
> coach somewhere. The coaches and I told her this would help pay for graduate
> school and really let her see if she enjoyed coaching. Later that afternoon this
> same student came down to my office to ask me how to go about looking for
> soccer coaching graduate positions and if I could help her apply for the positions.

During this cycle I also reached out to the female student-athletes through

conducting the focus groups. As I conducted the focus groups, I believed that the student-

athletes regarded me as someone other than their coach that they could come to for

guidance. After the focus groups were conducted, many of the student-athletes who

attended were interested in learning more either about Title IX or working in college

athletics. I e-mailed all the participants a worksheet on Title IX and so they could read

more about what Title IX was and how it affected them as a student-athlete, and if they

planned on obtaining a career in college athletics or education. The majority of the

student-athletes who participated in the focus groups also came by my office to discuss

Title IX or working in college athletics further or reached out to me by sending me an e-

mail asking for more information. This is an example of an e-mail that I received from a

student-athlete after I conducted the focus group,

> Patty, Thank you for inviting me to join the focus group. I have been thinking about a career in coaching softball and the focus group made me think that I need to start figuring out how I should proceed with pursuing a career in coaching. I have talked to my coach about it and she told me to get a softball coach grad position, but from the participating in the focus group I feel like I need more information to help me plan how to get a graduate position. Also, I was wondering if I could talk to you more about Title IX and you mentioned in the focus group you had some good websites to read more about it as well. Would you mind sending me those links? Thank you.

A few student-athletes even sent me their resume so I could look it over and provide them

with advice in how to make it stronger. I further had some student-athletes who did not

participate in the focus groups seek me out because they were teammates of a focus

group participant and they heard I might be able to assist them in working in college

athletics or pursing graduate school opportunities. I wrote in my journal the day after the

focus groups were conducted,

> I had three female student-athletes come see me today about working in college athletics and two of them were not part of last night's focus group. I asked the two who were not part of the focus group why they came to see me and they said that some of the student-athletes who attended the focus groups told them I could help them with trying to get a job in college athletics. The one student-athlete wanted to eventually become an athletic director, the second student-athlete wanted to coach and the third student-athlete was not sure what she wanted to do in college athletics but she just wanted to stay involved and thought it would be a cool job.

The focus groups created knowledge sharing among the student-athletes as to who could help them on campus pursue careers in college athletics and my leadership in this area designated me as someone they could speak with who could help them.

The results from Cycle II assisted me in establishing Cycle III in keeping with action research (Hinchey, 2008; McKernan, 1988). In Cycle III, I conducted workshops and created a panel presentation using the data I collected from Cycles I and II. The insights from the interviews and focus questions assisted me in determining what information would be important to share with the female student-athletes to generate interest in pursuing a career in college athletics. The following chapter will present results and analysis of the workshops and panel presentation, which were designed to generate interest in pursuing careers in college athletics.

Chapter VII

Cycle III Analysis

Creating the Workshops

As I reflected on what I learned through my observations, interviews, and focus groups, I decided to create a workshop that would give student-athletes information about working in college athletics and strategies on how to obtain a career in college athletics. I also wanted the student-athletes to meet other women who worked in college athletics outside of their university, so I decided to invite a panel of speakers that would not only let the student-athletes hear about different positions within college athletics, but would give students an opportunity to meet the people who worked in these positions.

To create the workshop, I gathered information from the interviews and research I had conducted and created a power point presentation and folders with information pertaining to college athletics, Title IX, college athletic job sites, and sample resumes. The power point presentation provided information on the various jobs in college athletics; strategies to obtain them; the pros and cons to working in athletics; and information on Title IX, graduate school, internships, and networking.

The workshops were held on three different nights and the last night also included a panel of seven women who worked in various capacities in college athletics. My goal for the female student-athletes, through their participation in the workshops, was for them to gain new knowledge about the profession, skills to use for job attainment, and connections with other females in the field for support and networking. Studies have shown that female college students were most likely to select occupations with good job opportunities for women. Similarly, female student-athletes may avoid the coaching

profession because they may have noticed the gender-related difference in opportunity (Knoppers, 1987; Lally & Kerr, 2005). The workshop and panel presentation provided information and professional women as role models for the female student-athletes. Research has also shown that it is important that women network with other women and have them as mentors (Avery, Tonidandel, & Phillips, 2008; Blinde et al., 1994).

One of the goals of this study was to get student-athletes interested in working in college athletics, and included in the presentation was an explanation that women work in various capacities in college athletics and there are many opportunities to work in college athletics in addition to coaching. I hoped that sharing this information with the female student-athletes created interest in working in college athletics. Another goal of this study was to have some athletic department staff members involved. The athletic director of the university and a head coach participated on the networking panel. I felt that their participation opened up possible mentoring connections for the student-athletes who participated in the workshops and attended the panel. The student-athletes were able to hear about the athletic director's and the head coach's experiences and have them share knowledge about their careers, which enabled the student-athletes to have someone in the athletic department as a source of information in working in college athletics. The panel portion of the workshops that the female student-athletes were involved in during the last cycle was an example of professional socialization (Avery et al., 2008; Blinde et al., 1994). This professional socialization by the members of the panel reinforced the workshop content by sharing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices that could guide the female student-athlete to a future career in collegiate athletics.

Cycle III Analysis

I utilized two questionnaires to collect data on the workshops and my leadership; the background questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the workshop and the evaluation questionnaire was administered after the workshops. I also conducted focus groups with the participants after each of the workshops. It was important to gather feedback from the participants about the workshops by asking specific questions on the evaluation questionnaires and through guiding them with questions in the focus groups. The data I obtained from the questionnaire assisted me in measuring the effectiveness of the workshop and my leadership. The data from the questionnaires also showed how the female student-athletes perceived knowledge sharing in regards to working in college athletics and how it could be helpful or not helpful to them.

There were 15 questions on the background evaluation questionnaire and 13 questions on the workshop evaluation questionnaire. There were eight questions asked both on the background questionnaire and the workshop evaluation questionnaire so I could compare and contrast the answers the participants gave before and after the workshop. Those questions are shown in table 7.1.

Table 7.1

Background & Evaluation Survey Comparison

Question N=15	SA	SA	A	A	N	N	D	D	SD	SD
	background	evaluation	**background**	evaluation	**background**	evaluation	**background**	evaluation	**background**	evaluation
I want to attend graduate school	53.3	53.3	20	20	13.3	20	6.7	6.7	6.7	0
I feel I am educated about the process of obtaining a job in college athletics	6.7	60	6.7	33.3	46.7	6.7	33.3	0	6.7	0
As a female I feel I am welcome to work in college athletics	20	46.7	40	53.3	40	0	0	0	0	0
I had the opportunity to network with other college athletic professionals	6.7	33.3	33.3	40	46.7	13.3	33.3	13.3	6.7	0
I know what Title IX is	33.3	75.3	20	26.7	13.3	0	20	0	13.3	0
My student-athlete experience has been a positive experience	26.7	60	33.3	13.3	40	26.7	0	0	0	0
I feel that I have a strong resume	33.3	26.7	40	40	26.7	33.3	0	0	0	0
I am interested in working in college athletics	20	53.3	60	40	13.3	6.7	0	0	6.7	0

Note. SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; N= Neutral; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree.

I want to attend graduate school. Research has shown that attending graduate school is an important component to obtaining a career in college athletics, and the desire to attend graduate school would enhance an ability to work in college athletics (Bracken, 2009). Prior to the workshop only two participants did not have a desire to attend graduate school and two indicated being neutral about attending graduate school, while the other participants agreed or strongly agreed to wanting to attend graduate school. After the workshop there was only one participant who disagreed that she wanted to go to graduate school, and three who responded neutral to attending graduate school. The other responses remained the same to agreeing or strongly agreeing to attend graduate school.

I feel I am educated about the process of obtaining a job in college athletics. In the initial focus groups with the female student-athletes, a deterrent to having an interest to work in college athletics was the lack of knowledge about obtaining a career in college athletics. Prior to the workshops, the majority of the participants indicated neutral or disagree to the statement about whether they were educated about the process of obtaining a career in college athletics. The main goal of the workshop was to educate and share knowledge about working in college athletics and the process of obtaining a position in college athletics. The workshop evaluation questionnaire results demonstrated that the goal was achieved; 60% of the participants responded strongly agreed to feeling educated about the process of working in college athletics, 33.3 % agreed, and 6.7% indicated neutral.

As a female I feel I am welcome to work in college athletics. Gender differences and perceptions of lack of competence by women were found throughout the interviews and focus groups as a deterrent to working in college athletics. I addressed

both of these issues in the workshop during which I even stopped to let the student-athletes ask the questions and voice concerns they had about feeling competent to work in college athletics. The results from the evaluation questionnaire show that before the workshop the student-athletes indicated that they felt somewhat welcome to work in college athletics as a female, yet after the workshop their answers on the evaluation questionnaire showed higher levels of agreement that they felt welcome to work in college athletics as females. Some of the research has shown that sometimes women do not feel confident to work in college athletics due to perceived lack of competence (Barber, 1998; Bracken, 2009; Kamphoff & Gill, 2008; Pastore & Meacci, 1994).

I have had the opportunity to network with other college athletic professionals. One of my goals for the student-athletes was for them to meet other people outside of their university who worked in college athletics. There were five people on the panel from other universities out of the seven total participating. I gave time before and after the panel for the student-athletes and the panelists to mingle with each other. I wanted the student-athletes to hear about what other women did in college athletics and for the student-athletes to feel comfortable to make a connection with them. The panelists let me include their contact information in the folders the student-athletes received, and they also encouraged the student-athletes to contact them for further information. The evaluation questionnaire results show that prior to the workshop and panel presentation that six of the participants indicated they had an opportunity to network and after the workshop and panel presentation 11 indicated they had an opportunity to network.

I know what Title IX is. I felt it was important to include information about Title IX within the workshops because Title IX affects so much in athletics and some facets of

Title IX affect how to obtain employment in college athletics. Also, when I conducted the focus groups with the student-athletes, many of them were not familiar with Title IX and the interviews with the coaches and athletic staff also mentioned that the current student-athletes were not very familiar with Title IX. The student-athletes were very interested in this part of the workshop and also had many questions and concerns. Many of them stated during the workshop that they thought they knew what Title IX was, but did not really know all the specifics it pertained to within athletics. The evaluation questionnaire results show that prior to the workshop there were five student-athletes who did not know what Title IX was and two responded neutral to the topic. There were three participants who agreed that they knew what Title IX was and five strongly agreed to knowing what Title IX was. In the evaluation questionnaire all of the participants indicated they knew what Title IX was.

My student-athlete experience has been a positive experience. I was surprised by the results of this question. In the background questionnaire six student-athletes responded neutral towards having a positive student-athlete experience, five responded with agreeing, and four responded with strongly agree, but after the workshop their responses changed and there were nine strongly agreeing responses to having a positive student-athlete experience, two agree, and four neutral. The results astonished me because I did not think that participating in the workshop would increase the perceptions of positive student-athlete experience and this is something that should be investigated in further studies.

I feel that I have a strong resume. The workshops provided information on how to build student-athletes' resumes and the student-athletes were also given sample

resumes to use as guides to create their own. I also encouraged them to use the campus career and academic planning center to assist them with their resumes and I offered to review them as well. The background results showed that for the most part, the student-athletes indicated they had a strong resume. There were four student-athletes who responded neutral when asked about whether they had a strong resume. After the workshop there was a slight decrease in agreeing that the student-athletes had a strong resumes.

I am interested in working in college athletics. The background questionnaire and the workshop evaluation questionnaire both asked the participants in the workshops whether they were interested in working in college athletics. The background questionnaire, which was given prior to the workshop, had a response distribution of: 6.7% strongly disagreed to having an interest in working in college athletics, 13.3% had a neutral opinion to working in college athletics, 60% agreed they were interested in working in college athletics, and 20% strongly agreed to have an interest in working in college athletics. The workshop evaluation questionnaire, which was given after the workshop, had a response distribution of: 6.7% had a neutral opinion to working in college athletics, 40% agreed to having an interest in working in college athletics, and 53.3% strongly agreed to an interest in working in athletics. The results of the workshop evaluation questionnaire showed that the interest rate for working in college athletics was raised after the participants attended the workshops. This shows a possible link between knowledge sharing and changing attitudes about working in college athletics. Generating interest about working in college athletics was also a goal of my study and I believe that through the responses on the evaluation questionnaires that goal was achieved.

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There were three questions that were asked on the background questionnaire that were not asked on the workshop evaluation questionnaire. These questions asked the participants with whom they discussed their future careers (see Table 7.2).

Table 7.2

Workshop Evaluation Career Questions

Question N=15	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My coach discusses my future career with me	6.7	33.3	40	6.7	13.3
My academic advisor discusses my future career with me	6.7	60	20	13.3	0
My parents or guardians discuss my future career with me	86.7	6.7	6.7	0	0

My coach discusses my future career with me. The student-athletes were mixed in their responses in regards to their coaches discussing their careers with them. There were six respondents with a male coach and there were nine respondents with a female coach. Table 7.3 illustrates the responses broken down by gender of the coach.

Table 7.3

My Coach Discusses My Future Career by Gender of Coach

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Student-Athletes with a Male Coach (n=6)	0	33.3	50.0	0	16.67
	11.1	33.3	33.3	11.1	11.1

The results indicate that there seems to be a small difference in career discussions based on the gender of the coach; however, these results should be considered with caution due to the small sample size. Research by Harrison and Lawrence (2004) suggests that most athletic support systems fail to consider what happens to athletes when they must make the transition to their careers after their college athletic careers end. The research also shows that student-athletes have a difficult time transitioning from being student-athletes to beginning their careers. Information from the interviews with the coaches and athletic staff revealed that some of the coaches and athletic staff felt it was not their responsibility to discuss their student-athletes' future careers.

My academic advisor discusses my future career with me. The student-athletes responded that for the most part their academic advisor discussed their career with them; however 13.3% responded that their academic advisor did not discuss their future careers with them.

My parents or guardians discuss my future career with me. The majority of the student-athletes responded that their parents discussed their future careers with them. Research has shown that student-athletes who have resigned themselves to their athlete role without having considered other roles reported lower self-efficacy for career decision making (Lally & Kerr, 2005). Lally and Kerr (2005) found that discussions with the student-athletes' parents, coaches, and advisors about their future careers helped student-athletes start to identify possibly career options. Lally and Kerr also suggested that student-athletes concentrate most of their interest and time on their sport during their college experience, and they are not motivated to pursue career planning until their senior year in college. The research also found that only later did the student-athletes realize their dedication to athletics was a distraction from an investment in career exploration.

