Perceptions of Deliquency among Male Athletes and Non-Athletes: A Qualitative Investigation

Humphrey Nartey
PERCEPTIONS OF DELINQUENCY AMONG MALE ATHLETES AND NON-ATHLETES: A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION

by

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(Under the Direction of Daniel R. Czech)

ABSTRACT

It is presumed that the involvement in sports helps to deter delinquency, yet athletes who seemingly have it all engage in destructive delinquent lifestyles (Savini, 2008). Many theorists contend that the “jock identity” or “sport hubris” is largely responsible, as people think they will be treated more favorably if they are athletes (Miller et al., 2006). This perception raises the question of whether athletes know and understand the constructs of delinquency. Thus the purpose of this study was to examine male athletes’ and non-athletes’ perceptions of the minor and major substrates of delinquency. A semi-structured interview was used to gather the delinquency perceptions of 16 southeastern collegiate student athletes and non-athletes. Six themes were identified from the data analysis: (1) Fighting and Illegal Activity, (2) Consequences, (3) Personal Relationships, (4) Athletes Have More To Lose, (5) Invincibility, and (6) Negative Impact of the Media. Topics on how to better understand why certain groups engage in delinquent behavior, and the possible treatments that can be implemented to help deter this behavior were discussed from an existential phenomenological perspective.

INDEX WORDS: Delinquency, Minor Delinquency, Major Delinquency, Athletes, Non-athletes
PERCEPTIONS OF DELINQUENCY AMONG MALE ATHLETES AND NON-ATHLETES: AN EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

by

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

A common statement by young athletes is that participating in sports helps to keep them out of trouble. Society tends to agree with this notion in their assessment that athletics can help promote discipline and structure in the lives of adolescents (Savini, 2008). Savini (2008) mentions the following regarding sport:

The claim here is that sports teaches youth participants how to adhere to rules and norms of society. In particular it introduces the concepts of teamwork, enforces levels of sportsmanship and instills qualities and characteristics such as dedication, commitment, perseverance and endurance that can be applied elsewhere in life. (p. 104)

Participation in organized sports can lead to the development of the “jock identity”. This term has become important in the lives of adolescents, is synonymous with popularity, and is many times seen as a status symbol. It is the perception one has of themself, or the perception that others have for that person (Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Sabo, & Farrell, 2006). If they are engaged in sports they know that they may be treated more favorably in the eyes of their peers and possibly seen in a greater light (Miller et al., 2006). This act of peer acceptance is also vital to the development of adolescent identity. Wyatt (2010) explains that peer crowds are reputation based groups and many times the goal is to gain acceptance and power within the larger social hierarchy. In addition, Wyatt (2010) postulates in descending order on the hierarchy ladder, that the high social status groups are the athletes (jocks), the academic group (the brains), the socially rebellious group (rebels), the deviant group (trouble-makers), and the finally the low-status group (loners). From this hierarchy it is easy to see why although many youth
claim they play sports to stay out of trouble, yet they may actually be playing for the perks involved with athletics as it is the most desirable group in the hierarchy.

Wyatt (2010) suggests that rejection from mainstream social groups may deprive rejected youth of key opportunities for positive social interaction with peers. Such youth who lack social skills may therefore learn more maladaptive behaviors with other rejected peers. This lack of positive interaction with peers can lead to negative delinquent behaviors as youth, resulting in school-related problems and anti-social behavior, (Wyatt, 2010) and subsequently stunts the growth and maturity of these youth when they enter adulthood (Kregar, 2007).

Delinquent behavior can be categorized into two substrates of minor delinquency and major delinquency. Minor delinquency is any behavior that contradicts social norms. Major delinquency is classified as any behavior that causes measurable harm to others and/or is subject to serious legal penalties (Miller et al., 2006). Delinquent acts can be categorized as followed: Minor delinquency – cheating, cursing, fighting with mom, fighting with dad, binge drinking, violating curfew, lying, having sex, and truancy. Major delinquency – fighting, gang fighting, drug use, vandalism, stealing from family, theft, credit card theft, and breaking and entering.

It has become more prevalent to associate being a good student with negative characteristics. It is perceived as a taboo to be a good student, and adolescents do not want to be labeled as “goody-goody” students, so they engage in delinquent behavior in order to be socially accepted (Eccles et al., 2003). It is therefore not a surprise to hear that deviant or delinquent behaviors such as lying, cheating, and stealing have become more prevalent in the past decade among high school-aged U.S. children (Miller et al.,
2006). It is important to understand how extra-curricular activities influence the development of adolescents because as Eccles et al. (2003) states, many American youth spend half of their day engaged in leisure activities when that time could be better spent engaged in structured physical activity programs, which would help strengthen character traits, while deterring delinquent behavior.

Violence is taught as an appropriate method of maintaining male masculinity. Society rewards physical aggression with on-the-field success and increased prestige. Contact sports in particular are portrayed as both elevating some athletes above their peers and increasing off-the field violence toward perceived outsiders and “weaker” students (Kregar, 2007). Previous research found that delinquency was more prevalent among males, significantly more frequent among whites, but decreased with age (Miller et al., 2006).

Kregar (2007) notes that a negative relationship exists between sport participation and delinquency, such that, as participation in sport increases delinquency levels decrease. Programs such as Midnight basketball were created which promote sports as a way of improving self-esteem and graduation rates in inner cities by keeping urban males off of the dangerous streets (Kregar 2007).

Lemieux, McKelvie, and Stout (as cited in Bushman, Baumeister, and Stack, 1999, p. 368) state that the participation in sport may allow its participants to “let off steam” thus decreasing their aggression in everyday life. This pertains to the catharsis theory which believes that aggression is a basic instinctive drive that builds up and must be released directly in behavior. Lemieux et al. (as cited in Jones, Stewart and Sunderman, 1996, p. 20) note that members of the National Hockey League agree with
this notion thus allowing their athletes to engage in violence on the ice thinking that it permits the release of frustration brought on by the game itself.

Michael Oher is a prime example of an athlete whom the involvement in sport helped to decrease his level of delinquency (Wallace & Schnee, 2009). Prior to becoming involved with football in high school, Michael Oher was associating with individuals who were living a destructive lifestyle, selling drugs, committing crimes, etc. Playing football kept him from possibly making decisions that he would regret, provided him with a high school education, collegiate scholarship, and ultimately the opportunity to play in the National Football League where he still plays today for the Baltimore Ravens.

While many studies portray athletics as a positive influence in the development of an adolescent (Eccles et al., 2003; Kregar, 2007), there exist some studies that have been published which depict the contrary (Lemieux, McKelvie, and Stout, 2002; Miller et al., 2006). “Yet, although conventional wisdom has long suggested that organized sport deters delinquency by building character, structuring adolescents’ time, and providing incentives for socially approved behavior, the empirical evidence has been mixed” (Miller et al., 2006, p. 712). There is evidence of a positive relationship between sport participation and delinquency, such that as sport participation increases, delinquency levels also increase. Miller et al. (2006) explains that the jock identity is the primary culprit of this trend. Students who are associated with a higher social status may take on the feeling of invincibility and the belief that they can get away with anything because they are an athlete.
Tiger Woods is often one of the first athletes to come to mind when we think of athletes who have used their status to engage in delinquent behavior. As a professional golfer it seemed as though Tiger had it all. Money, fame, a family, success, etc. yet with all of that power there is also a greater sense of responsibility. Tiger’s celebrity status resulted in him engaging in behavior that is unbecoming of someone whom the public places in high regard. It is perplexing to think of the rationale behind such behavior, particularly when you appear to have everything that anyone could ask for. Perhaps it goes back to the jock identity and that sense of invincibility. Thinking that regardless of what he does, he will always be perceived favorably by others.

Differences in delinquency levels have also been shown to exist depending on the type of sport that an athlete engages in. Contact sports tend to have the highest levels of delinquent behavior. These sports may attract individuals who are already aggressive, or they may help to promote levels of aggression in these athletes which may be carried off the field where consequences exist (Lemieux et al., 2002). Sports such as football, rugby and hockey may house athletes who may be more aggressive off of the field than those in non-contact sports because their actions on the field have a cumulative effect. Such aggression in contact sports is often rewarded and encouraged, making it more likely that it would occur off the field as well (Lemieux et al., 2002).

With conflicting results as to what delinquency is, how it pertains to athletes and non-athletes, and a lack of qualitative research on this topic, it is clear that further research is needed in order to fully comprehend the scope of this particular field.
Purpose and Significance of Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the perceptions that male athletes and non-athletes have on the minor and major substrates of delinquency. The minor and major delinquency substrates describe the severity of the delinquency, such that minor delinquency involves acting out, ethical violations and age inappropriate behavior. Major delinquency pertains to behavior that causes measurable harm to others and/or is punishable by law (Miller et al., 2006). Semi-structured interviews were used to gather the delinquency perceptions of sixteen southeastern NCAA Division I student athletes and non-athletes. Due to the contradictory nature of the subject, understanding why certain groups engage in delinquent behavior and the possible treatments that can be implemented to help deter this behavior were discussed.

The Humanistic framework was used in this study as it is concerned with the development of the individual as a whole. Every individual has their own experience and will therefore have their own view of the phenomenon. Since each person has his/her “unique experience”, qualitative inquiry would consider the individual as the expert on their experience. Researchers are therefore provided with the ability to advance their knowledge on a particular phenomenon by investigating rich lived experiences of the participants (Patton, 2002).
CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Bias Exploration and Bracketing

The researcher is always the primary tool when collecting data via qualitative research (Czech et al., 2004; Patton, 2002). Egli (as cited in Czech, 2004 p. ) mentions that biases are present with each researcher, and these biases can play a pivotal role in research by hindering and deterring the co-participants’ true experiences if these biases are not identified prior to the investigation. Therefore, the head researcher underwent a bracketing interview that asked the same questions that were used in the study. Egli (as cited in Czech, 2004, p. ) explained that this brought to mind any biases that the head researcher had regarding his own perceptions of delinquency so as not to guide or influence the co-participants.

I am currently a second year master’s student at Georgia Southern University (GSU) where I am studying sport psychology. As an undergraduate student I was a Residence Don who helped first year students make the transition from High School to University. As a Residence Don I encountered many situations in which poor decisions were made by students as it pertained to delinquency with general rule breaking, and in some cases acts that were against the law. Prior attending GSU, I played CIS Football in Canada and found that there were many occasions in which I could have engaged in delinquent acts, but realizing that I had too much to lose helped me to refrain from going down such a path. Unfortunately I had friends and acquaintances that made poor decisions and their experiences as well as my own have led me to analyze my own biases prior to investigation.
I believe that being able to recognize the consequence so ones actions can greatly influence whether or not they engage in delinquent behavior. My parents in particular have played a tremendous role in my life in teaching me right from wrong and helping to guide me to make good decisions that will benefit me in the present, as well as the future. This influence has molded me into the man that I have become today and because I value respect and value their opinion I ensure that they will always be proud of the choices that I make in all avenues of my life.

I think athletes have more to lose because of the incentives that are already in place. Both an athlete and a non-athlete lose the same things when they are caught engaging in delinquent behavior. However athletes also lose such things as scholarships, playing time, endorsements etc. that they have worked for, whereas non-athletes do not lose any of these things. I do recognize that these are added things that athletes may lose, but nevertheless they are items that athletes value, which can be lost.

The negative portray of athletes in the media has influence the perception of athletes particularly among the youth. Sports networks are quick to use the term breaking news when an athlete does something wrong, but they never use the term breaking news to describe something good that an athlete is doing. I understand that ratings determine what is shown, so it is disappointing to think that we as a society prefer seeing negative news about athletes which is why the media continues to portray them in that light. It is frustrating to see those whom we place on pedestals and view with such admiration struggle and fall. It is difficult to comprehend why they would engage in such behavior when they already seemingly have it all, and I often ask myself how I would act if put in that position. Perhaps a life of fame and fortune is not as easy as it seems.
Pilot Study

Research currently exists on the frequency of delinquent acts among athletes and non-athletes, but there is very little examination into the perception of delinquent behavior among athletes and non-athletes. An investigation as to why these groups engage in certain behaviors is needed, and thus a pilot study will be conducted. The implementation of the pilot study allowed the head researcher to practice the interview procedure prior to the official interviews with the co-participants. The interviews, data collection, and data analysis followed the same procedures as those set out in the actual study methodology.

From the pilot study, delinquency was viewed as behavior that was illegal, maintaining the idea that delinquent behavior coincides with the definition of major delinquency. The pros and cons of each situation are weighed in order to determine if they should engage in such an act, with the notion of getting caught the overwhelming deciding factor that helped to deter this behavior. The way in which an individual presents themselves greatly influences if the participant would believe they are delinquent. First impressions mean a lot and if an athlete or non-athlete has the look of a standard criminal or is behaving in a manner that one would classify as suspicious then the participant would not be surprised if they were delinquent as opposed to someone who carries themselves with class.

Participants

The co-participants in this study were sixteen male college-aged students. Due to the population used at this particular university, the participants were comprised of 18-23 year olds, who were Caucasian or African-American, and currently enrolled as students at
this particular university. A purposeful sample was used to obtain information-rich cases on the perception of delinquency by athletes and non-athletes. An athlete refers to any male student who is a member of a university varsity athletic team whether in season or out of season. A non-athlete refers to any male student who is not a member of a university varsity athletic team and does not consider themselves an athlete in any sense of the word because they have never even engaged in intramural sports. The co-participants were reached through personal contacts of the head researcher.

Table 1: Categorization of co-participants

<table>
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<th>ATHLETES</th>
<th>NON-ATHLETES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MALES</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
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Procedure

This study was comprised of semi-structured interviews which provide insight into the perceptions of delinquency among athletes and non-athletes. The semi-structured interviews asked seven questions along with probing questions that were based on the responses from the co-participants.

The interviews took place in private, either in the primary investigator’s office or an agreed upon location, which allowed for confidentiality. Consent forms were signed before each interview was conducted. Co-participants were informed that they were allowed to withdraw at any time since this was a voluntary study and that there is no monetary reward for their participation. The definition of delinquency was provided to each co-participant and they were made aware that the sessions would be recorded for accuracy. Transcripts were e-mailed to each participant for them to review and the research team also reviewed the transcripts for data analysis. The co-participants were
informed that their data will be anonymous. Each co-participant was given a pseudonym in order to maintain confidentiality when being reviewed by the research team or anyone outside of the main researchers. The research team members who read the transcripts also agreed to confidentiality. The interviews were conducted in person and lasted approximately fifteen minutes or until the data became saturated.

*Interview Protocol*

The following questions were used in the semi-structured interviews to facilitate the co-participants’ exploration of their perceptions of delinquency. The definition of delinquency was provided to each co-participant, and they will also be probed in order to stimulate rich descriptions of lived experiences.

1. When you think of delinquency, what comes to mind?
2. Describe the characteristics of a minor delinquent act and a major delinquent act?
3. When you think of a delinquent act that you have committed, what comes to mind?
4. When you think about stopping yourself from committing a delinquent act, what comes to mind?
5. When you think of differences in delinquent behavior among athletes and non-athletes, what comes to mind?
6. When you think of specific types of athletes that commit delinquent acts, what characteristics come to mind?
7. When you think of delinquent behavior, are you of the opinion that athletes are committing more crimes or is the media reporting more crimes that are committed by athletes?
Data Analysis

An adaptation of Czech et al. (2004) and Patton (2002) was used in order to analyze the data. This process includes the steps as outlined below.