Workshop Focus Groups Analysis

As I did with the cycle II focus groups, I coded the focus group data from the workshops. The themes that emerged were: strategies, attractors, and barriers.

Strategies. The female student-athletes shared in the focus groups that the strategies presented to them through the workshop and panel presentation were extremely helpful. As one student-athlete stated, "[I] liked the different strategies that you presented on how to get a job in college athletics, it gave me a better understanding of what I have to do to get a job in college athletics." The strategies provided guidelines on how to get started on a career in college athletics, including taking steps to obtain positions in college athletics, sharing their college athletic career intentions with their coaches and athletic staff members, networking with other college athletic professionals, and gaining experience through volunteering or internships. Also, the student-athletes discovered that

asking for help or guidance from their advisors, coaches, and athletic director was beneficial in obtaining careers in college athletics.

In analyzing the focus groups with the student-athletes who attended the workshops, I found that the student-athletes realized how important it was to not only receive information, but to share it by communicating with their coaches about their aspirations to work in college athletics. Through the interviews, focus groups, and observations I found that the student-athletes were not sharing their interest in working in college athletics and the coaches were only encouraging working in college athletics if the student-athletes shared their aspirations. Some comments regarding student-athletes' future intentions and strategies about sharing their career aspirations were, "I need to be building my resume, and getting out there now to get experience." Another student-athlete stated, "I need to communicate my intentions [about pursuing a career in college athletics] with my coaches and others in the athletic department." A student-athlete also said, "I need to ask for help." I hope this awareness of knowledge sharing that the workshops generated will create more dialogue between the coaches and the student-athletes regarding working in athletics.

Attractors. The female student-athletes also discussed in the focus groups that they were more interested in working in college athletics following the workshop because they learned about the various positions within college athletics in addition to coaching. One student-athlete stated, "I did not realize all the different positions within college athletics." Another student-athlete stated, "I do not want to coach but I want to stay involved in college athletics somehow and the workshop provided me with some alternatives to staying in college athletics besides coaching." Many of the female student-

athletes were very passionate about sports and wanting to make a difference in others'

lives, but not necessarily through coaching. A student-athlete stated, "I feel very

passionate about athletics and would find working in athletics as something I would love

to do." The knowledge shared about the various positions in athletics in addition to

coaching generated a new-found interest in working in college athletics among some of

the female student-athletes. This new knowledge gave the student-athletes a sense of

hope that they could still work in college athletics by working in a different capacity than

coaching in they choose too, which might afford them the opportunity to have more

balanced work and family lives. One female student-athlete stated about working in

college athletics, "It [working in college athletics] has its pros and cons but it is all how

you perceive those pros and cons that make you want to pursue working in college

athletics."

      Barriers. The barriers that the female student-athletes discussed about working

in college athletics mirrored what has been stated in the research and from the previous

interviews with the coaches and athletic staff, as well as from the other focus groups: lack

of interest, family/work conflict, gender issues, and the perception that women lack

competence to work in college athletics, specifically as coaches. One of the student-

athletes stated, "I think it [working in college athletics] is difficult for women, there is

gender discrimination, women are not always perceived as strong or if they react strongly

they are considered a 'bitch' but if a man does it, then it's manly." Two new perceptions

that the female student-athletes discussed that were barriers to working in college

athletics were: not knowing the strategies to obtain a position in college athletics and the

lack of networking. As one of the student-athletes shared with me in the focus group,

I had no clue as to how to go about getting your foot in the door to become a coach, the information you shared with us about the different strategies and different positions has really opened my eyes to the possibilities to working in college athletics.

The student-athletes expressed that although these two perceptions were not the most apparent barriers of working in college athletics, they were definitely a deterrent to having an interest and obtaining a career in college athletics. As one student-athlete stated,

I thought working in college athletics wasn't something I could do but listening to your workshop and hearing the people in the panel has created an interest in working in college athletics and confidence that I can work in college athletics.

Through my study, the lack of knowledge sharing about obtaining a career in college athletics was revealed as a barrier for female student-athletes to work in college athletics. This information could possibly open up new avenues in research for why female student-athletes are not pursuing careers in college athletics. The female student-athletes said that having information shared with them about working in college athletics generated interest, and also assisted them in making informed decisions about whether pursuing a career in college athletics was something in which they could be successful. A student-athlete stated,

My coach has never discussed working in college athletics with me and I am very interested in coaching at the college level. This workshop provided me information and it has also encouraged me to not wait to let my coach to bring up the subject of working in [college] athletics that I have to be the one to bring it up to him.

Leadership

I believed my positive interactions with women working in college athletics throughout the region enabled me to get them to take time out of their busy schedules to come speak to the student-athletes. I was able to secure seven women to speak on the

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panel, five of whom were outside of the university where the research was being conducted. I explained my research to each panelist and many of the panelists said that it was my passion and conviction for the topic that persuaded them to come to the panel presentation. After the panel presentation was conducted, I received several compliments on the panel from the panelists, and two panelists even discussed with me the possibility of setting up a workshop and panel presentation at their college. I thought this was a great accomplishment and it demonstrated my willingness to serve and help others while also encouraging them.

I believe that the data show I made several connections with the female student-athletes who attended the workshops that I would not have had if I did not conduct the workshops. Since the workshop, some of the female student-athletes have reached out to me for assistance in securing internships and graduate positions in college athletics. Many of the female student-athletes said the information that the workshop gave them assisted them in building their interest in working in college athletics, and it also provided them with information about all the possible opportunities in college athletics in addition to coaching. Understanding the range of opportunities created interest in working in college athletics. The data showed that the workshops, my leadership, support, and guidance created further interest in working in college athletics. I tried to create knowledge sharing within the female student-athlete population and the athletic department coaches and staff members (Fullan, 2001). As the data show, through my action research study, awareness of knowledge sharing increased.

The female student-athletes also liked the folders with information they were given and the powerpoint presentation. The female student-athletes suggested that to

improve the workshop, I conduct it during the fall semester rather than the spring semester, so seniors would have more time to use the information. They also suggested reaching out to professors in order to improve attendance by recruiting female students to attend the workshop and panel presentation and for me to come to their practices to explain the workshop.

Chapter VIII

Analysis

I wanted to do this action research project for several reasons. The first reason was because I felt a sense of responsibility, as a woman working in college athletics, to encourage and support other women to pursue careers in college athletics. The second reason was to share knowledge about working in college athletics and to try to investigate and change any misperceptions the female student-athletes had about working in college athletics. Lastly, I wanted to challenge my leadership with the student-athletes and the athletic department staff in trying to create a change in the athletic department.

In order to do this, I had to find out what motivated the current coaches and staff working in college athletics to pursue careers in college athletics and to also explore the extent to which they shared knowledge with the female student-athletes about working in college athletics. I also had to understand the perceptions female student-athletes had about working in college athletics. The change the study attempted was to create awareness about the lack of women working in college athletics. Once this understanding and awareness was established, knowledge could be shared with female student-athletes that might motivate them to pursue careers in college athletics (Fullan, 2001). My study's purpose was to address the following research questions:

1. What motivates current female coaches and athletic staff members to pursue careers in college athletics?

2. What motivates female student-athletes at X University to pursue or not pursue careers in college athletics?

3. What are current female X University student-athletes' attitudes toward working in collegiate athletic positions?

4. How do information workshops on careers in college athletics affect this institution's female student-athletes' interest in choosing collegiate athletics as a career?

By addressing each research question, my study sought to discover how to challenge the status quo involving women and their marginalization regarding career attainment in college athletics.

College athletics are full of symbols such as mascots and school colors, and also has unique organizational cultural perspective (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). Thus the purpose of this study was to use the organizational culture perspectives to determine the extent to which knowledge sharing created a change in the perceptions of female student-athletes about pursuing careers in college athletics. I discovered through research and throughout this action research project that when members believe an organization's culture is causing a majority of its problems, they become more open to cultural change (Schein, 2004). The people working in the athletic department were all very different, but were all bound together by their common identity of working in college athletics. I used this as a focal point in creating a shared vision that involved showing them what the future might hold if the rate of women working in college athletics stayed the same or decreased (Senge, 2006).

I found that the women working in the athletic department were motivated to help me create change because they told me they were very aware of gender discrimination within college athletics. I also ascertained through conducting the focus groups the

student-athletes' perceptions of working in college athletics. Their perceptions reflected a lack of interest due to: 1) a lack of information about the various careers in college athletics, 2) a lack of understanding of the strategies for obtaining positions within college athletics, and 3) a negative perception of work/life balance in the college athletic field. In order to change student-athletes' perceptions about working in college athletics, I used knowledge sharing, a technique recommended by Fullan (2001). I established knowledge sharing practices that I believed would provide the female student-athletes with information about careers in college athletics. I did this through creating the workshop and panel presentation, which demonstrated the positive effects of knowledge sharing (Fullan, 2001). I also utilized a panel presentation of different women working in college athletics. Panelists discussed the various attractors and barriers associated with working in college athletics, so the student-athletes could be given information to make informed decisions about pursuing careers in college athletics.

I utilized an action research approach to this study. Action research enabled me to collect data and make changes in a cyclical process as the research progressed, and allowed me to make changes for improvement (Hinchey, 2008). This type of research also allowed me to continually reflect upon my leadership in relation to my action research project. In this chapter, I will analyze and present data to answer the research questions and also analyze and present data on the change process. In the next chapter, I focus on my leadership. I found focusing on the change to be a difficult task at first, because I was so immersed in the data and the organization, however, once I was able to detach by leaving my position, I was able to see changes that most people would not notice from inside (Heiftz & Linsky, 2002).

Overview of the Cycles

Cycle I enabled me to observe the athletic department of X University and it also provided me the opportunity to collect interview data from women and one man working in the athletic department. I wanted to gain the support of the coaches and athletic staff members so I could involve them in the overall vision of the research project (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2006). A change effort could be successful if the coaches and athletic staff members were able to provide their different perspectives and contribute to the formulation and implementation of the change (Eckel, Green, Hill, & Mallon, 1999). I attempted to do this through listening and identifying their perspectives and backgrounds. I felt it was important to my action research to paint a picture of the future through listening to diverse and unconventional voices (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). The future I envisioned was more complex, had more depth, and was more thorough and more creative, because I had coaches, athletic staff, and student-athletes involved who had different perspectives and different experiences (Kouzes & Posner, 2006).

Cycle I. Cycle I also gave me the opportunity to share with the coaches and athletic staff my knowledge and passion about encouraging and knowledge sharing with female student-athletes about pursuing careers in college athletics. This was an important step in my action research project. Many of the women working in the athletic department knew there was not much interest in the female student-athlete population to pursue careers in college athletics, and had several perceptions as to why female student-athletes were not pursuing careers in college athletics. However, lack of knowledge sharing was not something that was identified by a majority of the coaches and athletic staff (Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2007).

Cycle I enabled me to better understand the organizational culture through reflection, listening, and engagement in discussions (Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Senge, 2006). Some of the coaches and athletic staff who I approached to participate in my study were eager to help and they also offered to assist with recruiting female student-athletes for the focus groups and the workshops. After the interviews, more of the coaches and athletic staff members embraced my strategy of sharing knowledge with the female student-athletes about pursuing careers in college athletics through sending e-mails to their players about the workshop, posting flyers about the workshops in their locker rooms and on their office doors, and participating on the panel. The reflections I wrote in my journal showed that through sharing my vision I generated genuine commitment with some of the coaches and athletic staff rather than polite obligatory agreement to encourage knowledge sharing (Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2007; Senge, 2002).

Cycle II. In Cycle II, I conducted two focus groups with female student-athletes to gain insight regarding their perspectives about working in college athletics. I found through Cycle II that the female student-athletes had varied experiences that produced their perspectives about working in college athletics. Cycles II and III also introduced me as a resource to student-athletes who may have been interested in working in college athletics, but who did not know how pursue positions or who to ask for help. I was able to connect to the student-athletes through the focus groups, which resulted in them sharing the information they learned. I was later approached by student-athletes who did not attend the focus groups, but who were told by teammates that I was resource in obtaining information about working in college athletics.

Cycle III. I used the information I gathered from Cycle I and Cycle II to create

Cycle III. The interviews and focus groups confirmed institutionally that there was a lack

of interest among the female student-athletes at X University to pursue careers in college

athletics. During Cycle III, I created and conducted workshops about working in college

athletics, and constructed a panel presentation that included women who worked in

various positions within college athletics. Some of the coaches and athletic staff members

who participated in the interviews assisted me in recruiting student-athletes through e-

mailing them information about the workshop and panel, and posting flyers in the athletic

offices, and in the locker rooms. The purpose of the workshops and panel presentation

was to generate interest among the female student-athletes to pursue careers in college

athletics. The workshops and panel presentation provided opportunities to share

knowledge about strategies to obtain positions within college athletics, the various jobs

within college athletics, and resources for assisting with career attainment in college

athletics (Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2007).

Institutional Culture

I needed to understand the culture of the X University athletic department in order

to create change within it (Senge, 2002). I had to find out the perceptions some of the

coaches and athletic staff had toward sharing knowledge about working in college

athletics and I also had to explore female student-athletes' perspectives about pursuing

careers in college athletics (Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2007). I examined the athletic department

in which I was employed and in which I conducted my research. X University has a

strong tradition in athletic excellence. It has won many NCAA titles and has had over 150

All-Americans. The coaches and athletic staff at X University are very talented and all

are leaders in their sport. They all work very hard to have successful athletic programs and they push their student-athletes to be successful in athletics and academics.

This particular athletic department also had a female athletic director and a large number of women as head coaches, which was uncommon in a college athletic personnel structure (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). As I conducted the interviews with the women coaches, one male coach and athletic staff, it became apparent that they were aware of the lack of interest in women pursuing careers in college athletics, and they had valuable insights as to why women were not pursuing careers in college athletics, but they were not sure if they played a role in any change. During the interviews, I tried to develop an awareness of the need to act through sharing with the coaches and athletic staff members information about the lack of women pursuing careers in college athletics (Eckel et al., 1999; Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2006). I wanted the coaches and athletic staff members, especially the women, to be aware of the lack of women pursuing careers in college athletics, and for them to be supportive of my action research project with the female student-athletes. As I worked within the department, I knew that the coaches and athletic staff worked long hours and had many responsibilities; therefore, I did not want to burden them with additional work. I did not plan my action research project to involve their participation other than participating in the interviews. However, I welcomed their participation and I had several coaches and athletic staff members assist with recruiting student-athletes and participating on the panel presentation.

I was able to produce change through several strategies in my action research project. The first strategy I used was to identify a problem that had a direct connection to some of the people working within the athletic department (Eckel et al., 1999; Heifetz &

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Linsky, 2002). The next strategy I used was to share knowledge about the problem, as well as possible solutions in the interviews, and to keep sharing information afterwards (Fullan, 2001). Eckel et al. (1999) state, "various constituencies on campus and within your department are more likely to understand the reasons for change if they have access to the same information upon which the decision to change was based" (p. 14). The third strategy I used was to share ownership of the problem with the coaches and athletic staff through making them aware of the issue and encouraging them to participate (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Lastly, I articulated constant and repeated messages and I attempted to encourage public discussions of the issues (Fullan, 2001). I was able to do this through formal and informal events and activities, from the workshops and panel presentations to casual conversations with the student-athletes, coaches, and athletic staff members (Eckel et al., 1999; Fullan, 2001; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

Creation of Change

I was able to create the workshops and the panel presentation through setting a goal and vision of creating them and executing them. I envisioned the workshop and panel presentation's purpose and objectives, communicated the purpose and objectives to the coaches and athletic staff, publicized the workshops and panel presentation, and conducted three workshops and a panel presentation. Through journaling and reflecting, as is required in action research (Creswell, 2007; Hinchey, 2008), I evaluated each step and tried to improve upon one step to another to keep the cycles moving and to modify and make changes as needed to solidify the action research project (Creswell, 2007; Hinchey, 2008; McKernan, 1988).

My overview of the project allowed me to see how tiny differences in attitude, perspective, and shared knowledge made a difference in creating interest among the female student-athletes to pursue careers in college athletics (Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2007). In *The Tipping Point*, Gladwell (2000) discussed John Wesley's point of view on how to bring about change. Wesley believed that if one wanted to

> Bring about a fundamental change in people's belief and behavior, a change that would persist and serve as an example to others, you needed to create a community around them, where those new beliefs could be practiced and expressed and nurtured. (p. 172)

From looking back at my action research project, I realized that I did not quite create a community among the female student-athletes and many of the coaches and athletic staff, but I did make them more aware of the need for knowledge sharing (Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2007). During the focus groups, the student-athletes identified individuals who could be possible mentors and shared possible resources. One student-athlete said, "I was not really sure who I could ask for information about getting an athletic graduate position but know after attending the workshop and panel I know who to ask and I also feel comfortable asking." Also, during the discussions I had with the coaches and athletic staff members after the panel presentation, they shared with me that they learned that the female student-athletes needed encouragement, guidance, and knowledge sharing to pursue careers in college athletics. One coach stated, "We must have discussions with our student-athletes about encouraging them to pursue careers in college athletics because if we as women don't do it, then who will?" I also observed coaches and athletic staff sharing information about working in college athletics with female student-athletes that I had not observed prior to the origination of my action research project (Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2007). I wrote in my journal,

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I observed another discussion today between a coach and a female student-athlete about the student-athlete having a future career in coaching. I was excited to hear this conversation and others like that I had heard recently because I cannot recall hearing conversations similar to this prior to my action research project.

In order to bring about a change, I had to be intentional and reflective by developing strategies and working within the norms of the department to create change (Eckel et al., 1999). I was able to do this by creating a vision, building on my research and my cycles, and formulating steps to create a change. Building the vision would be one of the most important steps (Kouzes & Posner, 2006).

I began building my vision of sharing knowledge about pursuing careers in college athletics in Cycle I (Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2007). The vision for my project was not only getting the coaches, athletic staff, and student-athletes to understand what my project was about, it was also about advocating its need and creating commitment to believe in it and support it (Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2006). As the cycles were continuous, so too was building the vision, therefore, every opportunity I had to share my research project and to encourage knowledge sharing enabled me to build my vision (Fullan, 2001). I wrote in my journal,

> I found myself initiating discussions with student-athletes especially the female student-athletes about what their majors are and how with their major they could work in college athletics. I found that many of the student-athletes did not know how their major could apply to a job in college athletics.

These discussions prompted the student-athletes to share with their teammates that I was a resource for information about obtaining careers in college athletics.

The Research Questions

I was able to answer the research questions using my qualitative and quantitative data that were collected through the three research cycles. To answer my first research

question "What motivates current female coaches and athletic staff members to pursue careers in college athletics?" I collected qualitative data in Cycle I. The data showed that the current female coaches and athletic staff were motivated by several reasons to pursue careers in college athletics. The reasons they gave also mirrored the research I had gathered for the literature review. Female coaches and athletic staff stated that they were motivated to work in college athletics for the following reasons: staying involved within college athletics (Bracken, 2009; Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999; Weiss & Stevens, 1993), having a passion for the game (Bracken, 2009; Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999; Weiss & Stevens, 1993), working with athletes of a higher caliber (Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999; Weiss & Stevens, 1993), doing something they loved (Bracken, 2009; Kamphoff & Gill, 2008), and seeing their student-athletes grow through their sport (Barber, 1998; Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999; Weiss & Stevens, 1993). As one coach stated,

> I enjoyed working with the high school students and being a positive presence but I enjoyed working with the college kids more. I enjoyed coaching the college level because it was more challenging and I could still have a positive effect [on] the student-athletes because they were still growing and learning in college.

As the research has suggested, women were motivated to work in college athletics for several reasons, including to become role models for young aspiring athletes, to help female athletes reach their potential, to work with advanced and motivated athletes, to maintain their love of sport, and to teach sport and life skills (Barber, 1998; Bracken, 2009; Kamphoff & Gill, 2008; Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999; Weiss & Stevens, 1993). However, during Cycle I, the coaches and athletic staff also stated that someone encouraged them or mentored them to pursue a career in college athletics, which prompted them to envision being able to work in college athletics. The research has shown that the current lack of mentoring is one of the factors explaining the lack of

women going into the college athletic profession (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010; Bracken, 2009).

There are several questions that need to be addressed in the future regarding how mentors can have an impact on recruiting women to pursue careers in college athletics. Other questions that need to be addressed are: How do coaches and athletic staff influence their student-athletes to pursue careers in college athletics? What is the female student-athlete's opinion of the impact of having a mentor on their decision to pursue careers in college athletics? What are the coaches' and athletic staff's insights on their influence on the perceptions of student-athletes regarding pursuing careers in college athletics?

The second research question was, "What motivates female student-athletes at X University to pursue or not pursue careers in college athletics?" I collected qualitative data in Cycle I, II, and III to address this question. The data collected for this question mostly reflected the current literature on the topic, which has shown that female student-athletes are not interested in working in college athletics for various reasons including: time commitment, family conflicts, lack of pay, perceived lack of competence, and perceived gender discrimination (Bracken, 2009; Inglis et al., 2000; Kamphoff & Gill, 2008; Knoppers, 1987; Lopiano & Zotos, 2009; Pastore, 1991). The female student-athletes at X University were motivated by several reasons to pursue careers in college athletics including: having a passion for the game, wanting to stay involved in college athletics, desiring to work with athletes at a high level, and giving back to others. The reasons female student-athletes at X University were not motivated to pursue careers in college athletics were: lack of pay, time commitment, gender discrimination, family/work

conflict, perceived lack of confidence to be qualified to coach, and lack of information on how to obtain careers in college athletics. Female student-athletes have stated in other studies that they would not go into college athletics as a profession because of: lack of administrative support for female coaches, conflicts with having a family life, inadequate and unequal salaries, negative attitudes of co-workers, lack of professional role models, lack of professional connections/networks, negative attitude of athletes, perceived lack of self-confidence, and homophobia (Bracken, 2009; Kamphoff & Gill, 2008). The research did not reflect that the lack of information on how to obtain careers in college athletics was a barrier, however, the student-athletes at X University identified this as a reason they were not motivated to pursue careers in college athletics.

As stated previously, the majority of the current coaches and athletic staff stated that someone mentored them to pursue a career in college athletics. They also commented that they would currently mentor student-athletes if they thought the student-athlete had "what is takes" to work in college athletics. The student-athletes did not mention mentors as a reason to pursue a career in college athletics, however, based on the observations, interviews, and focus groups, the data show that not only is knowledge sharing essential to creating interest in pursuing careers in college athletics, but having a mentor is equally important (Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2007). Mentoring has been shown to help women get into the college athletics profession, stay in the profession, and navigate the profession successfully (Harding-Hardore, 1987; Inglis, 1988; Lough, 2001). The mentoring relationship, like knowledge sharing, can be reciprocal (Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2007). There is a learning process for the mentor from the feedback and insights of the student-athlete, and the student-athlete will learn from being mentored (Fullan, 2001; Lough, 2001).

The third research question was, "What are current female X University student-athletes' attitudes toward working in collegiate athletic positions?" The female student-athletes at X University were mixed in their attitudes toward working in college athletics. Some had no interest in pursuing a career in college athletics and also did not like women coaches and had a very negative attitude toward the profession. Others thought it could be a possible career, however, they wanted to pursue a career that involved their major. Still, others were set on working in college athletics in some capacity and felt very positive toward the profession. There was much research on hiring and recruiting women for careers in college athletics, but few studies on the perceptions that female student-athletes have about working in college athletics. Therefore, it was difficult to compare the student-athletes' at X University perceptions to working in college athletics to previous research. The study conducted by Bracken (2008) provided me the majority of the research regarding female student-athletes' perceptions of working in college athletics, which did reflect most of the perceptions the female student-athletes at X University had.

Research has shown that student-athletes do not always have well-defined career plans compared to their non-athletic peers (Lally & Kerr, 2005; Sandstedt, Cox, Martens, Ward, Webber, & Ivey, 2004). Student-athletes have difficulty making mature career-related decisions until their senior year, and regardless of their career, they need assistance in researching and choosing a career (Lally & Kerr, 2005; Sandstedt et al., 2004). Research has also shown that women need to be recruited to work in college athletics more diligently than men, and it is important to identify strategies to increase the attractiveness of working in college athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008, 2010; Bracken, 2008; Pastore, Inglis, & Danylchuk, 1996). When female student-athletes have an interest

in working in athletics, it is on the secondary level rather than the collegiate level, compared to males who would rather coach at the collegiate level (Pastore & Meacci, 1994).

Female student-athletes have seen the struggles faced by their coaches and athletic staff members, and that may have caused a disinterest in pursuing careers in college athletics. Yet, these struggles faced by their coaches and athletic staff do not need to be barriers, instead, they can serve as opportunities for mentoring relationships to be established to share knowledge with female student-athletes (Pastore, 2003). Encouraging and empowering female student-athletes to make meaningful contributions to college athletics may be the link that has been missing in the recruitment of women to pursue careers in college athletics (Pastore et al., 1996). Giving female student-athletes the voice they need to feel connected and mentoring their leadership skills could eventually create motivation and interest to pursue careers in college athletics (Lough, 2001; Pastore, 1993).

The last research question that was not directed toward my leadership was, "How do information workshops on careers in college athletics affect this institution's female student-athletes' interest in choosing collegiate athletics as a career?" The evaluation questionnaire from the workshop and the focus groups after the workshops provided the information that enabled me to answer this question. The evaluation questionnaire showed that the female student-athletes were more interested in pursuing a career in college athletics after attending the workshops. The student-athletes also commented in the post-workshop focus groups that they had an interest in considering a career in college athletics that they did not have before the workshops. The student-athletes were

also more interested in working in college athletics due to the presentation of various careers within college athletics in addition to coaching and the strategies to obtain these positions.

Acosta and Carpenter (2008, 2010) and Pastore and Meacci (1994) have recommended providing information and training opportunities for female student-athletes to generate interest and to recruit female student-athletes into careers in college athletics. The workshops and panel presentation provided information for the student-athletes that they may not have received before. In the interviews with the coaches and athletic staff, many stated they only shared information if they felt the student-athlete had "what it takes" to work in college athletics. The workshop and panel presentation were open to anyone to attend and I invited all female student-athletes. This openness and opportunity to learn information about working in college athletics may not have been given to some of these student-athletes before, because the coach or athletic staff they worked with may have had the perception that did not have "what it takes" to work in college athletics. The opportunity to learn information about working in college athletics may have generated interest in the student-athletes. Some of the student-athletes stated in the focus groups after the workshop that they felt they had to approach their coach for guidance to work in college athletics, because they felt their coach was not going to talk to them about it.

As I worked through the cycles, I tried to create an environment in which the female student-athletes felt comfortable asking about pursuing careers in college athletics. Fullan (2002) shares with us that "leading in a culture of change does not mean placing changed individuals into unchanged environments. Rather, change leaders work

on changing the context, helping create new settings conducive to learning and sharing

that learning" (p. 4). It was important that learning occurred within the context and

related to maintaining the knowledge sharing, because it improved the organization by

establishing conditions that were conducive to continuous development of cultural

change (Fullan, 2002; Senge, 2006). My leadership in a culture of change will be

ultimately judged by the sustained change; not by what I did as a leader, but what

leadership I left behind (Fullan, 2002).

Limitations

During Cycle III I left X University, where I was working and conducting my

research, to accept a position at a local community college. In hindsight, this move was

not the best option for my research or my career. Not being on site made it very difficult

to recruit the female student-athletes for the workshops. Earlier in the year at the NCAA

eligibility meetings I had 64 female student-athletes sign up for the workshops, however,

I only had a total of 15 female student-athletes attend the workshops, and out of those 15

workshop participants, 10 student-athletes attend the panel presentation. I believe had I

been on campus, I would have been more visible in my recruiting efforts and more

successful in retaining participants for the workshop. Since I was not on campus, I had to

rely on e-mails, flyers, and communication from the coaches. Due to my new job

responsibilities, I was unable to speak at practices about the workshops as I planned to

do. I believe this personal appearance would also have generated more interest in the

workshops, thus creating better attendance.

Therefore, I was only able to secure the 15 student-athletes to participate in the

workshop and 10 for the panel presentation. This is a small sample limited to one

institution and so all results should be interpreted with caution. I believe the relationships that I have built over time with the student-athletes created some interest in attending the workshops and panel presentation. The interviews with the coaches and athletic staff also created an awareness of knowledge sharing with the female student-athletes about working in college athletics, which prompted the coaches and athletic staff to assist in promoting the workshops with their student-athletes.

Summary and Implications

I hope my study can be a catalyst for recognition within the NCAA and on college campuses, that there is a need for knowledge sharing programs for female college students who may be interested in coaching or working in collegiate athletics. I found through sharing information about working in college athletics, I generated some interest in female student-athletes to consider careers in college athletics. I feel that the first step in the process of involving more women to work in college athletics is to create interest in the female student-athlete population. The results from this study have shown that knowledge sharing is a positive strategy to create interest in the female student-athlete population (Fullan, 2001). Furthermore, creating awareness among coaches and athletic staff that knowledge sharing can establish interest for female student-athletes to aspire to a career in college athletics may encourage the coaches and staff to share their knowledge.