1. Approaching the interviews
   - Transcribing the interviews
   - Obtaining a grasp of the interviews

2. Focusing the data
   - Bracketing the data

3. Phenomenological reduction
   - Eliminating irrelevant, repetitive, or overlapping data
   - Verifying the elimination of the data
   - Member checking

4. Releasing meanings
   - Forming categories
   - Identifying the themes
   - Describing the themes

1. Approaching the interviews

   The initial step was to approach and transcribe the interviews. This involved having the recorded interviews transcribed verbatim by the researcher. This ensured that the exact information that was relayed by the participants was transcribed accurately, and allowed for thematization (Czech et al., 2004; Patton, 2002).
After transcription, the researcher needed to obtain a grasp of the interview. This was accomplished by reading and listening to the recorded interviews several times to allow access to the wholeness of the data. By striving to obtain a grasp of the information collected, the researcher developed accurate conclusions about the findings of the study (Czech et al., 2004; Patton, 2002).

2. Focusing the data

The second step was to focus the data. Focusing the data was done by clearing and grouping the text that had been collected. Bracketing of the data assisted in this process. Bracketing the data allowed for any biases the researcher had to be brought to the forefront and created a mindset where “all elements and perspectives had equal weight”. It was important for the researcher to identify and bracket out any presuppositions so that the data could be examined in a pure and unclouded manner (Patton, 2002). It is unlikely that this process bracketed out all biases that the researcher had. Instead it allowed the researcher to become aware of their personal thoughts and biases prior to the investigation of the phenomenon (Czech et al., 2004; Patton, 2002).

3. Phenomenological reduction

Eliminating irrelevant, repetitive, or overlapping data was accomplished in the third step known as Phenomenological Reduction. In this step, the researcher created a shortened version of the interview but retained vital information, words, and thoughts of the participant. Meaningless utterances such as “um” and “uh” were removed but only in a way as to ensure that the essential meaning of the co-participants’ experiences and perceptions remained intact and to allow for a smaller more manageable transcript (Czech et al., 2004).
Transcripts were returned to the co-participants via member checking for them to read what had been summarized. This process of verifying the elimination of data was to ensure that the accuracy of their interpretations had been preserved (Czech et al., 2004; Patton, 2002).

The use of triangulation is intended to demonstrate completeness and confirmation of the data set. Using the triangulation process, participants were allowed to view the transcribed interviews via member checking. If needed they were able to modify and/or expand on what was recorded to ensure that it was a truthful representation of their experiences (Czech et al., 2004; Patton, 2002).

4. **Releasing meanings**

The data was placed into meaningful clusters based on the emergence of similarities among the themes. This was done by forming ‘meaning units’ which were “a segment of text that was comprehensible by itself and contains one idea, episode or piece of information” (Patton, 2002). These units were then grouped into clusters consisting of different themes. The researcher and his primary advisor were involved in this process to ensure bias was limited.

The individual interviews were looked at one by one by the researcher and his advisor to identify themes. The summaries were then compared to each other to identify "global themes" within the data. These “global themes” were coded into categories and identified so as to capture the aspects and substance from the given set of data (Czech et al., 2001).

When describing the themes, one must recognize the large amount of data; therefore, some data may have been omitted to further focus the experience and to allow
for a rich description of the lived experiences. Patton (2002) outlines how to present the results of qualitative data: a) focusing and balancing b) description and interpretation. The description and interpretation of the data highlighted what was common across the athletes/non-athletes perceptions, capturing the essence of the phenomenon.

**Reliability**

Reliability can be defined as the ability to duplicate particular methods and attain consistent results across people and time. A major criterion for reliability in qualitative research is trustworthiness. Therefore if the descriptions can be shown to be true, it is considered reliable (Patton, 2002).

To determine the reliability within the study, four questions will be asked of the data:

1. Do the descriptions capture the perceptions?
2. Does the structure match the co-participant’s perceptions?
3. Does the structure emerge from the data?
4. Do others see the description?

**Validity**

The degree of a study’s validity is based on a reader’s ability to experience the descriptions as truthful (Czech et al., 2004). Validity of the instruments was shown through triangulation. Triangulation involves a collaboration of sources converging on a particular phenomenon from which conclusions can be drawn (Patton, 2002).

Triangulation was used to show that the data did not only come from one source and was able to reduce the impact of potential bias within the collected data. Methods such as a bracketing interview, a pilot study, member checking, group analysis as well as peer debriefing were conducted by the head researcher to be used in the process of
triangulation. The bracketing interview allowed any biases that the head researcher may have had to be brought to the forefront, thus limiting the likelihood of him influencing the co-participants or the reader. The pilot study acted as a practice trial for the head researcher to determine if the questions that were posed to the co-participants would produce the necessary results when asked to individuals who most resembled the makeup of the actual co-participants. Member checking provided the co-participants the opportunity to assess the accuracy of their transcriptions as they pertained to their lived experiences. In the group analysis, outside perspectives were given to the researcher regarding the themes of the transcripts. Finally, the peer reviewer is an expert in qualitative methods and was able to challenge the lead researcher as well as provide valuable insight into qualitative analysis.
CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions that male athletes and non-athletes have on the minor and major substrates of delinquency. Co-participants were asked to describe their perceptions of delinquency during the interviews and the results obtained via descriptive quotations were used to identify six themes that were consistent across the co-participants. After analyzing the data, six themes were revealed: (1) Fighting and Illegal Activity, (2) Consequences, (3) Personal Relationships, (4) Athletes Have More To Lose, (5) Invincibility, and (6) Negative Impact of the Media. Each theme was developed using the questions from the study as an anchor for identification.

Contrary to popular belief, the perceptions that male athletes and non-athletes have towards delinquency does not differ from one another. Many similarities were found between the two groups with very little differences. All of the themes identified express the views and mindset that both parties have towards delinquency. The findings were very surprising as they contradicted the head researcher’s hypothesis. He believed athletes and non-athletes would differ on a few of the themes, particularly ‘what is classified as delinquency’, and ‘athletes having more to lose’. The head researcher thought that due to the jock identity, athletes would select major acts of delinquency as being minor while non-athletes would choose minor acts as being minor. The feeling that athletes can get away by having their transgressions more easily overlooked may lead them to believe that major acts of delinquency are not as major as others may perceive them to be. The same is true for athletes having more to lose. It was not a surprise that
athletes stated that they have more to lose. It was surprising that non-athletes agreed with this mentality mentioning that athletes have more to lose due to the scholarships that they hold or the potential to make large sums of money in the professional ranks. The head researcher was under the impression that non-athletes would think that they had more to lose because athletes have different rewards, incentives and guidelines in place to help prevent and deter them from engaging in delinquent behavior. They are also treated more favorably and receive the benefit of the doubt in most situations leading to them not having as much to lose as a non-athlete who do not have these structures in place.

The sixteen participants identified in the study were divided into two groups of eight. Eight co-participants were athletes, meaning they played on a NCAA varsity team during the time of the interviews, while the remaining eight co-participants were classified as non-athletes, meaning they did not play on a varsity team, nor have they engaged in club sports or intramural sports.

Table 2: Description of co-participants

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<tr>
<th>Participant #</th>
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<tr>
<td>Athlete/Nonathlete</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
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A = Athlete
N = Non-athlete
**Theme #1 Fighting and Illegal Activity**

The first theme in the data involved the co-participants understanding delinquent behavior to be fighting or any illegal activity. The way in which they perceive delinquency is subject to any behavior that is seen as major and/or associated with actions that are bad or unbecoming.

“When I think of delinquency, I think of like, breaking into houses. Major things like stealing, theft, breaking into houses, hurting another person”. (Participant #9)

“Fighting or any rude behavior, in public. Anything punishable by law”. (Participant #7)

“Probably children acting in a impulsive kind of behavior, you know. I might be wrong, you know, my definition might not be right but, that’s the first thing I think of delinquency. Like minors like people under the age of eighteen, doing something illegal”. (Participant 8)

“I guess you’d think of major delinquency. Like someone doing like a felony or some type of crime. You know, something major”. (Participant #14)

One co-participant understanding the substrates of delinquency attributed major delinquent acts to fighting and repercussions of the law.