Support for these various kinds of knowledge sharing programs are important considerations for the NCAA and people who work in college athletics who are concerned with creating a pipeline of talented, promising employees from diverse backgrounds, who are capable of assuming positions of leadership in intercollegiate

athletics (Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999). Through this study I found that some of the coaches and athletic staff agreed that there is a lack of females choosing college athletics as a career choice, but did not realize that the lack of knowledge sharing was a possible deterrent (Fullan, 2001). After the interview, many of the coaches and staff members stated that they would make a more conscious effort to share knowledge about working in college athletics with their student-athletes.

This study and the research by Bracken (2008) demonstrated that future studies are needed to determine whether knowledge sharing is beneficial to creating interest among female student-athletes in working in college athletics (Fullan, 2001). Female student-athletes comprise the largest pool of candidates for future collegiate athletic positions, so studying their lack of interest about the athletic profession as a career option would be beneficial. Two areas that were deterrents for female student-athletes in my research were the lack of knowledge of various careers in college athletics and of the strategies for obtaining a career in college athletics. The research has shown that we can help establish a strong foundation within the female student athlete population by encouraging collegiate athletic careers as a positive career choice through providing workshops for the female student athletes that present knowledge sharing opportunities and strategies for obtaining a position in college athletics.

The lack of women going into intercollegiate athletics as a career choice, and the current all-time low percentage of women currently in the ranks, is not a positive sign for the future of intercollegiate athletics. Female student-athletes need strong women role-models for their growth and confidence as they mature from girls to women. Additional studies need to be conducted to explore the different reasons female student-athletes are

not going into college athletics as a career choice and possible solutions that could be

implemented to stop the decline of women working in college athletics.

Chapter IX

Leadership Analysis

Introduction

My study was conducted with two foci: the first was to explore female students-athletes' interest in athletic careers and to increase that interest. The second, which is the focus of this chapter, was to examine my leadership. In Chapter I, I introduced two leadership questions that I aimed to answer through my research project.

5. How will my leadership affect the female student-athletes with whom I work?

6. How will my leadership change and grow through this action research project?

In this chapter, I present and discuss data pertaining to my leadership and answer the research questions. Also, with the study's leadership focus, I attempted to identify the leadership behaviors that assisted in the process of knowledge sharing within the athletic department (Beyer & Hannah, 2000).

Defining Leadership

I believe anyone can be a leader. A leader does not need a title to be a leader. Leaders' styles can vary depending on the situation they are in and the style they choose to use to lead, but all leaders must be credible and authentic.

> Leaders must be someone we can believe in, someone we can trust, that they will do what they say, that they are personally excited and enthusiastic about the direction in which we are headed and that they have the knowledge and skills to lead. (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 26).

As I studied my leadership throughout my action research project, I found that I did not need a title to be a leader, and that Kouzes and Posner's (1995) description

describes me. This is something I have struggled with throughout my career. I thought I

needed the title of athletic director to be a leader. In reflection, I discovered I was already

leading through serving and encouraging others. I do what I say I am going to do, I can

be trusted, and I am very passionate about my work and my research study. In most

organizations people expect the supervisor to control the organization, but I have learned

I can lead without formal authority; however, I am learning that I must be careful to

assess my leadership in relation to others and to adjust how hard and fast to push for

change (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

Leadership Practices Inventory

During Cycle III, I asked my former supervisor, coaches, and athletic staff that I

worked with to complete the online Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory

(LPI) to assess my leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2008). I also asked two student-athletes

with whom I worked very closely in SAAC, and who also attended the workshops and

the panel presentation to complete the LPI as well.

I used the Learning Practices Inventory (LPI) as the main assessment of my

leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2008). The LPI is an online evaluation questionnaire that

assesses leaders in five leadership practices: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision,

challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. The LPI was

an excellent evaluation questionnaire to use to measure my leadership theories, because

the five leadership practices that the LPI assessed also reflected the foundations of

transformational and servant leadership, which are two of my leadership theories (Bass,

1985; Greenleaf, 1976; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Rieke et al., 2008). Both the leader and

the observers are asked to evaluate the leader's ability in 30 leadership behaviors that

each relate to one of these five practices. The rating scale on each statement of the LPI ranged from 1 *almost never* through 10 *almost always*. The rating for each of the five leadership practices were totaled and provided a score for each leadership practice. Thus the total score had the potential to range from 6 to 60 for each leadership practice.

The LPI results group people by their relationship to the three groups I asked to participate in the LPI, a manager, 10 co-workers, and two students. I have built different relationships with each group and their assessment of my leadership reflected the different relationships I had built with them. My manager assessed me very low in many categories, while my co-workers were pretty even throughout the categories, and the students assessed me high in most of the categories. As I stated before, my manager ranked me lowest in my LPI scores, and at first when I read the scores from my manager, I was very upset with the response, because I thought I failed at being a good employee and a leader, but then I started to reflect on the scores and tried to look at the message of the scores and not the measurements.

LPI Results

As I stated before, I have always been very hard on myself, so when I took the LPI I tried not to be overly critical of my leadership abilities, but in comparison with my observers I think I was too positive in my assessment of my leadership. Table 9.1 presents a summary of the LPI results in Kouzes and Posner's (2007) Five Leadership Practices.

Table 9.1

Five Leadership Practice Data Summary

Leadership Practice	Self	Average of all Observers	Average manager	Average co-workers	Average students
Model the way.	53	47.6	31	48	54
Inspire a shared vision.	46	41.5	9	42.4	53.5
Challenge the process.	46	44.5	20	45.6	51.5
Enable others to act.	52	42.5	8	43.2	56.5
Encourage the heart.	50	44.1	15	44.4	57

The observers took the LPI during the Month of May in 2011 after I completed the workshops and the panel presentation. The results showed that the observers and I had areas we agreed upon and areas that we disagreed upon in my leadership assessment. In "challenge the process" I was 1.5 points higher than the observers, and this was the most similar score. In "inspired a shared vision" the observers' score was 4.5 points lower than mine, in "model the way" it was 5.4 points lower, and in "encourage the heart" it was 5.9 points lower. Furthermore, the category in which there was the biggest discrepancy was "enable others to act," with 9.5 points difference.

I also wanted to see how the different groups of observers viewed my leadership, so I broke down the averages by question and practice for each group. I believed this was also important because I had different leadership relationships with each group, and I believed, especially with the students, I could be more of a leader than with my co-

workers and my manager, because through most of the project I felt I needed a title to be a leader and I acted that way. For example, I noted in my journal that when I was working with the student-athletes I was confident in my abilities to lead and to help them achieve success as I did with them in SAAC, but when I worked with some of the coaches and my supervisor, I did not feel confident to be able to lead with them and sometimes waited to be asked to do something instead of taking the initiative to do something. I also believed, because I was younger than most of the coaches, that I could not help them be successful because they had much more experience than I did, and I wondered how I was to help them. I also focused my action research project with the students, and both of these students participated in the focus groups, workshop, and panel presentation. As shown in Table 9.1, the students scored me very highly in all of the leadership categories. My co-workers were in the mid-way in the averages. and my manager rated me very low in all the categories, however, I feel the scores are on target as I acted differently with each group.

The first leadership practice "model the way" (Table 9.2) can be my strongest, but can turn into my weakest due to my occasional short-sightedness when I take on a task. I have to not only model the way, but make sure I have included others in my journey. I rated myself highest overall in "model the way" as did my observers, and I relate this practice to my espoused transformational leadership style, especially throughout the research project. As a transformational leader, I model the way through being visible and displaying a positive attitude and actions (Bass, 1995). Throughout the research project, I kept an upbeat attitude toward my research and was passionate about it when I discussed it with people. I believe the positive interactions that I had, whether

they were created purposefully or not, displayed transformational leadership by helping

create knowledge sharing awareness and opportunity about female student-athletes

pursuing careers in college athletics.

Table 9.2

Model the Way

Model the Way	Self	Average of all Observers	Average manager	Average co-workers	Average students
Sets a personal example of what is expected	9	7.8	1	8.2	9
Makes certain that people adhere to agreed-on standards	9	8.6	8	8.7	8.5
Follows through on promises and commitments	10	9.4	10	9.3	9.5
Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect people's performance	8	6.4	1	7.2	8
Builds consensus around organization's values	9	7.1	1	7.6	9
Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership	8	8.4	10	7.9	10

I have always been someone who people could count on, however, I believe

through the process of my research project I found my voice. In finding my voice I

examined who I really was, and how I wanted to lead (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Many

times in the past I did not have the courage to express and stand by my values. I have

learned that in order for people to follow me as a leader, expressing my values is the first

thing I have to be able to do. Kouzes and Posner (2007) state, "Clarity of values is essential to knowing which way for each of us, is north, south, east and west" (p. 52). If I did not know my own values and stand up for them, then how was I expecting others to follow me? I learned through this process that I do have a voice and my voice is a confirmation of my values and intentions.

I have found that I did not always have the highest personal values, but had a high commitment to my organization. I have always shown this by expressing my school pride by wearing school colors and apparel, supporting the student-athletes at their games, and acknowledging the coaches' and athletic staff's achievements. However, Kouzes and Posner (2007) state that it is "personal values that drive commitment. Personal values are the route to loyalty and commitment, not organizational values" (p. 56). In the past I did not believe that my personal values made a difference in my attitude and commitment to my workplace, but as I have gained the courage to express and stand by my values, I have learned that clarity about personal values is more important than the clarity of the organizational values alone (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

As is clear in Table 9.2, my former manager rated me with a 1 in three categories: "sets a personal example of what is expected," "asks for feedback on how her actions affect people's performance," and "builds consensus around organization's values." I have reflected on these scores and also met with my former manager to discuss them. In regards to "sets a personal example of what is expected," my manager discussed with me that she sometimes thought I did not support her, and as such I did not set a personal example of what was expected. I shared with her that there were several occasions that I did not agree with her decisions and talked with her about them, but once the final

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decision was made I either carried out the decision or supported her on it. In regards to "asking for feedback on how my actions affect people's performances" my manager discussed with me that this was a huge weakness I had when I started working at X University, and although I had improved in asking for feedback, I still was not asking enough or assessing enough how my actions affect other people's performance. Lastly, in our discussion regarding my assessment in "building consensus around organization's values," my manager felt I sometimes was too independent in creating policy and procedures and I needed to consult others in the organization, so the policy or procedure reflected the department's values.

Modeling the way is also about setting an example that others should follow. As a leader, I have to be aware and responsible for the choices and actions I make. I am setting an example of what is suitable, what is ideal, and what is not (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). The actions and words I use send a message out to the people with whom I work, and if I want people to follow me, then my values and commitment must be reflected in those messages. I have to make sure that everyone has a "good understanding of what my values are and a good understanding of what the expected behaviors are" (Kouzes & Posner, 1997, p. 81). I must be aware of how my words and actions influence my co-workers and the students I work with. As a leader it is my responsibility to give a voice to my values and provide a model for others.

The second practice, "inspiring a shared vision" (Table 9.3), is something I have always struggled with. The key word in this is "shared." I can envision the future, but I have difficulty in communicating my vision to others. I knew that if my research project was going to be successful, I had to work very hard in sharing my vision with others and

recruiting them to be a part of my vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). I also knew that a strong transformational leader is able to create a vision. Creating a vision is one of the most important things a leader must do to be successful, and they must not only create the vision they have to keep reminding the people they are leading what the vision is (De Pree, 2004).

Table 9.3

Inspire a Shared Vision

Inspired a Shared Vision	Self	Average of all Observers	Average manager	Average co-workers	Average students
Talks about future trends influencing our work	5	6.8	1	7	8.5
Describes a compelling image of the future	7	6.1	1	6.2	8
Appeals to others to share dream of the future	10	6.7	1	6.7	9.5
Shows others how their interests can be realized	8	6.5	1	6.8	7.5
Paints "big picture" of group aspirations	9	7.2	2	7.1	10
Speaks with conviction about meaning of work	7	8.4	3	8.6	10

Kouzes and Poser (2007) state, "Leaders have to make sure that what they see is also something others can see" (p. 105). In order for me to accomplish the goals I had set out for my research project, I had to be able to imagine the possibilities of what the

research project could do and find a common purpose with the people participating in the project (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

As I mentioned, inspiring a shared vision is something I have struggled with, and my former manager also indicated through her assessment of me that it is something I struggle with as well. As indicated in Table 9.3, my manager gave me scores of 1 in four categories in the "inspire a shared vision" practice. When I met with my former manager, we discussed these scores; she focused on my including others in my journey. She said I had great ideas and knew I was willing to do the work to get the task accomplished, but I had to share my vision with the people with whom I worked. My supervisor believed I left co-workers feeling left out of the process and in some cases made them look bad.

In regards to my action research project, I believe through my interactions with the research participants in the interviews and focus groups and in other interactions, I was able to communicate my vision of my research project and the possibilities that could unfold. As a leader, I had to articulate clearly the outside and inside pressures to propel my change initiative, while not changing or even challenging the traits that made the athletic department successful (Eckel et al., 1999; Kouzes & Posner, 2006). I am passionate about this research project and I believe I was able to communicate my passion for the project. I believe I was also able to find a common purpose through the research project through sharing why I was conducting my research and how the principle of knowledge sharing can help generate interest among the female student-athletes to pursue careers in college athletics (Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2007). On September 10, 2010 I wrote in my journal,

> Today was an exciting day because I feel that some of the coaches are really understanding why I am doing my research and why it is not only important to me

but to the future of college athletics as well. At the soccer game tonight, two of the coaches asked me how my research was going which prompted a conversation about the lack of women working in college athletics and how my proposed plan of working with our female student-athletes could increase interest for them to work in college athletics. The coaches asked me more about my intentions and how they could help. I am so excited because not only were they interested, they offered to help. I have been feeling a little isolated because the coaches and athletic staff for the most part have cooperated with letting me interview them but only one really offered to help, now I had two more offers of help and I could tell from the conversation that they were genuinely interested and really wanted to help.

This conversation with these two coaches provided me with renewed motivation for my research project and I finally felt that I had communicated my vision and found a common purpose among the coaches and athletic staff in regards to my research project. Prior to this point I was frustrated that I was not inspiring a shared vision with my research project and I was struggling to find other ways to inspire the coaches and athletic staff.

I also believed I was able to inspire a shared vision when I reached out to seven women who worked in college athletics in the local vicinity to participate on the panel of women who work in athletics as part of the knowledge sharing process for the female student-athletes (Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2007). I knew all of these women professionally through working in college athletics. When I contacted them and shared my research project with them, they were so appreciative that I asked them to share with the student-athletes. I also asked two of my interviewees to sit on the panel as well. They expressed a sincere desire to help with my research project during the interview process and I wanted to make sure I included them on the panel to express to them how much their knowledge sharing helped me create and facilitate the workshop and the panel presentation. The panel presentation gave me an opportunity to bring together women who work in

athletics in the region where my university was located. Ironically, none of the women knew each other on a personal basis, so the panel not only provided information to the student-athletes, but gave the seven women who participated on the panel an opportunity to network with each other. I believed through this process, my feminist leadership came through as I communicated with the panelists and communicated with the student-athletes who attended (Rosener, 1990). As a feminist leader, I wanted to not only share information, but empower people as well, as I let each woman who sat on the panel have a voice in telling her career path story (Klenke, 1996; Rosener, 1990). My feminist leadership was confirmed by an e-mail one of the panelist sent me after the panel, she wrote,

> I wanted to thank you for asking me to be a part of your panel about working in college athletes, although I was quite surprised when you contacted me to sit on your panel. I felt as the director of basketball operations I did not have much to share with the student-athletes but once I began to hear the other women's stories of their career journey to athletics I realized I had a lot to share. I learned a vast amount of new information from the other panelist and also have connected with people I would not have had the opportunity to meet had it not been for your urging to be on the panel. Participating on the panel has also prompted me to attend graduate school, something that I have been putting off for quite a while. I registered for my first class this summer. Patty, thank you again for asking to be a part of the panel your charisma and passion for working in athletics is inspiring as you are also an inspiration to those student-athletes who were at the panel.

This e-mail made all the years of research and long hours working on the project worth it. It was not my goal to motivate any of the panelists to further their education or to provide a networking opportunity for them, but it makes me happy that it happened.

The third practice is challenge the process (Table 9.4). When I began this project I believed that women working in college athletics were at a standstill. I believed I needed to act and challenge the process; therefore the mission of this action research project was created to try and help tackle the issue of women not pursuing careers in college athletics.

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There have been efforts by the NCAA and the National Association of College Women

Athletic Administrators (NACWAA) to encourage more women to work in college

athletics, but I believed that if the women already working in college athletics did not do

something about the lack of women pursuing careers in college athletics then the efforts

on the NCAA and NACWAA could go to waste (Bracken, 2008).

Table 9.4

Challenge the Process

Challenge the Process	Self	Average of all Observers	Average manager	Average co-workers	Average students
Seeks challenging opportunities to test skills	8	8.5	8	8.4	9
Challenges people to try new approaches	7	7.1	1	7.3	9
Searches outside organization for innovative ways to improve	9	8	4	8.4	8
Asks "What can we learn?"	7	6	2	6	8
Makes certain that goals, plans, and milestones are set	8	7.3	1	7.5	9.5
Experiments and takes risks	7	7.7	4	8	8

I believe "challenge the process" really reflects my transformational leadership

style (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Couto, 1993; Yusof, 1998). As it is clear from Table 9.4,

my manager indicated an answer of one in two areas of "challenge the process." In

"challenges people to try new approaches" I found when I first came to X University that

many of my co-workers were resistant to the ideas that I had come with, and I learned

that if I wanted their support I had to listen to their opinions and sometimes keep the status quo. I learned that I could implement new approaches if it did not affect the people in the department too much, therefore, I did not challenge people to try new approaches, because whenever I did try I received resistance. In regards to the other score of one in "makes certain that goals, plans and milestones are set" I believe that as I have mentioned before, that once I get absorbed in a task I forget to check on where others are and where I stand within the organization.

I found I sometimes struggled within my department because I also have a hard time settling for mediocrity. I have high expectations of myself and I also have extremely high expectations for the people with whom I work, which are indicative of a transformational leader (Bass, 1995). Kouzes and Posner (2007) state that the "expectations that successful leaders hold provide the framework into which people fit their own realities" (p. 323). I have found when I care for my co-workers and students and expect them to achieve greatness, they usually live up to the bar I have raised or go beyond it. I have faith in the abilities of my co-workers and students, and I try very hard to thank them and let them know how much their contributions mean to me, and the success of the organization. Even though I have high expectations for myself, and the people with whom I work, I should also be able to empathize with them and encourage them.

In my LPI results, my lowest score for myself and my observers, was the question "asks what we can learn?" When I took the LPI this question stood out to me, and it made me think that I should have been doing this, because I had not been doing so. This question made me reflect on my whole project in a new way.

Through my action research project I wanted to create a change in the attitudes of female student-athletes toward working in college athletics. I knew this was going to be a difficult task, but one that I was excited and passionate about taking on. I believe as a leader in the athletic department I needed to dynamically seek ways to make things better, to cultivate, innovate, and progress (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). I believe that one of the things that needed to be changed was the lack of knowledge sharing we were doing in the athletic department with the female student-athletes about pursuing careers in college athletics. The research tells us that women are not working in college athletics for various reasons, and one of them is a lack of interest (Bracken, 2008). I believe that because we were not talking about working in college athletics with our female student-athletes that we were not creating an interest among them to work in college athletics. As a transformational leader, I had to create a vision of what knowledge sharing could do to transform the interest of the female student-athletes; creating this vision required changing the attitudes of most of the coaches, athletic department staff, and student-athletes at X University (Fullan 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Creating a new attitude among the people I worked with and the female student-athletes was not a small task, and on January 17, 2010 I wrote in my journal,

> How am I going to do this [change the attitudes]? I am just one person. Why would people want to help me with my research project? I feel very passionate about helping students achieve success and find the right career for them and I also want to provide opportunities for them to pursue careers in college athletics however how do I get the coaches and athletic staff to feel the same way?

I was determined to make something happen, and since it was my action research project, it was up to me to initiate the change, be responsible for guiding the change, and to produce results. To create change, Kouzes and Posner (2007) state that innovation

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requires more listening and communication than it does routine work. Leaders guiding a change must establish more relationships and connect with more sources of information (p. 177). I believe that my feminist leadership was demonstrated through this process by connecting with the participants through the interviews, workshops, and focus groups. I was able to listen to the participants and connect with them by sharing knowledge (Klenke, 1996; Rosener, 1990).

I also focused on what I could do within my scope of leadership in my research project. I tried to stay positive when things were not going well and to look at every small step working toward the ultimate goal. I had many obstacles along the way, some that I could not avoid, some that I created, and some that just moved me in another direction, but I kept plugging along. I had tried new things like creating a workshop and planning a panel presentation as part of my research project. I reached out to people I had never met and invited them to campus to speak with the student-athletes. I also took risks by putting myself and my research on display and engaging in conversations about it. I was able to do all of this because I believed in what I was doing, I was passionate about it, and I felt a deep intrinsic motivation to make a change. One of my highest scores from both myself and my observers were that I "search outside the organization for innovative ways to improve." Thinking outside of the box is one of my strengths. I try to be creative in coming up with solutions or new ideas; not everything will work, but going through the process helps me grow and learn. Fullan (2001) states, as a leader grows and develops, she seeks out challenges to test her skills, and on the LPI assessment my observers and I scored this area high in "seeking out challenges and testing my skills." I do not like to get too comfortable in my work, because truthfully I get bored and complacent. Challenging

myself was apparent throughout the research. I had never created or facilitated a workshop before, so the challenge of doing this for my research project was very appealing to me. The evaluation questionnaires and the focus groups from the workshop showed that I was successful in the challenge of creating and facilitating them, which gave me new confidence as a leader.

As is clear from Table 9.5, my manager assessed me with ones in four of the categories. In several of my evaluation meetings, my manager discussed me with me that she believed I could have developed more cooperative relationships with certain people in the athletic department. She felt because I had not developed a cooperative relationship with them, I did not treat them with respect, support their decisions, and work with them in giving them a choice in how they performed their job, which caused lack of growth in our relationship and growth in our positions. I believe in many cases I was in a difficult situation, because as the NCAA compliance officer I had to monitor the coaches and athletic staff, and sometimes rules were broken that I had to investigate. This put me in a difficult position with some of the coaches and athletic staff, and sometimes relationships became strained and feelings were hurt. However, I do not believe I ever treated people disrespectfully and I have really taken that particular assessment to heart, because I have always tried to be respectful, kind, and helpful to all the people with whom I have worked. I have found that not everyone is going to like me and I have always strived to do my work and support others in theirs, so that even if there is mutual dislike, there is professionalism between the two people.

Table 9.5

Enable Others to Act

Enable Others to Act	Self	Average of all Observers	Average manager	Average co-workers	Average students
Develops cooperative relationships	10	7	1	7.1	9.5
Actively listens to diverse points of view	8	7	2	7.1	9
Treats people with dignity and respect	10	7.8	1	8.2	9.5
Supports decisions other people make	8	6.7	2	7.1	8.5
Gives people choice about how they do their work	8	7.1	1	7.1	10
Ensures that people grow in their jobs	8	6.9	1	6.9	10

An organization's strengths can be from the different ideas that are brought to the table (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Through the interviews and focus groups I was able to collect ideas from people within the organization as to why female student-athletes were not going into athletics as a career and how to create interest for the female student-athletes to consider careers in college athletics. The interviews and focus groups gave people within the organization the opportunity to provide input and be a part of the research process, and ultimately encouraging them to act if they wanted to.

Kouzes and Posner (1995) state, "that leadership is a relationship, founded on trust and confidence. Without trust and confidence, people do not take risks, without risks; there is no change, without change, organizations and movements die" (p. 12). I

assessed myself through the LPI as second highest in "enabling others to act." The two student-athletes who participated in the LPI also rated me very high in this category with 56.5 out of 60. I believe when I am working with the student-athletes enabling them to act is something that comes very naturally for me, but when I work with my supervisor and my co-workers, I struggle. I think I have struggled with my co-workers and supervisor in this area due to my position as a NCAA compliance officer. In my position of compliance officer, it is my responsibility to make sure the coaches and athletic staff are educated about the rules and also to monitor their compliance to the rules. In many cases, in order to ensure compliance I was regimented in how I wanted processes handled, where as I could have been slightly more flexible and asked for feedback in how the processes were established and enforced. As a leader, I must also be able to be direct in delivering my appreciation or admiration to people I work with or lead. I must be specific and tell the person directly about how their particular experiences help the organization (Kegan & Lahey, 2001).

Fullan's (2001) leadership model for change also creates leaders within the organization. Strong institutions have many leaders at all levels. As I discussed before, I have struggled with not having a "leadership" title, which made me perceive I was not a leader with my co-workers and my supervisor. However, as I worked with the student-athletes through SAAC, I was able to perceive myself as a leader, and I believed I could develop and encourage the student-athletes to be leaders. Fullan (2001) has said that the ultimate leadership contribution is to develop leaders in the organization who can move the organization even further after the leader has left it. I believe my servant leadership role is evident in this category, because I am willing to help others and serve them so they

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are successful (Greenleaf, 1976). I was very concerned when I left my institution for my new position that the SAAC would lose its strength and momentum, because I was not there to lead them, however the student-athletes were able to carry on successfully without me, which I believe is due to me developing them into leaders, which as a transformational leader is something I set out to do (Bass, 1989).

As I go from here I must keep in mind I can lead with my supervisor and my co-workers even though they may be older and have more experience than me, because I can lead mostly through servant leadership. A servant leader leads through service; therefore, I can help everyone I work with be successful. This also would make the organization successful (Greenleaf, 1976). As a servant leader, I was able to lead by assisting the coaches and my supervisor through giving them information about compliance and eligibility issues. As a servant and a feminist leader, I shared power and information by always communicating information and not withholding information so the coaches and athletic staff could make informed decisions.

The fifth practice is "encourage the heart" (see Table 9.6). I rated myself at 50 in this category, with my supervisor at 15, and my co-workers at 44.4, however the student-athletes rated me at 57. I believe I am very supportive of the student-athletes and try to always be positive and encouraging of them, and I believe this score reflects that. However, I am not always comfortable giving control to my co-workers and students, which is indicative of transactional leadership (Burns, 2003). This may be the reason my supervisor assessed me with a score of 15. Yet, I have learned that my ability to motivate students and recognize their contributions produce the high expectations I have of them, which represents my developing transformational leadership style (Bass, 1985).

Table 9.6

Encourage the Heart

Encourage the Heart	Self	Average of all Observers	Average manager	Average co-workers	Average students
Praises people for a job well done	9	7.2	2	7.3	9.5
Expresses confidence in people's abilities	8	7.5	3	7.5	9.5
Creatively rewards people for their contributions	9	6.9	1	7	9.5
Recognizes people for commitment to shared values	8	7.8	2	8	9.5
Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments	8	7.4	6	7.1	9.5
Gives team members appreciation and support	8	7.3	1	7.5	9.5

As I have stated before, I do not want to be a transactional leader and I have been diligent in being supportive and motivational so I can be the transformational leader that I want to be (Bass, 1985; Burns, 2003). My goal was to create interest in pursuing careers in college athletics, however, I did not realize how much my positive attitude and belief in the student-athletes affected their interest until looking over the research results. I asked the students in the focus groups what they liked about the workshops and one student stated, "I liked that you believe that we can do anything, your enthusiasm towards us made me feel that I could do this [profession]." I believe I spend a lot of energy on encouraging the student-athletes, however, when it comes time to encourage my co-workers and my supervisor, I sometimes run out of energy and I leave them feeling

neglected or unmotivated. I want to continue to engage and encourage the student-athletes by finding out what motivates them, but I also need to conserve some energy for engaging and encouraging the coaches and my supervisor as well.

During my research project I was able to listen to the athletic staff and coaches in their interviews and by doing this I believe I was able to encourage their hearts. I noted in my journal,

> The interviews have been going very well, much better than I thought they would be. The coaches have really opened up and I feel I am learning something new about them and I also feel they are learning to trust me more. One coach said to me after the interview that she thought what I was researching was great and she said she noticed that I was already doing a lot of knowledge sharing with the student-athletes and it that I was someone the student-athletes looked up to and respected.

The interview questions prompted discussions after the interviews that I would not have had with the coaches and athletic staff had I not interviewed them. The information that was shared was personal and sometimes reflective in nature, which also became encouraging for both the interviewees and me as the researcher. I also became more amiable with some of the staff members, because I welcomed their participation and consultation and I was willing to listen to different ideas and views. In the future I will make sure to engage and motivate my co-workers as well as actively listen to them as a result of what I have learned.