“I wouldn’t have known it was a minor and major but now you say it, it kind of makes sense. You know typically thinking of juvenile delinquency you’d be, getting into fights, getting kicked out of school and you know, getting arrested and all that type of stuff”. (Participant #15)

**Theme #2 Consequences**

A large number of the co-participants revealed that when they have engaged in delinquent acts in the past, their conscience played a significant role. They thought about the consequences of their actions, and mentioned feeling apprehensive about what they were doing. The act of getting caught weighed heavily on their minds.
“What comes to mind? My conscience comes to mind. The idea that I’m being watched, being judged on a daily basis kind of thing. There’s right and there’s wrong and my conscience says you have to do right. You have to avoid being delinquent in those things and you gotta stay away from that stuff”. (Participant #2)

“Mainly nervous. Just didn’t want to get caught. Just felt like you know it was on my chest the whole time. I didn’t want nobody finding out. I didn’t want to tell anybody. Just worried about getting caught the whole time”. (Participant #4)

“Consequences. Going to jail. Disappointment in friends and family. Disappointment in yourself you know. Cause I mean mainly when somebody does something bad like that they kind of, you know they hold it against their-self. You know later down in life they have regrets”. (Participant #4)

“The consequences. For me it’s taken a while. But like just slowing down, maybe sitting somewhere thinking about what I’m about to do”. (Participant #7)

“Just the outcomes that can come from it. I’m just thinking about you know just the outcome of a situation versus if I did do a delinquent act, what the outcome would be. Just the good versus the bad and not steering down the wrong road and causing trouble, things like that”. (Participant #11)

One co-participant mentioned the important of not comparing yourself with others. It does not behoove an individual to think that if someone else got away with a delinquent act that they too will be fortunate enough to get away with such an act.

“I always thought about consequences about committing that act because I always have the mindset one person might get away with it but I might not get away with it. You know, everybody’s luck is different. I always think about if I want to commit a delinquent act, what would the consequences be? Like what would be the repercussions of all that stuff? Like how severe would my punishment be? So that’s why I never really committed any delinquencies”. (Participant #8)

Maturity also plays a role in why the co-participants engaged in delinquent behavior and their mindset while engaging in such behavior. As youngsters it was thought that they
did not want nor need to take responsibility for their actions, but as they have matured they have developed a better sense of right and wrong and are better able to comprehend the consequences of their actions.

“I think I’ve grown up a lot, and I have a better kind of awareness of what’s right and wrong and you know if there’s the whole thing of not causing harm and stuff like and I think it comes with maturing and having more integrity as a person and just realizing the consequences of your actions can affect others”. (Participant #15)

“Yea, probably when I was younger just, I didn’t want to take ownership in something bad that I’ve done. Just trying to lie to my parents or whoever cause I didn’t want to deal with the consequences”. (Participant #13)

Theme #3 Personal Relationships

Personal relationships was the overwhelming factor that co-participants identified as helping to keep them from engaging in delinquent behavior. Many co-participants stated that what their parents and close friends thought of them meant a lot to them, and they did not want to do anything to jeopardize those relationships by disappointing those close to them.

“Well for me the first thing that comes to mind is my family, and then organizations that I represent, and then my own safety and you know certain situations”. (Participant #1)

“Probably my dad. Haha. Just because you know, he raised me and he was a big guy especially when I was younger so I was always afraid if I did something stupid that he was gonna, you know he was gonna get onto me, and get after me. So seriously my parents just, I understand that they’ve done a lot for me and you know, to put me in the position that I am in and so I wouldn’t want to jeopardize that and you know, just disrespect them in that way”. (Participant #3)

Participant #3 goes on to describe just how much his parents have influenced him and helped mold him into the man that he has become today.
“Yea, I believe that I would have a sense of right and wrong regardless, but I don’t think that I would have to consider things as much if I wasn’t worried about disappointing them. I think having them in my life is really you know, just thinking about them before I do things you know. I don’t want to mess this up because it’d be disrespectful to them that makes a big difference. I believe that if they weren’t there and I was just on my own, then I would be able to justify a lot more things”. (Participant #3)

“Well that falls up under morality and character and character traits because, well my parents raised me pretty good. I got raised by a bunch of people around me, and I know that there are certain things I’m not supposed to do. Like I would say what would my mom think? My mom would say what would Jesus do, or what would God do? And when I stop myself from doing anything I would think of my own moral character traits. I’m not a thief. I’m not really a liar. I’m not a person that would commit a major crime. But I majorly have to think about it like how would I feel if that person did that to me, how would I feel? And if I feel that bad, I wouldn’t do it”. (Participant #9)

The pressure that the co-participants feel from family and friends is such a strong deterrent that they mention it is the overwhelming factor that prevents them from engaging in delinquent behavior at this stage in their lives.

“I think about my, as lame as this sounds, I think about my family. Normally my parents have taught me you know, do the right thing. So I always think about what my family would say, you know if they saw me doing such a thing”. (Participant #5)

“Family, friends, you know loved ones and then consequences as far as school and sports go. You know, what it would lead to, like you know, how much trouble I’m gonna get in with coaches or you know parents, you know stuff like that. And then like moral obligations too”. (Participant #10)
Theme #4 Athletes Have More To Lose

This theme provided insight into how the co-participants separate delinquency between athletes and non-athletes. A vast majority of the co-participants believe that athletes have more to lose and are therefore less delinquent overall, while non-athletes because they do not necessarily have as much to lose are free to push the boundaries of delinquency.

“I think that athletes are obviously put under a different like- you know what I’m say- there’s a little more careful eye on athletes especially upper levels in the big schools. So I think that a lot of the things they do they might even have friends that have done it, which I mean it doesn’t make it right. Their friends may have gotten in trouble but it would blow over a lot faster if it was somebody who wasn’t an athlete. If a serious delinquent act such as a DUI, or you know, fighting in public you know bigger problems, so I think that that carries a lot more weight with it for an athlete than it does for a non-athlete”. (Participant #3)

“Non-athlete their repercussions are major meaning, they can go to jail, but their name probably won’t be as slandered. It won’t be as publicized, but they’ll always know. It’ll always be on their record. So it would still be kinda hard for them to get a job. But in terms of an athlete it’s probably a little bit worse, in my opinion”. (Participant #9)

“I feel like non-athletes might commit it more just because they feel like they have less to do. I just feel like they don’t have as much to lose as most athletes do. Just from like someone with a scholarship or like something they’re working for is more focused on like what they’re doing. And so they’re less likely to commit a delinquency act, you know”. (Participant #10)

“But I would say that athletes have more to lose than a regular student would in the situation of committing a delinquent act. You know, a regular student’s you know, gonna go to jail. They both gonna face the consequences with the law, but when the regular student gets outta jail, you know they can go back to school or whatever, and then as for an athlete commits it, they most likely gonna get kicked off the team. So then they’re losing the sport and school at the same time, whereas the regular student is just losing school momentarily”. (Participant #11)
“I guess cause an athlete you represent more people so you have more people behind you that you could put in a bad reputation if you do get caught, or do something you’re not supposed to. And a regular person wouldn’t have as many people behind them so they really wouldn’t have as much responsibility”. (Participant #13)

It is expected that athletes would indicate that they have more to lose when compared to non-athletes. Yet Participant 6 who is a non-athlete reaffirmed this notion by stating that he too believes that athletes have more to lose when compared to non-athletes who engage in delinquent behavior.

“But I think that there are acts like yes they do lie, yes they do cheat, yes they do whatever but when they do the higher acts of delinquency they’re under the spotlight anyway so it comes to light quicker, as opposed to somebody who isn’t. For example just some normal joe on the sidewalk, you might not know he’s been dog-fighting, he’s done assault, he’s murdered, he’s- you know what I mean? I think that that is the big difference between the two. Is that the athletes are always in the spotlight”. (Participant #6)

*Theme #5 Invincibility*

As research indicates, the jock identity mentions that some athletes may feel that they are treated favorably because of their athletic ability, leading many to conclude that a sense of invincibility encompasses athletes. The prevailing notion throughout the interviews as to why some athletes engage in delinquent behavior is because they feel as though they are invincible and can therefore get away with anything.