The next assessment of the LPI gave the overall comparison of my self-assessment with that of my observers and several thousands of other people who have taken the LPI (Kouzes & Posner, 2008). Scores can range from 0-100, 0-29 indicate low leadership ability, 30-69 represent moderate leadership ability, and anything between 70-100 show high levels of leadership ability. The LPI scores are presented in a percentile

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ranking. I assessed myself high in one area and that was "model the way." I assessed myself moderate in "inspire a shared vision," "challenge the process," "encourage the heart," and "enable others to act." The data I presented earlier also reflect a moderate level of leadership in the percentile ranking. My main concern was how the student-athletes assessed my leadership because my study was focused on them. They assessed me high in my leadership and this was also reflected in the data. Figure 9.1 illustrates the comparisons of the scores.
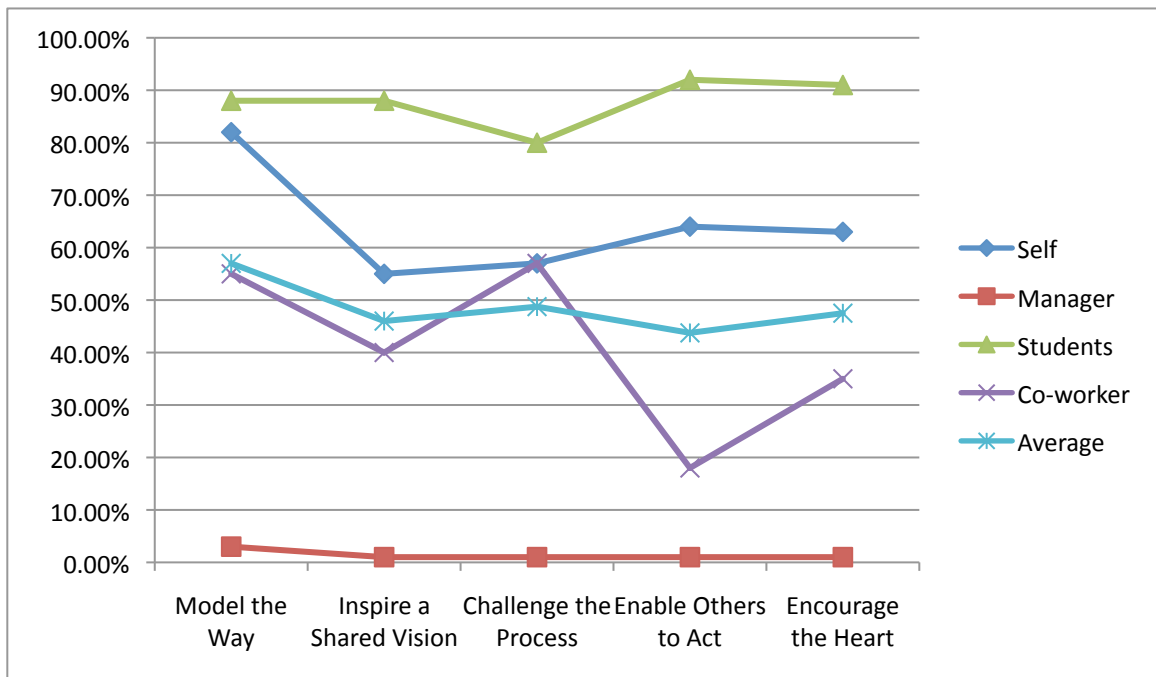
Figure 9.1

LPI Percentile Ranking

Through the LPI assessment I have been able to reflect on my leadership and how it has affected the organization in which I worked and conducted my research. Bolman and Deal (2000) state, that "culture and core values will be increasingly recognized as the

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vital social glue that infuses an organization with passion and purpose" (p. 185). Blanchard and Shula (2001) also confirm this in their statement, "what makes a winner is that when something happens, that person's belief system brings forth attitudes that can take good events and make them better; likewise it transforms bad events into opportunities to learn" (p. 27). The assessment provided me with information to assist in improving my leadership and established where I was already successful. I believe the LPI was very instrumental in providing me valuable feedback and assessment for my leadership, gave me specific areas in which I need to improve, and provided me information on my current strengths as a leader.

Through the use of the LPI, I learned what I need to improve upon to be a more effective leader. One of the most important things I learned is to make sure I include the other people I work with in the journey. This requires communicating the vision to them, listening and trying their ideas, providing support and encouragement along the way, and acknowledging their contributions regardless how big or small they may be.

I appreciated the candor my supervisor, co-workers, and students used to assess my leadership through the LPI. Their honest assessment of my leadership provided valuable feedback for me to evaluate my leadership and areas in which I need to improve. Through this action research project, I learned not to wait for feedback from others on how I may be functioning as a leader, because they may not give it. Therefore, I must initiate the question, acknowledge the importance of the feedback, and use what I have learned.

I am changing the way I lead through my strength as a servant leader (Greenleaf, 1976). I used to struggle with having a title to be a leader and I learned that I do not need

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a title to lead, and that leading through servant leadership provides me with a sense of self-worth and satisfaction in my leadership. I believe I am a stronger leader when I am serving others and the relationships I have created through being a servant leader are what make me an effective leader. Lastly, if I want to develop leadership, I have to focus on reciprocity, the shared responsibility and value of sharing knowledge among the people with whom I work. I have learned through creating change and knowledge sharing that as a leader, I have an obligation to remove obstacles to sharing, create strategies for sharing, and reward those who do share (Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2007).

Leadership Research Questions

My first leadership research question asked, "How will my leadership affect the female student-athletes with whom I work?" As I stated in Chapter II, I wanted to work with the female student-athletes in my study through my leadership by focusing on valuing and inspiring the student-athletes. I also wanted to focus on their wants and needs, as is consistent with transformational leadership (Yusof & Shah, 2008). During the workshops, focus groups, and panel presentation, I attended to the female student-athletes and tried to give them as much information as possible for them to make an informed decision about pursuing careers in college athletics. I tried to do this by being approachable, having topical and new information, and by being motivational.

The workshop evaluation questionnaires that the female student-athletes completed asked them to rate me on the following categories, which directly relate to my ability to be a transformational leader (Bass, 1985; Rieke et al., 2008). Table 9.7 shows the averages of the results of the particular questions posed on the evaluation questionnaire that directly relate to my leadership

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Table 9.7

Workshop Evaluation Questions

Workshop Evaluation Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The facilitator was approachable	80	20	0	0	0
The facilitator was knowledgeable about the topic	93.3	6.7	0	0	0
The facilitator presented me with new information	86.7	13.3	0	0	0
The facilitator motivated me to want to pursue a career in college athletics	53.3	40	6.7	0	0
I am interested in working in college athletics	53.3	40	6.7	0	0

I was successful in answering my leadership question in how my leadership affected the female student-athletes. I wrote in my journal on April 29, 2011,

> My research project is complete but I feel that I only have begun. The female student-athletes have been coming to me for advice and some of them have even referred their friends to talk to me. As I am not longer at my research location and not in my former position I still feel I can be a resource for them. I now know I don't need a title to be a leader and can lead by helping the student-athletes. I feel I have been able to provide them with useful information that will let them make an informed decision about working in college athletics. I also feel like I have been a positive influence on them during their college athletic career which in turn I hope makes their college athletic career a positive experience.

I believe I was able to gain the student-athletes' trust by being honest and approachable. I was able to get the student-athletes' respect by attempting to be fair in my decisions and truthful when giving assessment and advice. By listening to the student-athletes and taking into account any suggestions they might have had, I established some

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form of credibility with the student-athletes. The focus group that I conducted after the workshop also reflected that I was successful in leading the female student-athletes in the workshop. A student-athlete commented, "If it was not for your interest in me attending this workshop I would not have gained an interest to possibly work in college athletics." Another student-athlete stated,

> I would never have attended a workshop like this because I did not realize that marketing was a job in college athletics and through you asking me to come and telling me there are marketing jobs in college athletics made me interested in looking at college athletics as a career choice.

One of the last questions in the focus group asked the student-athletes who participated for words to describe how I interact with student-athletes. The words the student-athletes replied with are: advice, support, perspective, charismatic, passionate, compassionate, positive, helpful, committed, outgoing, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and trusting. These words have all been used in describing transformational, feminist, and servant leaders (Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Greenleaf, 1976; Klenke, 1996; Rieke et al., 2008). Although I do not believe the student-athletes would use negative words to describe me, as I was asking the questions, I do believe they were honest in their opinion of me, and my leadership. These descriptive words suggest to me, as the researcher, that I was successful in sharing knowledge with the female students athletes in regards to working in college athletics. The words used to describe me also showed that I am positive and passionate when leading the student-athletes, and I believe this is especially important, because I am trying to be a role model to them. I wrote in my journal after the last workshop,

> [that I felt] although I only had 15 student-athletes attend the workshops and 10 attend the panel I still felt I was successful in sharing knowledge with the student-athletes and generating interest in working in college athletics. I also felt that I

created some awareness of the importance of sharing knowledge about working in college athletics with them women who attended the panel because many of them commented after the panel was over that they felt like they had a voice by sharing their information and making connection with some of the student-athletes.

My second research question that was about my leadership was "How will my leadership change and grow through this action research project?" Change and grow are the two key words in this question. Even though I wrote that I was transformational in my espoused leadership chapter, I believe it was something that I aspired to rather than what I was. In the beginning of my research project, I struggled with being a transformational leader and I caught myself behaving in a more transactional way (Burns, 2004). I wrote in my journal,

> Today I had a difficult situation with a coach, he argued with me about a [NCAA] rule and throughout the discussion I wanted to just tell him "just do what I say!" however I did not want to be a transactional leader in this situation so I listened to him and after a very long discussion I was able to reason with him why the rule was important and that we had to follow it.

As I mentioned before, I do not want to be a transactional leader, because I do not believe that I will be able to be successful as a leader by being a transactional leader, and in my past experiences I did not like being led by a transactional leader (Burns, 2004). Therefore, I worked very hard to make sure my leadership behaviors were transformational so I could be proud of the leader I was. I did this by providing a vision and encouraging and supporting others (Bass, 1995; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). I found that I had to make sure I was very conscious of the words I used, the choices I made, and the actions that I took. I hoped in keeping this practice up it would become second nature for me in the future. In the situation with the coach, I was able to reason with him by listening to him and letting him voice his opinion. Once he felt heard and became more compliant, I then discussed with him the merits of the rule. I want to be a

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transformational leader because it is the best way to gain consensus and cooperation with the people with whom I work, and it creates a more productive and positive work environment (Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Yusof & Shah, 2008).

I also found that I have a more servant leadership base than I thought I did (Greenleaf, 1976). I enjoy serving others and helping them achieve success. I believe that if I rely on this leadership style the most, I will have more success as a leader. I wrote in my journal,

> I like supporting other people who are also leaders. I am learning just because I am not the head of the organization does not mean I am not a leader. I think my supervisors appreciate that when I help them with something I am contributing more to the department then when I try to initiate leadership on a task.

I am comfortable in the role of a servant leader and I do not have to consciously think about how I am leading when I let myself be in the servant leader role. I prefer to help others to achieve success. I know when I am considerate of their needs and respond with assistance and empathy, I build relationship with them. The positive relationships that I build are critical to my success as a leader (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). This was shown in my action research project. In my role as an assistant athletic director and compliance officer at X University, I helped the coaches and athletic department staff whenever they needed it, therefore when I asked for help in my research project, a majority of them were willing to assist me because I had helped them in the past, which had built good relationship with them (De Pree, 2004). For example, I have assisted the assistant athletic trainer with team rosters and other paperwork and had listened to her and used some of her ideas, so when I asked for help in recruiting student-athletes for the workshops she was very willing to assist me in recruiting students. She shared information about my action research project to students in her classes while providing treatment to the student-

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athletes and through helping me disseminate flyers. She also participated in the interview process and wanted to be a part of the panel presentation, but was unable to due to a scheduling conflict. As a servant leader, I am able to give my values a voice and gain commitment from the people with whom I work. As a leader, it is my natural inclination to serve first. I believe the choice to serve inspires me to lead (Shugart, 1997; Spears, 2004).

As a servant leader, I have the motivation to actively listen to the people I work with and support them in their work. I have always had a great amount of empathy for people, and as a servant leader I try to understand and empathize with others (Spears, 1998, 2004.) Also, as a servant leader, I try to help people solve their problems, but in doing so I also teach them ways to solve future problems which will empower them. I wrote in my journal,

> I have found that I am someone the student-athletes are coming to for career advice and not just working in college athletics. Many student-athletes are asking me to review their resume or ask me guidance for help choosing a major. I know this is not part of my job description but I like helping the student-athletes and I find that helping them with their career enables them to learn something new about themselves and it gives them hope and motivation to perform better in school.

Two others things I do that are indicative of servant leadership are being aware and having foresight (De Pree, 2004; Greenleaf, 1976; Spears, 2004). I believe these two traits complement each other. By being aware, I am able to see others' situations from their points of view and from the balcony. I commented in my journal,

> The interviews really opened my eyes to some of the coaches' points of view on working in college athletics. I know it is important to include their thoughts and ideas when I present to the student-athletes. Everyone has had a different experience and it is important to include them. I don't think people see the big picture for women working in athletics and how the current female student-athletes see what it is like for women to work in college athletics.

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It is important to be able to step back and see the situation from all sides (Heifetz &

Linsky, 2002; Spears, 1998). I am a planner, and having foresight lets me learn from the

past to achieve a better understanding of what is currently going on and what can happen.

It allows me to be ready for what can happen and the consequences of the future (Spears,

2004). I have a commitment to the people with whom I work. As a servant leader, I

believe that people should be valued beyond their contributions as workers (Spears,

2004). Therefore, I try to nurture the personal, professional, and emotional growth of my

co-workers and student-athletes.

As a former student-athlete, I have had the opportunity to develop and maintain

stereotypically masculine traits such as competitiveness, independence, and assertiveness;

conversely, I sometimes believe that when I use those traits as a woman leader in

athletics, I encounter conflict from some of my co-workers in whether I should be

displaying those traits (DeBoer, 2004). Research from DeBoer (2004) and Desertrain and

Weiss (1998) have shown that people can find a contradiction exists between societal

expectations and their own personal values or expectations. Since college athletics has

historically been more of a masculine domain, a female leader might perceive a conflict

between her own personal leadership role and what is expected by the standard set by the

athletic society. However, when I used my feminist leadership style I was also able to see

results, but my style has sometimes been questioned (Rosener, 1990). I wrote in my

journal on October 16, 2010,

> Today I was questioned about my interactions with the student-athletes; I was told
> by a male co-worker that they thought I was 'mothering' them too much.
> However, I believe I was demonstrating my feminist leader by encouraging the
> student-athletes by supporting them and providing them useful information.

There have been many instances in which I have tried to include the student-athletes' voices in athletic department decisions, which is a trait of feminist leadership (DeBoer, 2004; Rosener, 1990). I wrote in my journal,

> I spoke up today in an administrative staff meeting about an issue we were discussing. I really felt that the student-athletes should have some kind of input prior to us making the decision. Some of the other administrators did not agree with me and thought that my opinion of including the student-athletes input was not appropriate. We moved on from the topic and even though I tried to give the student-athletes a voice I still felt upset that I did not succeed in doing it.

In the area of my feminist leadership, I have been in a dilemma, because on one hand if I display my feminist leadership, I worry that I have been perceived as too soft, and then on the other hand, when I display a more masculine type of leadership, I may have been perceived as bossy and demanding (DeBoer, 2004). I have found that different situations may require different styles of leadership and in dealing with the student-athletes I have found that my feminist style of leadership works the best in getting results out of the student-athletes. The student-athletes have indicated to me through the focus groups that they prefer when I am aware of their situations, include them on decisions, and communicate with them, which are indicative of a feminist leader (Rosener, 1990). A student-athlete stated this in the focus groups, and several other student-athletes also confirmed the statement when it was given. She said,

> I like that you listen to us and try to use our ideas, I attended the first focus group and the workshop and panel presentation and you used the ideas we gave you in the first focus group in the workshop.

It is important as a leader to understand which style works best with which people so I am able to recognize and able to succeed with them as a leader (De Pree, 2004).

As a leader, I have the capabilities to create, to care, and to encourage growth in the context of concern for others (Rosener, 1990). As a female leader in athletics, I need

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to approach leadership with courage, tolerance, and humor, while addressing personal

and organizational gender typing and self-fulfilling prophecy. One of the lessons I have

learned through this leadership process is to know my strengths and values and to use

them. One of my strengths is my feminist leadership capabilities, and I have gained

courage to stand up for my leadership through knowing who I am and my leadership

abilities. I have found that communication breakdowns cause people to become frustrated

and feel unappreciated. The skill of feminist leadership lies in liberating and enabling

people through open, honest, effective, and clear communication (De Pree, 2004). As a

feminist leader I have promoted good communication by creating open dialogue with the

student-athletes and a majority of the coaches and athletic staff with whom I work

(DeBoer, 2004). This open dialogue enabled me to reach out to the student-athletes and

encourage them to attend the workshops, because I was available to many of them when

they voiced their interest in possibly working in college athletics to me.

As I have adjusted to change myself throughout the research project, I tried not to

focus on changing of the environment, but rather to focus on how people reacted to my

leadership. All people are different and their responses to me are important to my success

as a leader. I had to be cognizant of the staff's, coaches' and student-athletes' reactions to

situations and to my leadership. I had to build relationships with them through trust and

mutual respect, and once I had a relationship built, I had to maintain it by observing

everyone and also participating with them (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). I commented in my

journal,

> It has been difficult leaving [X] University but the relationships I have built with
> the student-athletes and many of the coaches have helped me spread the word out
> about the workshops. I have had several coaches e-mail me names of student-
> athletes I should directly contact about the workshops when they are conducted. If

it were not for the coaches and these student-athletes I think my project might collapse.

I know that as a feminist leader I built relationships and I had a supportive organization that had a foundation of respect, admiration for others within, and a motivation for excellence (Rosener, 1990). I believe this is why I was able to successfully accomplish my action research project and build knowledge sharing opportunities for the female student-athletes about careers in college athletics.

Leadership is the talent and skill of influencing others through credibility, capability, and commitment (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). I was a credible leader because people believed in me, "I was passionate and enthusiastic about the work I was doing and I had the knowledge and skill to lead" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 37). I have come to realize that I am a capable leader through my sense of self-worth and through my talent, skill, competence, and confidence in which I empower others. I was able to be a competent leader throughout my research project because I had a vision, an intense focus on the outcomes and results, a realistic strategy to carry out the vision, and the ability to communicate the vision and rally the support of the student-athletes and athletic department members (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

Defining Resistance

Many of the coaches and athletic staff members were happy to help, but a few coaches and athletic staff members were resistant to participating. I approached them several times, but they either disregarded my advances, or told me they felt they had nothing to contribute. I also found resistance even when I interviewed some of the coaches and athletic staff members when they stated in their interview that they did not

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discuss working in college athletics with their student-athletes, and also felt that it was not their responsibility.

I struggled with the resistance in my change initiative within my action research project. I had to discover how I could break down resistance from the people with whom I worked. I also had to define the resistance. Why was the athletic staff not encouraging female student-athletes to pursue careers in college athletics? Was it because they felt it was not part of their job or were they unaware of the importance of sharing knowledge about working in college athletics with female student-athletes? As some of my co-workers discovered the topic of my research study, many of them either became defensive or skeptical toward what I was researching. They did not feel that there was a decline in women working in college athletics, or a lack of interest among female student-athletes to pursue careers in college athletics. I wrote in my journal,

> I asked a male coach today to participate in my research study by letting me interview him. He asked me what I was researching and I told him the lack of women working in college athletics and he said there are plenty of women working in college athletics, just look at our athletic department. When I responded that our athletic department was atypical he said he was too busy and to ask another coach.

The majority of my co-workers thought that it was not their responsibility to talk to their female student-athletes about future careers, much less working in college athletics. A comment from the interviews supports this, with one person saying, "I don't think it is my responsibility to talk with my student-athletes about their careers, my job is to coach them and the career and academic center's job is to help them prepare for a career." Another female athletic staff member said, "I don't think we do a good enough job talking to the female student-athletes about working in college athletics. Someone encouraged me and if we don't encourage them, then who is?" However, some coaches

and athletics staff did talk to their student-athletes about their majors, but not necessarily what they were going to do as a career once they completed college and exhausted their athletic eligibility. When I first began this project, I was concerned about how I was going to change their perceptions and convince them that one strategy to increase females working in college athletics would be to share knowledge with them about working in college athletics (Fullan, 2001).

I had to learn from the people who were resisting if I wanted to be an effective leader and create change. The interviews gave me an opportunity to learn from the coaches and athletic staff. Their candid responses provided me with insight, which gave me different perspectives and new ideas, especially from the resisters (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). As a leader, I had to build good relationships with the resisters and respect their differences (Argyris, 2000; Kegan & Lahey, 2001). As I now look back at the people who resisted my project, I realize I did not have a strong relationship with them (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Solid relationships, built on trust and credibility, are what leaders need to have in order to get support from the people they are leading (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

The questions that I asked through the interviews sparked discussions that enabled me to show my passion and share my thoughts on why I thought knowledge sharing was critical to encouraging interest among the female student-athletes about working in college athletics. I believe these discussions created awareness about the core issue of my research project and tore away some layers of resistance as the interviewees embraced the knowledge I had shared with them.

Resistance to my project sometimes came in the form of complaining, indifference, or disagreement. According to Kegan and Lahey (2001), people complain,

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show indifference, or disagree for many reasons, and the challenge is to change the complaint, indifference, or disagreement to commitment. The idea is to use the power of the complaint, indifference, or disagreement as an opportunity for expressing personal commitment. The language of commitment does not dismiss the complaint, indifference, or disagreement, but rather goes with the complaint, indifference, or disagreement, using the complaint, indifference, or disagreement as a mode of action and making it a commitment (Kegan & Lahey, 2001). I tried to do this with the athletic staff and student-athletes when they came to see me. If they complained or disagreed about something, it showed me that they cared, and if they cared, they were usually more motivated to make a change. This is when I tried to build a relationship with them by being a servant leader. How could I help them, how could I serve them? As a servant leader, I used this to motivate them in initiating an action to make a change (Greenleaf, 1976). I found through being passionate about my research topic and including everyone in the process, the people from whom I thought I would encounter the most resistance became my biggest supporters and encouraged their female student-athletes to attend the workshops. Two of these people even participated in the panel presentation. I also built a relationship with these people that helped me in establishing credibility and trust with them, which is important to creating change (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

I realized through this study that I did not need a title to be a leader; by building relationships and serving others I am a leader (De Pree, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). There are leadership opportunities everywhere, and if I wanted to be a leader I had to take an initiative to act. I wanted to make change in my organization, and through my research and persistence, I was able to create a change and make something happen (Kouzes &

Posner, 2007). My data show that I created interest in pursuing careers in college athletics with the student-athletes who attended the workshop. A student-athlete stated in the focus groups after the workshops, "You are committed to helping student-athletes gain interest in working in college athletics and helping them prepare to work in college athletics" and another student-athlete stated in the focus group, "You are helping the profession by creating interest and opportunity for female student-athletes to obtain careers in college athletics."

As I mentioned before, I did not need a title to be a leader and to create change. Eckel et al. (1999) state, "some effective leaders often do not have positional titles or formal authority, and they may have few 'subordinates' and little influence over areas of the institution beyond their own but they can lead by persuasion" (p. 8). I was able to lead through sharing knowledge with the coaches, athletic staff members, and student-athletes (Fullan, 2001). I was authentic in my approach, which built trust and persuaded them to believe in my vision and support it (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). I wrote in my journal,

> I believe that I built stronger relationships with some of the coaches and athletic staff by interviewing them. The information they shared with me was personal and sometimes intimate and created a bond between us that had not been there before.

I have come to learn that as a leader I can plan all I want, but I must be prepared for the unexpected (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). I need to be sensitive to the specific situation and environment that I am in. Leading in athletics is complex and ever-changing, with many fires and bumps along the way. As I espouse transformational leadership, I have found that my leadership performance is visible when I broaden and elevate the interest of the followers, when I generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when I am able to have the followers transcend

their own self-interests for the good of the group (Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Yusof & Shah, 2008). I noted in my journal the day after the workshop when I was sitting back to reflect and review the evaluation questionnaire results,

> I created interest among the student-athletes to think about pursuing careers in college athletics. I was also able to get some of the coaches to realize that there is a lack of interest among the current student-athletes and it is our responsibility to create that interest.

I have also found that when I am more flexible and provide assistance to people with whom work, I provide effective leadership and gain the support of my followers. Building relationships with the people I work with is crucial to gaining credibility and support from them (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). If I do not have relationships built on trust and collaboration, then I will not be successful as a leader. I discovered this when I had resistance from some of the people I worked with when I asked them to participate in my research.

I also espouse servant leadership, and through this style of leadership I find myself helping others to assist them in being successful, which in turn, will make me successful (Greenleaf, 1976; Spears, 1998). I noted in my journal on November 3, 2010,

> I want to help everyone be successful, but I need to find out what they need to be successful. I do not always have the answers or know what to do to help someone. When this happens I feel like I have let the person down. Sometimes I cannot figure out what the person needs to be successful and I get frustrated with myself because I lack the information or aptitude to help them.

I am learning that I will not be able to help everyone, and sometimes by forcing some kind of assistance on them, I make the situation worse. I have been learning to gauge the situation and do what I can.

In serving the student-athletes and the people with whom I work, I can empower them by giving them confidence to achieve their goals and the group's goals (Spears,

1998). As a servant and a feminist leader I try to create a sense of community and builds relationships (Greenleaf, 1976; Klenke, 1996; Rosener, 1990; Spears, 1998). I include other people's opinions and ideas. I try to give everyone a voice and include them in the process (Klenke, 1996; Rosener, 1990; Spears, 1998). I was able to do this through interviewing the coaches and athletic staff; their voices helped create the workshops, which enabled me to share information about working in college athletics with the female student-athletes.

I am also motivated to lead by a sense of fairness and equality. As a feminist leader I want everyone to have equal opportunities to contribute and be a part of the process (Barton, 2006; Bond & Mulvey, 2000). In my research project I tried to create a sense of community and involvement by including the coaches and athletic staff in my project. I shared with them my vision and what I wanted to try to do through my project. I asked the coaches and athletic staff members if they wanted to participate in parts of my project. I felt that their participation would benefit the project and contribute to the overall success and experiences of the female student-athletes. Two people from X University were able to participate in the panel, although five wanted to. However, due to scheduling conflicts, three were unable to participate; I believe that their desire to participate showed that I was able to build relationships with them and to also make them feel some sort of duty to be a part of the knowledge sharing process with the female student-athletes.

Summary

According to Fullan (2001), knowledge is power. Knowledge sharing is a cultural value that transforms people into change agents and enables organizations to flourish and

grow. I became a change agent as a part of this research project by being able to share knowledge. Fullan (2001) states that leading in a culture of change does not mean moving transformed individuals into an unchanged environment, but rather it means effective leaders work on changing the context of the environment by arranging the surroundings to be advantageous to learning and sharing knowledge. Fullan also discusses Von Krogh's principle of knowledge sharing that states:

> Knowledge enabling includes facilitating relationships and conversations as well as sharing local knowledge across an organization or beyond geographic and cultural borders. It also relies on a new sense of emotional knowledge and care in the organization, one that highlights how people treat other and encourages creativity. (Fullan, 2001, p. 81)

Knowledge sharing must include building relationships and treating each other's ideas and innovations with respect (Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). When trust is built among people in an organization, creative ideas are able to flow within the organization and new policies and systems may be generated from this environment (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Through the interviews I was able to share knowledge and create a change in attitude among some of the coaches and athletic staff regarding the positive effects of sharing information with their student-athletes about working in college athletics. It is a leader's responsibility when change occurs to not just lead the change, but to assist in facilitating change. As the leader, I used the coaches' and athletics staff's experiences and voice to create the workshops, which helped bring about a change in perception and interest among the female student-athletes (Fullan, 1982, 1999, 2001).

I know that not all the coaches and athletic staff agreed with my research and my plans to create the workshop, however, Fullan (2001) states that "there will be disturbances, and this means that there will be differences of opinion that must be

reconciled" (p. 118). I tried to be positive with the people who resisted and I expressed that even though I did not share their opinions, I still valued their opinions. Effective leadership means guiding people through differences and also letting differences surface (Fullan, 2001). It is important for differences to surface because change can be scary, threatening, and dangerous, and when differences are out in the open, partnerships can occur (Fullan, 2001). Heifetz and Linsky (2000) state that "Leadership, requires not only reverence for the pains of change and recognition of the manifestations of danger, but also the skills to respond" (p. 48). I believe I am still learning the skills to guide people through the change process, and that these skills are learned on a continuum, and that I will always be adjusting and learning to deal with change.

Obtaining my doctorate has not been a lifelong dream of mine; it only recently became very important to me. The knowledge I have gained from the experience of the program was the most significant aspect of obtaining my doctorate. One of my main reasons for obtaining my doctorate is to be competitive in my goal to be an athletic director. I know as a woman in athletics I always have to be a step ahead of the men to earn the position. By obtaining my doctorate, I will become a more valuable commodity as a candidate for an athletic director's position. I also know that I do not need a title to be a leader. My actions, how I treat people, and how I make them feel will make me a leader, not the credentials on a business card.

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Collegiate Athletics Career Interview

First, thank you for meeting with me today. Is it okay to tape record this interview so I do not miss anything? You signed the consent form for the interview and the information that you share with me today will be kept confidential; however, I want to remind you that your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. This research study is being conducted to gain insight regarding undergraduate female student-athletes at X University decision to enter or not enter collegiate athletics as a career choice. The study will examine the current female student-athlete's perceptions of the different career roles and responsibilities in collegiate athletics. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes.