“A lot of guys I think just get caught up in all the attention and feel like they can get away with you know, certain things just because they are who they are. And I mean they do get treated differently, obviously, than non-athletes and so I think some guys let that get to their heads and think that they can do whatever they want to in some places”. (Participant #3)
“I believe they think they can get away with it a little bit more because they’re an athlete they bring- you know, they have a talent they bring something to the table. I just think an athlete’s more prone to think that they can get away with it”. (Participant #4)

“Well, what comes to my mind is just you know, examples from high school. Because they’re on the football team or on the sports team it’s very important to the school to look good. They almost have protection so they’re able to get away with certain delinquencies”. (Participant #5)

“I feel like yea, they might try to go harder, especially if they get away with it the first few times. But you know, I feel like athletes- it’s not all athletes, I don’t wanna generalize all athletes, but certain types of athletes who always constantly get in trouble, and you know if they would have thought okay, the first time I got in trouble maybe I shouldn’t do this again but it keep- the ones who keep consecutively getting in trouble and stuff they would probably try to push the envelope more and stuff”. (Participant #8)

Maybe ‘cause in some cases you think you can get away with it and that you’re invincible. I mean nobody can see, nobody’s gonna be able to catch you do it so you’re like well there’s no way of me getting caught. (Participant #4)

Being cocky is the attitude or mindset that the co-participants feel some athletes embody because they are able to escape the repercussions of their delinquent acts when compared to non-athletes. These feelings were expressed by both athletes and non-athletes.

“Cockiness. The you can’t touch me attitude. I think it’s the biggest one. I mean especially with Michael Vick before the dog charges came through. I personally felt like he had the you can’t touch me, you can’t do anything about it so let’s see how far I can go. And I think a lot of athletes get that, but not all of them go to the extent that others have”. (Participant #6)

“Cockiness. Feeling that he can probably get away with it, because I’m basically very- what’s the word? Not my head’s in the clouds, but I think a lot of myself. I’m very cocky. Knowing good and well I can do what I want and get away with it. It’s like, basically I’m the star. So I can probably do what I want”. (Participant #9)
“Maybe, probably like too cocky for their own good. Very egotistical or seeming not to care. Like those athletes tend to probably not go to class and like you know skip meetings, or be late to stuff, and you know not really have a team feel for them. I feel like those kind of people don’t commit themselves to the team cause, they’re obviously not worried about the team if they’re worried about like committing delinquency acts”. (Participant #10)

It is interesting to hear one of the athletes actually acknowledge the fact that they may receive preferential treatment due to the simple fact that they play on an athletic sports team.

“The consequences that we might face may be way different than a non-athlete might face. Or we might be let off the hook and they might get in trouble. Some people get in places for free cause they’re athletes, and non-athletes they don’t get as much love, but it’s, it’s just I don’t know”. (Participant #12)

Theme #6 Negative Impact Of The Media

The final theme within this study was the negative impact of the media. It was expressed that the media portrays athletes in only a negative light. Athletes are also involved in many positive aspects in society, but these positive items are rarely discussed by the media. The general notion is that society in general is partly to blame because the media provides news that generates ratings and if they continue to receive increases in ratings for negative news then it must mean that we as society enjoy being exposed to negative images of athletes in the media.

“Media. It’s always the media. They’re reporting more stuff. They focus on the negative, which is why I don’t even like to watch the news anymore. Cause the first thing you hear on the news is ten murders, a natural disaster and like at the end of the show they might devote five minutes to somebody, an athlete who is actually doing a good charitable thing for the community. But let him do
something wrong and they’ll spend twelve hours talking about it”. (Participant #1)

“I think it depends. I think you’re on to something. Like with athletes, I don’t want to make it racial, but with young black athletes, they you know, try to portray them as negative cause I think a lot of people really don’t like how a lot of athletes come from, you know, hard upbringings and in a day they’re millionaires compared to not having money two, three years ago”. (Participant #8)

“I’ve thought about that myself because quite frankly I personally don’t like watching the news because it’s just a lot of negativity. I barely rarely hear anything good coming on the news and the reason why I believe they do it is because, well it’s interesting. Because the questions you’re asking me are the questions that the newscaster news reporter would ask the athlete, if they had a chance”. (Participant #9)

“I think the media is definitely reporting more crimes committed by athletes. I think some social environments that athletes come out of, you know, may not be the best. Which could like correlate to how many you know, perform delinquent acts. But I still think that there’s a larger eye on athletes then there is just you know a non-athlete, committing delinquency acts”. (Participant #14)

By elaborating on the negative effects of the media, co-participants describe how the influence of the media leads to a humanization of athletes. Society can therefore view athletes as less than perfect which makes us feel better about our own shortcomings.

“Yea cause I think a lot of people view certain athletes as, you know, as perfect. So when we do see that, it kind of brings them down to our level. You know, it makes them kind of human like I guess when they fail or when they do something bad”. (Participant #4)

“Because it also makes us feel good in ourselves. ‘Cause, oh we haven’t done that then okay, this is kinda how it’s working for society. Also it’s one of those things where it’s so bad you can’t look away. I think it’s what it is”. (Participant #6)
“I don’t know if people necessarily like to see people fail. But I do think that it might make some people feel better. I mean like everyone’s human and so it’d be like, you know if you see someone’s that’s great fall, maybe it makes some people feel better about themselves, because they’re like see, they’re not as good as we thought they were, so I’m okay too, kind of thing”. (Participant #10)

“Yea I think the reason it’s so popular to publicize like athletes doing wrong is ‘cause we put them on that pedestal of being perfect. I guess it’s like a comfort thing for normal people to know that you know those top athletes make mistakes too”. (Participant #14)
A vast majority of research on the topic of delinquency is analyzed through a quantitative method. This study attempts to analyze these same constructs through qualitative measures, which provide unique rich descriptions of the lived experiences of the perceptions of delinquency by athletes and non-athletes. Several themes emerged from the data leading the researcher to incorporate the results of this study with previous research. A summary of the current study followed by a discussion of current research comprises each segment. The conclusion follows this section, ending with suggestions for future research on delinquency.

**Theme #1 Fighting and Illegal Activity**

When the co-participants were asked about their perceptions of delinquency, individuals engaging in fights or illegal activity was consistently mentioned. One participant was quoted as saying, “When I think of delinquency, I think of like, breaking into houses. Major things like stealing, theft, breaking into houses, hurting another person” (Participant #9).

Fighting and illegal activity are seen as the most prominent delinquent behaviors with the rise in delinquent behavior among adolescents in the United States. Miller et al. (2006) mentions “Lying, cheating, stealing and other forms of deviant or delinquent behavior among high school-aged U.S. adolescents have grown more common over the course of the past decade”.

It is easy to understand why most people associate delinquency to acts of violence and illegal activities. Such activities are viewed as inappropriate because they are in
direct contrast to social norms established by society. Sport has become that influence that can be used to combat delinquency (Miller et al., 2006). Begg, Langley, Moffitt, and Marshall (1996) describe sport as a social control that was used as a substitute for poaching, vandalism, bullying and drunkenness predominately in public schools. They go on to state that “sport has been proposed as a possible panacea for juvenile delinquency”.

Research also exists that on the other end of the spectrum, contradicting the notion of sport deterring delinquent behavior. Zamanian, Zameni, Forouzandeh, and Haghighi (2012) describe sport as aiding delinquent behavior. They emphasize that values such as sportsmanship, stubbornness and championships may encourage deviant behavior such as violence, conflict and illegal drug use, concluding that sport cannot be an effective tool to prevent anti-social behavior.