(Interview questions will be asked aloud, will be audio-taped, and interviewer will take additional notes).

1. Please tell me about yourself? Where you grew up? Where you live now?

2. Where did you attend college and graduate school and what was your major?

3. What sports did you play in high school and college?

4. How was your experience as a collegiate student-athlete?

5. When you were a child what did you aspire to be as a career?

6. What made you choose to go into working in collegiate athletics?

7. What are some obstacles or barriers you think women face in obtaining a job in collegiate athletics?

8. How do you think your female student-athletes feel about coaching or working in collegiate athletics as a profession?

9. Do you talk with your female student-athletes about their future career choice?

Why or Why not do you do it?

10. Do you encourage female student-athletes to choose a career in collegiate athletics?

11. Do you feel female student-athletes are taking advantage of opportunities presented to them to work in collegiate athletics?

12. How much do you think your student-athletes know about Title IX?

13. Did you have mentors? How did they help you?

14. What networking or professional organizations do you belong to? How do you think they have helped you?

Thank you for talking with me today. An overview of this interview will be provided to you. This overview will highlight important points made during the interview. Please review it to be sure it reflects what you intended to say. And remember, you are always free to contact me if there are any areas that you would like to elaborate.

Patty Raube Keller

Education Leadership Doctoral Student

raube@x.edu (c) 609.238.8845

Focus Group Questions

TITLE OF STUDY

How can workshops for female student athletes increase

their interest and obtainment of careers in collegiate athletics?

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

First, thank you for meeting with me today. Is it okay to tape record this focus group so I do not miss anything? You signed the consent form for the interview and the information that you share with me today will be kept confidential; however, I want to remind you that your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. This research study is being conducted to gain insight regarding undergraduate female student-athletes at X University decision to enter or not enter collegiate athletics as a career choice. This part of the study will examine the current female student-athlete's perceptions of the different career roles and responsibilities in collegiate athletics. This focus group will take approximately one hour.

 (The focus group questions will be asked aloud, will be audio-taped and or videotaped, and interviewer and an assistant will take additional notes).

1. Please state you name, major, sport

2. When you were a child what did you aspire to be as a career?

3. Describe your experience as a collegiate student-athlete?

4. There are many avenues of becoming a college coach, can you please describe one of the ways you can become a coach?

5. What is your knowledge of other positions in collegiate athletics besides coaching?

6. How do you feel about working in collegiate athletics?

7. Why or why not would you choose collegiate athletics as a career choice?

8. Has anyone from your athletic background mentored you?

9. Do you have an understanding of Title IX?

10. How has Title IX affected you as a female student-athlete and how might it effect you in the future?

Thank you for talking with me today. A transcript of this focus group will be provided to you. This transcript will document the information shared in the focus group. Please review it for accuracy to be sure it reflects what you intended to say. You are always free to contact me if there are any areas that you would like to edit or provide more details.

Patty Raube Keller

X University Education Leadership Doctoral Student

raube@x.edu (c) 609.238.8845

Letter of Informed Consent: Coach/Athlete Staff Interview

Title of Project: How can workshops for female student athletes increase

their interest and obtainment of careers in collegiate athletics?

Investigators: Patty Raube Keller

Purpose: The purpose of my study is to establish networking and mentoring for female college students who are interested in working in collegiate athletics as a career. It is extremely difficult for females to attain positions in collegiate athletics and by conducting this part of the study I will be able to discover by narrative inquiry how current female coaches and athletic department staff were motivated to choose collegiate athletics as a career choice, how they attained their position and how they also keep their position. This interview will last approximately 30 minutes.

Description and Procedures:

During this project, Patty Raube Keller will be interviewing you to find out your perception of females working in collegiate athletics. The interview will be audiotaped _____ for data analysis purposes only.

<div style="text-align:center">Participant Initials</div>

Risks: Your data will be kept secure and confidential. You can withdraw from this study at any time. There are minimal risks involved with your participation. No identifiable information – name, identification number, etc. – will be used when describing the results, in order to alleviate risks.

Benefits: The information you provide will contribute to the advancement of knowledge and to support the attainment of females achieving a position in collegiate athletics.

Extent of Confidentiality: All of your responses, writings, or other materials will be kept confidential. This research data will also be developed into a dissertation, published articles and conference presentations. Please note all identifying responses will be masked to keep your identity confidential.

Freedom to Withdraw: Participation is completely voluntary. Should you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Your signature below gives us permission to use the data collected from your interview during the project. (You will also receive a copy of this form for your records). Any further questions about this study can be answered by the principal investigator, Patty Raube Keller at raube@x.edu, the faculty sponsor, Dr. Joanne Damminger at Damminger@x.edu or the director of the X University's Institutional Review Board, Dr. Gautam Pillay, Ph.D at pillay@x.edu. Thank you.

Participant Name_____ Date_____

Participant Signature_____

Researcher Name_____Date_____

Researcher Signature_____

Appendix D

Letter of Informed Consent: Female Student-Athlete Focus Group

Title of Project: How can workshops for female student athletes increase

their interest and obtainment of careers in collegiate athletics?

Investigators: Patty Raube Keller

Purpose: This research study is being conducted to gain insight regarding undergraduate female student-athletes at X University decision to enter or not enter collegiate athletics as a career choice. The part of the study will examine the current female student-athlete's perceptions of the different career roles and responsibilities in collegiate athletics. This focus group will last approximately one hour.

Description and Procedures:

During this project, Patty Raube Keller will be interviewing you to find out your perception of females working in collegiate athletics. The focus group will be audio taped or videotaped _____ for data analysis purposes only.

Participant Initials

Risks: Your data will be kept secure and confidential. You can withdraw from this study at any time. There are minimal risks involved with your participation. No identifiable information – name, identification number, etc. – will be used when describing the results, in order to alleviate risks.

Benefits: The information you provide will contribute to the advancement of knowledge and to support the attainment of females achieving a position in collegiate athletics.

Extent of Confidentiality: All of your responses, writings, or other materials will be kept confidential. This research data will also be developed into a dissertation, published articles and conference presentations. Please note all identifying responses will be masked to keep your identity confidential.

Freedom to Withdraw: Participation is completely voluntary. Should you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Your signature below gives us permission to use the data collected from your focus group during the project. (You will also receive a copy of this form for your records). Any further questions about this study can be answered by the principal investigator, Patty Raube Keller at raube@x.edu, the faculty sponsor, Dr. Joanne Damminger at Damminger@x.edu or X University's Director of the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Gautam Pillay, Ph.D at pillay@x.edu. Thank you.

Participant Name_____ Date_____

Participant Signature_____

Researcher Name_____Date_____

Researcher Signature_____

Appendix E

Workshop Background Evaluation Questionnaire

*This research study is being conducted to gain insight regarding undergraduate female student-athletes decision to enter or not enter collegiate athletics as a career choice. The study will examine the current female student-athlete's perceptions of the different career roles and responsibilities in collegiate athletics. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. While your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are not required to answer any of the questions herein, your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and are greatly appreciated. **If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly confidential and no personally identifiable information is being requested. Your completion of this survey constitutes informed consent and your willingness to participate.** If you have any questions please contact me at raube@x.edu.*

Please place an "X" in the appropriate boxes

Freshman   Sophomore   Junior   Senior   My Head Coach is a:
Male   Female

Major:

Art   Biology   Business   Communication   Education   Engineering   Exploratory Studies   Health & Exercise Science

Math   Music   Political Science   Psychology   Radio/TV/Film   Sociology   Other
_____

Sport:

Cross Country   Basketball   Field Hockey   Soccer   Softball   Swimming   Track & Field   Volleyball   none

Please place an "X" in the box that goes best with each statement.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My coach discusses my future career with me.					
My academic advisor discusses my future career with me.					
My parents or guardians discuss my future career with me.					
I am interested in working in college athletics.					

I know what Title IX is.					
I feel my head coach has encouraged me to pursue a career in college athletics.					
I want to attend graduate school.					
I feel I am educated about the process of obtaining a job in college athletics.					
As a female I feel I am welcome to work in college athletics.					
My student-athlete experience has been a positive experience.					
I feel that I have a strong resume.					
I have had the opportunity to network with other college athletics professionals.					

Appendix F

Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire

This research study is being conducted to gain insight regarding undergraduate female student-athletes decision to enter or not enter collegiate athletics as a career choice. The study will examine the current female student-athlete's perceptions of the different career roles and responsibilities in collegiate athletics. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. While your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are not required to answer any of the questions herein, your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and are greatly appreciated. **If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly confidential and no personally identifiable information is being requested. Your completion of this survey constitutes informed consent and your willingness to participate.** *If you have any questions please contact me at* raube@x.edu*.*

Please place an "X" in the appropriate boxes

Freshman   Sophomore   Junior   Senior   My Head Coach is a:
Male   Female

Major:

Art   Biology   Business   Communication   Education   Engineering   Exploratory
Studies   Health & Exercise Science

Math   Music   Political Science   Psychology   Radio/TV/Film   Sociology   Other
_____

Sport:

Cross Country   Basketball   Field Hockey   Soccer   Softball   Swimming   Track &
Field   Volleyball   none

Please place an "X" in the box that goes best with each statement.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The facilitator was approachable.					
The facilitator was knowledgeable about the topic.					
The facilitator presented me with new information.					
The facilitator motivated me to want to pursue a career in college athletics.					
I am excited to attend the workshops on a career in college athletics.					

I want to attend graduate school.					
I have had the opportunity to network with other college athletics professionals.					
I feel I am educated about the process of obtaining a job in college athletics.					
As a female I feel I am welcome to work in college athletics.					
My student-athlete experience has been a positive experience.					
I feel that I have a strong resume.					
I know what Title IX is.					
I am interested in working in college athletics.					

Appendix G

Flyer for Workshop

Are you interested in working in sports?

Then working in college athletics might be the career choice for you! So if you want to be coach or learn about the positions in college athletics besides coaching, come to the workshop for women interested in working in college athletics.

There are three different dates for the workshop:

All the workshops will be in the Esby Gym Classroom
Sunday April 17th 7pm
Monday April 18th 7pm
Monday April 25th 5pm

There will also be a panel presentation of different women working in college athletics in the area. They will tell you their personal story of how they obtained their position, what their job is like and how you can obtain a similar position. This will be a great networking event to meet other women who work in college athletics.

Some of the members of the panel are:

Genevieve Haney, Villanova University: Coordinator of New Media & Marketing
Julie Greger, University of Pennsylvania: Director of Basketball Operations
Marchelle Coleman, Camden County College: Head Women's Basketball Coach
Jen Sekellick, Temple University: Assistant Director of Compliance & Student Services
Erin Barney, Rutgers University, Camden: Associate Athletic Director/SWA
Karyn Pinter, Kean University: Director of Student Athlete Services/SWA
Penny Kempf, Rowan University: Head Field Hockey Coach/Assistant Athletic Director
Joy Solomen, Rowan University: Director of Athletics

The panel presentation will be on Monday April 25th at 7pm in the Esby Gym Classroom

Please contact Patty Raube Keller if you are interested in coming to the workshops.

raube@x.edu or 609-238-8845

Workshop Focus Group Questions

TITLE OF STUDY

How can workshops for female student athletes increase

their interest and obtainment of careers in collegiate athletics?

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

First, thank you for meeting with me today. Is it okay to tape record this focus group so I do not miss anything? You signed the consent form for the interview and the information that you share with me today will be kept confidential; however, I want to remind you that your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. This research study is being conducted to gain insight regarding undergraduate female student-athletes at Rowan University decision to enter or not enter collegiate athletics as a career choice. This part of the study will examine the current female student-athlete's perceptions of the different career roles and responsibilities in collegiate athletics. This focus group will take approximately one hour.

(The focus group questions will be asked aloud, will be audio-taped and or videotaped, and interviewer and an assistant will take additional notes).

1. What were you expecting to learn from the workshop?

2. What were your perceptions of working in college athletics prior to the workshop?

3. There are many avenues of becoming a college coach, can you please describe one of the ways you can become a coach?

4. What is your knowledge of other positions in collegiate athletics besides coaching?

5. How do you feel about working in collegiate athletics?

6. Why or why not would you choose collegiate athletics as a career choice?

7. Has anyone from your athletic background mentored you?

8. Do you have an understanding of Title IX?

9. How has Title IX affected you as a female student-athlete and how might it affect you in the future?

10. Please give three words that describe how I interact with student-athletes?

11. Please describe what went well with the workshops and what could be improved?

12. What was the most important part of the workshop to you?

Thank you for talking with me today. A transcript of this focus group will be provided to you. This transcript will document the information shared in the focus group. Please review it for accuracy to be sure it reflects what you intended to say. You are always free to contact me if there are any areas that you would like to edit or provide more details.

Patty Raube Keller

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Appendix I

Letter of Informed Consent: Focus Group after Workshops

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

Female Student-Athlete Focus Group

After workshops

Title of Project: How can workshops for female student athletes increase

their interest and obtainment of careers in collegiate athletics?

Investigators: Patty Raube Keller

Purpose: This research study is being conducted to gain insight regarding undergraduate female student-athletes at X University decision to enter or not enter collegiate athletics as a career choice. The part of the study will examine the current female student-athlete's perceptions of the different career roles and responsibilities in collegiate athletics. This focus group will last approximately one hour.

Description and Procedures:

During this project, Patty Raube Keller will be interviewing you to find out your perception of females working in collegiate athletics. The focus group will be audio taped or videotaped _____ for data analysis purposes only.
Participant Initials

Risks: Your data will be kept secure and confidential. You can withdraw from this study at any time. There are minimal risks involved with your participation. No identifiable information – name, identification number, etc. – will be used when describing the results, in order to alleviate risks.

Benefits: The information you provide will contribute to the advancement of knowledge and to support the attainment of females achieving a position in collegiate athletics.

Extent of Confidentiality: All of your responses, writings, or other materials will be kept confidential. This research data will also be developed into a dissertation, published articles and conference presentations. Please note all identifying responses will be masked to keep your identity confidential.

Freedom to Withdraw: Participation is completely voluntary. Should you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Your signature below gives us permission to use the data collected from your focus group during the project. (You will also receive a copy of this form for your records). Any further questions about this study can be answered by the principal investigator, Patty Raube Keller at raube@X.edu, the faculty sponsor, Dr. MaryBeth Walpole at Walpole@X.edu or X University's Director of the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Gautam Pillay, Ph.D at pillay@X.edu. Thank you.

Participant Name_____ Date_____

Participant Signature_____

Researcher Name_____Date_____

Researcher Signature_____