With the ever-increasing use of technology, violence has increased exponentially in our society. Cyber bullying for instance allows individuals to target others using their computers as a medium. Campbell (2005) discusses the different methods of cyber bullying including sending threatening emails, ganging up on one student and bombarding him/her with emails, setting up a derogatory website to target one student and inviting other students to comment. With the number of adolescents that have access to the internet expected to rise, it is expected that the incidence of cyber-bullying will also rise as the perpetrators will never have to encounter their victims allowing this cowardly behavior to continue. “Even though the consequences for the victims of cyber bullying have not yet been researched, it would seem that they could be even more severe than those of face-to-face bullying. Although bullying by physical violence can only be
threatened, not conducted, by technology, research has shown that verbal and psychological bullying may have more negative long term effects” (Campbell, 2005).

**Theme #2 Consequences**

Consequences are the thoughts that people have when they are about to engage in behavior that may have a lasting impression on their lives. One participant mentioned the impact that consequences from his acts have on him. “I always thought about consequences about committing that act because I always have the mindset if one person might get away with it but I might not get away with it. You know, everybody’s luck is different. I always think about if I want to commit a delinquent act, what would the consequences be? Like what would be the repercussions of all that stuff? Like how severe would my punishment be? So that’s why I never really committed any delinquencies” (Participant #8). Being able to recognize the consequence of your actions is very beneficial in preventing both athletes and non-athletes from delinquent behavior.

“While most teens experiment with delinquent behavior at some point in the developmental trajectory from childhood to adulthood, choices made in adolescence may have both immediate and long-term consequences” (Miller et al., 2006).

The premise of consequences is a risk-reward analysis. The pros and cons of each situation are weighed and decisions are primarily based on the perceived benefits and repercussions of the outcomes. As humans we are pleasure seeking creatures and will often make decisions that we will find pleasurable. Those that make good decisions are able to be unbiased as they weigh their options. Those that make poor decisions do so because the lure of pleasure outweighs everything else. “People weigh the costs and benefits of legal and illegal lines of action and select the ones they consider most likely to
maximize their pleasure. The assumption is that all people are capable of crime if the product of the crime is beneficial and the likelihood of detection is reduced” (Carroll, Houghton, Hattie, & Durkin, 2001).

Those who are unable to comprehend the consequences of their actions are more likely to reciprocate the behavior. This is evident amongst those who an onset of aggressive, antisocial behavior that usually develops during childhood. This behavior can persist into adolescence and adulthood and is caused by ineffective parenting, individual deficits and structural disadvantage (Thornberry, Lizotte, Krohn, Smith & Porter, 2003). The authors go on to explain that these individuals have few resources to protect themselves from the consequences of their behavior. “They also have few resources to ward off the reciprocal consequences of their early antisocial behavior. As a result, they are more likely to become entrapped in delinquent careers. Escape becomes increasingly difficult as more and more avenues to prosocial careers become closed and long-term careers in criminal behavior become more likely” (Thomberry et al., 2003).

This reflects the notion that the behaviors of athletes and non-athletes are rooted in their upbringing. As several co-participants in this study have stated, child rearing greatly influences the way an individual perceives consequences. This is not only limited to their family, but also to the environment surrounding them and their own moral code or conscience. Thus Carroll et al. (2001) explains that it should not come as a surprise that people weigh the pros and cons of their actions, and if the pros outweigh the cons they tend to proceed with the act. However, if the cons outweigh the pros then they refrain from the act. Therefore those who do not have the resources to protect themselves
from the consequences of their behaviors are more likely to misinterpret this ratio and engage in acts that would be classified as delinquent (Carroll et al., 2001).

Theme #3 Personal Relationships

Consistent with research, personal relationships play a significant role in helping to deter delinquent behavior. Family support and friend attachments in particular are important elements that help individuals refrain from engaging in delinquent acts. This is evident from the fact that the social competence index (SCI) incorporates family and friends as two items on this scale. “Two of the items in the SCI measured attachment to family and attachment to friends” (Begg et al., 1996). The social support theory as this is common referred to as, has become increasingly more important to our lives. Sherborne and Stewart (1991) describe how the ability to cope with life stressors is seen in one’s ability to both seek and receive help from other people. Having others provide assistance or emotional support can act as a preventative measure to protect some individuals from the negative consequences that might occur from stressful situations. This is particularly true with athletes who have a difficult time assessing situations that may lead to unwanted consequences because of the notion that they may receive preferential treatment. The same is true about non-athletes who may not have the social support so they tend to feel as though they do not have anything to lose either way by engaging in such acts. Our understanding of social support is not yet complete, but research has determined that its benefits are favorable. “Interest in the concept of social support has increased dramatically over the last few years due to the belief that the availability of support may impact favorably on a person’s health and emotional well-being. There is
some empirical evidence that has established its beneficial effects” (Sherborne & Stewart, 1991).

Family structure is so crucial in deterring delinquent behavior that studies have shown an increase in delinquency among those who come from broken homes. “More recent research consistently reveals that children from broken homes are more delinquent than those from intact families” (Demuth & Brown, 2004). The ideal family structure helps those at risk of engaging in delinquent behavior to recall the expectations set upon them by their families, ultimately leading to them avoiding such situations. Parental monitoring, supervision and closeness are also vital in reducing acts of delinquency as individuals who experience low levels of parental control and supervision are at a greater risk of delinquent behavior (Demuth & Brown, 2004).

Family structure is not alone in deterring delinquent behavior. One of the co-participants describes what he thinks about to help prevent him from engaging in delinquent acts. “Well for me the first thing that comes to mind is my family, and then organizations that I represent, and then my own safety and you know certain situations” (Participant #1). Attachments to friends and the community play an instrumental role in deterring delinquency as individuals often think about how their actions will affect those that they care about, as the opinions of these groups of people are valued by the individual. “Individuals take into account such things as attachment to people or institutions, commitment to conventional lines of action, involvement in noncriminal activities, and belief in the moral validity of norms” (Carroll et al., 2001).
Theme #4 Athletes have more to lose

From the interviews it was found that athletes are perceived to have more at stake when contemplating whether to engage in delinquent activities. As one co-participant stated, “I feel like non-athletes might commit it more just because they feel like they have less to do. I just feel like they don’t have as much to lose as most athletes do. Just from like someone with a scholarship or like something they’re working for is more focused on like what they’re doing. And so they’re less likely to commit a delinquency act, you know” (Participant #10).

Athletes are supposed to represent the school that they play for, or the organization that employs them. Thus, they do not only represent themselves, but their actions are judged on a larger scale as they represent an institution. This leads them to believe that any unmoral interaction perceived or otherwise, tarnishes their reputation which is something that is important to them. “The degree of feedback about goals and reputations provides evidence to adolescents that their reputations are being recognized. The peer audience is extremely influential because friends often generate and facilitate expressions of shared behavioral inclinations. Like their non-delinquent peers, delinquent adolescents have much commitment to build publicly and maintain a reputation” (Carroll et al., 2001).

With the incentives and rewards that are in place for athletes, there is added pressure on them to uphold their end of the bargain to ensure that they do not waste such an opportunity that many others yearn for. “Student athletes may have more incentive not to be delinquent, since they have access to highly valued reward structures through sports and thus much to lose by being delinquent” (Miller, Sabo, Farrell, Barnes, &
Melnick, 1998). An avoidance of activities that non-athletes may engage in such as drinking or sexual intercourse may be seen as threatening to their participation in their sport. An inability to compete in sport may hinder their long-term goals of earning an athletic scholarship in order to play in college (Miller et al., 1998).

In the grand scheme of things, both non-athletes and athletes will have to deal with the consequences of their actions, but athletes seemingly also have to deal with the loss of their sport and all the hard work and dedication that they have put forth will be for not. The losses that a non-athlete has to endure, an athlete also has to endure. However, the athlete also has to endure specific losses that pertain to sport participation.

**Theme #5 Invincibility**

Consistent with research, those that partake in athletic activities are perceived to escape repercussion more often. This mindset exists from both non-athletes and athletes. Non-athletes believe that preferential treatment is paid to athletes because of what they can provide the institution that they represent. “Well, what comes to my mind is just you know, examples from high school. Because they’re on the football team or on the sports team it’s very important to the school to look good. They almost have protection so they’re able to get away with certain delinquencies” (Participant #5). This mindset is evident throughout literature as Stevens (2006) mentions that high school athletes may be placed on a pedestal which allows their mistakes to be more easily forgiven when compared to those of non-athletes. This is what researchers classify as “the jock identity”, and it is due to this social position that causes young athletes to feel a sense of entitlement and superiority (Stevens, 2006).
This subject is particularly noteworthy when broached by an athlete. One athlete was quoted as saying, “The consequences that we might face may be way different than a non-athlete might face. Or we might be let off the hook and they might get in trouble. Some people get in places for free cause they’re athletes, and non-athletes they don’t get as much love, but it’s, it’s just I don’t know” (Participant #12). This helps to confirm this hypothesis as athletes themselves may be aware of the effects of the jock identity. Being let off the hook or getting into places for free due to their status highlights the fact that athletes and non-athletes are cognizant of the jock identity.

This feeling of invincibility is not limited to student athletes. Professional athletes also experience this feeling of invincibility, leading them to engage in more delinquent acts, and in their cases these are of the major delinquent variety. High-profile athletes in particular receive biased treatment which can be favorable with the criminal justice system (Robinson, 1998). The feeling is that with their fame and fortune they have a “get out of jail free card” which they can use to manipulate situations in their favor. Examples of such would be O.J. Simpson, Tiger Woods, and Lance Armstrong. One particular example from the literature is that of James Darling.

“Philadelphia Eagle James Darling was sentenced to thirty-five days in jail in 1997 for burglary and assault charges. However, the judge arranged Darling’s sentence so that Darling would be incarcerated for three days in July and then be released so that he could attend training camp and compete in the 1997 NFL season. The remaining thirty-two days were to be served after the end of the season” (Robinson, 1998).

It is evident from this excerpt that Mr. Darling was viewed differently and treated favorably by the judge because of his status as a professional football player.
Theme #6 Negative Impact of the Media

From this theme it was gathered that the co-participants are in agreement when it comes to the influence of the media. They believe that the media is portraying a negative image upon athletes such that athletes are not committing more crimes; instead the media is reporting more crimes that are committed by athletes. One co-participant was quoted as saying, “Media. It’s always the media. They’re reporting more stuff. They focus on the negative, which is why I don’t even like to watch the news anymore. Cause the first thing you hear on the news is ten murders, a natural disaster and like at the end of the show they might devote five minutes to somebody, an athlete who is actually doing a good charitable thing for the community. But let him do something wrong and they’ll spend twelve hours talking about it” (Participant #1). This coincides with research indicating that the media works to report negative news pertaining to athletes. Cullen, Latessa, and Kopache (1996) noted, “The news media has done much to publicize the criminal activities of college athletes, suggesting that many college athletes are prone to break rules”. By producing such information, the media may be casting a bias shadow on college athletes that other societal roles may not have to endure. 

This negative portrayal by the media has led many to begin to humanize athletes. Athletes have long been placed on pedestals and with the negative impact of the media, society can see that athletes are not perfect beings as we would like to believe. They too are human, and they too make mistakes. Two co-participants were quoted as saying the following: “Yea cause I think a lot of people view certain athletes as, you know, as perfect so, when we do see that it kind of, it brings them down to our level. You know, it
makes them kind of human like I guess when they fail or when they do something bad”.

(Participant #4)

“Because it also makes us feel good in ourselves. ‘Cause, oh we haven’t done that then okay, this is kinda how it’s working for society. Also it’s one of those things where it’s so bad you can’t look away. I think it’s what it is”. (Participant #6)

Resentment towards athletes may develop on the part of the non-athletes, but by knowing that athletes are not perfect it tends to make those of the general public feel better about themselves. It makes it easier to accept their own faults when they know that the “great” Tiger Woods for instance has his own problems to overcome. “Athletes may be pampered, glorified, and idolized by peers, teachers, and administrators. This increased attention and praise can cause some peers to resent the athletes” (Stevens, 2006).

Implications

The findings of the research only add to the fact that delinquency, like beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Some non-athletes may view an action as a major delinquent act because he may not have previous exposure to that action. Some athletes however may view that same action as a minor delinquent act because it is a common occurrence in their lives, and they may feel that their transgressions will be overlooked by authority figures. “Scholars suggest that one reason some athletes disregard the law and possess an "I can do what I want" attitude is that athletes believe they have entitlement.
"Entitlement" is best defined as the belief that one is entitled to have whatever one wants, whenever one wants it” (Robinson, 1998).

The reverse can also be true, such that some athletes may view something as a major delinquent behavior because they feel that they represent more than just themselves and therefore need to act in such a manner that they do not bring shame or unwanted attention to their institution. “Public school superintendents were on record as saying voters were more agreeable to raising taxes to pay for school improvements if the school’s athletic teams were winning. A well-run sports program can also generate positive publicity” (Stevens, 2006).

Further research can still be accomplished on areas that have been explored on a limited basis. More research into this phenomenon could be achieved in order to gain a deeper understanding of these lived experiences. All participants in this study were males so it would be interesting to examine these experiences from a female perspective. It would be beneficial to examine the experiences of athletes and non-athletes from other countries to identify any similarities or differences between them. Future research might want to investigate the perception of delinquency among athletes from the perspective of their coaches. This may provide insight into ways in which delinquent behavior can be curtailed.

Limitations

Some of the co-participants may express views that are socially acceptable in order to prevent themselves from being perceived negatively. Others may express opinions that they feel is popular. Findings do not reflect collegiate athletes and/or non-athletes from other levels, nor do they reflect the opinions of individuals with other
beliefs and values. The majority of athletes in this study are Division I athletes, but some of them are Division I-AA athletes. The head researcher is a former collegiate athlete who was aware that his own biases could affect the data; however, measures were taken to eliminate this from happening.

Conclusions

Based on the findings from the present study, the following conclusions can be drawn: Collegiate athletes and non-athletes share many similarities in their perceptions of athletes and delinquency. This investigation found that both parties believe that delinquency involves primarily fighting and illegal activity. They fail to think about the act itself and how this reflects on their moral code, but rather the consequences of their actions. They weigh the pros and cons of their actions, often leaning towards whichever is more pleasurable. If deem that they will not get caught they will not refrain from the act. It is only the fear of getting caught that prevents them from engaging in delinquent behavior.

Parents are a major influence on both collegiate athletes and non-athletes. In this investigation, both mention that the relationships with their family, particularly their parents as the major contributor for keeping them from engaging in delinquent behavior. They respect and value the opinions of their parents so they would not want to do anything to disrespect them or to know that their parents would disapprove of their decisions.

The thinking is that athletes have more to lose. Athletes are viewed in a different light when compared to non-athletes as they are always in the spotlight so their mistakes are often magnified. Thus the rewards and incentives that they have in place may be lost.
by partaking in delinquent acts but these same incentives are not available for non-athletes which leads to the conclusion that more can be lost for athletes. This coincides with the feeling that athletes are more arrogant because they are aware that they have been and will continue to be treated more favorably by society, resulting in resentment by non-athletes towards athletes due to the preferential treatment that they receive. Both parties agree that athletes have a sense of entitlement or invincibility believing that they can do no wrong.

The role that the media plays in influencing the minds of these youth was unmistakable. Collegiate athletes and non-athletes in this investigation perceive the media to report mainly negative news pertaining to athletes. The negative news allows for bias opinions directed towards athletes. This contributes to the resentment that non-athletes have towards athletes but also leads to those of the general population feeling better about themselves because they are able to see that athletes also have flaws. This helps them realize that if an athlete whom they deem to be perfect and place on a pedestal can make mistakes, then surely they who are not perfect can also make mistakes.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

RESEARCH QUESTIONS, LIMITATIONS, DELIMITATIONS, ASSUMPTIONS

AND DEFINITIONS
Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of delinquency that NCAA Division I athletes and non-athletes have?

Delimitations

1. A purposeful sample was used to identify the co-participants.
2. Only co-participants from one southeastern Georgian university was used, so the findings may not be generalized to a larger population.
3. Focus was on college-aged students between the ages of 18-23

Limitations

1. Some of the co-participants may express views that are socially acceptable to prevent themselves from being perceived negatively.
2. Division I athletes are a limitation because the majority of athletes at the chosen university are Division I athletes, but some are Division I – AA athletes.

Assumptions

1. The assumption is that the participants were honest and truthful when describing their perceptions in their own words. They did not compromise their beliefs or views in order to be perceived favorably in the eyes of the researcher since confidentiality procedures (no identifiers) are in place.
2. Co-participants did not exaggerate or lie about delinquent behaviors that they have not engaged in.
3. The perceptions of delinquency provided a better understanding as to why people engage in delinquent behavior, and in particular why athletes are willing to risk everything to be delinquent.
4. Due to the nature of the humanistic approach, the participants in this research were able to openly and honestly convey their own accounts, thoughts, feelings and perceptions of delinquency.

Definitions

1. Delinquency – Any behavior that is a violation of the law, persistent mischievousness, antisocial behavior, disobedience, and/or is committed in order to thwart the correction of parents or figures of authority. Delinquency can be divided into minor and major delinquency (Miller et al., 2006).

2. Minor delinquency - Involves acting out, ethical violations and age in-appropriate behavior. Examples would include cheating, cursing, and lying (Miller et al., 2006).

3. Major delinquency – Action that causes measurable harm to others and/or is subject to legal penalties. They include such items as drug use, theft, and vandalism (Miller et al., 2006).

4. Triangulation – Strategies for reducing systematic bias and distortion during data analysis (Patton, 2002).


APPENDIX B

REVIEW OF LITERATURE


- N = 606
- The study used the social control theory along with a routine activity perspective.
- Time use by adolescents was examined to determine behavior problems.
- Many time use strategies were examined including but not limited to homework, extracurricular activities, sports time, alone time, paid work, housework, etc.
- Sociodemographic factors such as gender, age, race and socioeconomic status were taken into account.
- The most important predictors of adolescent problem behaviors were family time and peer time.
- Family time acts as a protective factor against problem behaviors.
- Peer time is a significant risk factor for problem behaviors.


- The purpose of this study was to determine whether the involvement in sports during middle adolescence would deter delinquent behavior in late adolescence.
A longitudinal cohort study was used in which members were interviewed at age 15 and again at age 18.

Questions asked pertained to involvement in physical activity and delinquent behavior.

Logistic regression was used to identify the relation between sports involvement and delinquency at age 15 and delinquency at age 18.

Females with moderate or high levels of sporting activity, and males with high levels of sporting activity were more likely to be delinquent at age 18 than those with low levels of sporting activity.

The deterrence hypothesis was not supported by the study, but high involvement in sporting activity, but not team sports was associated with an increase in delinquent behavior.


The belief that strong social bonds inhibit delinquency, while weak social bonds do little to prevent it is the premise that the social control theory is built upon.

Study sample was of high school youth.

Research suggest that the type of social bonds affect both males and females differently.
• The study aids in our understanding of social control factors and how they affect both young men’s and young women’s reports of serious delinquency and risky behavior.

• The effects of social bonds on male and female delinquency were examined by the models in this article.


• The term cyber bullying was developed by Canadian Bill Belsey.

• Cyber bullying is bullying using technology that children and adolescents seem to be using at increasing rates to harm others.

• Several studies have found that face-to-face bullying is a constant occurrence for many children.

• One in six children report being bullied at least once a week.

• In face-to-face bullying, most studies report boys being bullied equally as girls.

• In cyber bullying, studies report girls being more involved because they are more likely to communicate by text and email.

• To prevent bullying, those involved need to be made aware. The difficulty with bullying prevention in schools is that schools tend to deny that bullying exists.

- Delinquency is a major problem in society, disrupting families, schools and communities.
- Adolescents choose to be delinquent because it provides feedback about their own self-image and status.
- Engaging in delinquency also helps in interpreting the image and status of others.
- Model is made up of four components: individual’s resources; personal goals; peer influence; and reputation management.
- Four self-regulating mechanisms exist as well: presence of audience; feedback; commitment; and challenge.
- Harris (1995, 1998) believes that peers have a greater influence on teen delinquency than family does.
- Aggressive young people who are attracted to danger and excitement tend to seek out others like themselves for peer support in these activities.


- N = 648
- 2000 students-athletes contacted to partake in the study. Only 648 returned usable surveys.
Random sample of student-athletes at division I basketball and football programs reported on the degree to which they violated NCAA rules.

Six out of ten student-athletes reported not committing any violations during the recruitment process.

However, seven out of ten reported breaking NCAA rules while attending college.

If student-athletes are warned of the penalties of infractions, the likelihood of committing such infractions is not likely to decrease.

Rather, the creation of programs are a better way of persuading student-athletes that NCAA rules should be followed.


N = 19

Participants were from a mid-western university in the USA, and involved with four different sports (women's basketball, track & field, and men's football & baseball).

The purpose of this exploratory, pilot investigation was to examine intercollegiate Christian athletes' perceptions of prayer so that coaches can understand the thought processes of religious athletes.

Participants were administered the Johnson-Chan Prayer Effectiveness Survey (JCPES) and Religious Behavior Survey (RBS).
The data gathering process involved three levels (survey distribution, personal interviews, and prayer meeting observations).

After completion of the inventories, all participants were interviewed and prayer group meetings were observed.

Results revealed that athletes strongly supported the notion of prayer before and after competition.

All athletes revealed that prayer intensity, prayer meaning, and the number of times praying increased with the importance of performance.

The importance of coaches understanding all faiths in sport and future research ideas are discussed.


**N = 9**

Division I Christian collegiate athletes were interviewed asking them to describe their use of prayer before, during, and after competition.

The purpose was to examine using a first person perspective of the Christian athlete’s lived prayer experiences.

Four themes were developed which characterized the athletes experiences with prayer in sport: Performance prayers, prayer routines, thankfulness and God’s will.

Recommendations for coaches and sport psychologist are discussed.
• Researchers interested in phenomenological methodology can gain greater insight into the meaning of sport behavior.


• Trends in qualitative research in sport psychology are described, and a new paradigm, termed existential phenomenology is identified.

• The phenomenological interview is the primary method of inquiry.

• Consists of an open-ended format and has similarities to the athlete-sport psychology consultant interaction in a performance enhancement intervention.

• The basic views of existential phenomenology, including its philosophical foundations as well as instructions for conducting a phenomenological interview study, are provided.

• Specific discussion of the potential significance of this type of research for the field of sport psychology is offered.


• 33% of all children are born to unmarried mothers.

• Over one half of children will spend some time in a single-parent household.

• The fastest growing form of family is the single-father family.
• The effects of growing up in a two-parent household were compared with single-mother families by examining delinquency among adolescents in single-father families too.

• Mean differences among the dependent, independent and control variables for the total sample were examined.

• Supplemental analyses examine the effects of family structure, child and parent control variables, and direct and indirect parental controls on the three dimensions (petty property, serious property, and violent offenses) of delinquency.

• Results show that adolescents in single-parent families are significantly more delinquent than those living with two biological, married parents.


• n=600

• It is assumed that involvement in organized athletics helps to deter delinquent behavior, but research up to this point has been mixed on the topic.

• Purpose was to examine how self-reported jock identity, school athlete status, and frequency of athletic activity influence delinquent behavior in high school students.

• Neither athlete status nor the frequency of athletic activity could predict delinquent behavior.

• Jock identity was associated with significantly higher levels of delinquent behavior.
Results indicated that delinquency was prevalent in both males and females and consistent across all races.

When dividing delinquency into major and minor categories, whites showed more incidents of major delinquent behavior as compared to blacks.


- **n = 6**
- The purpose of this study was to gather a narrative of the lived experience of collegiate Division I Christian head coaches’ use of prayer within their profession.
- Four themes emerged from the data analysis: Relying on God’s Guidance and Plan, The Roles of Coaching, Prayer Types, and Personal Faith not Forced.
- Implications from this study may benefit coaches, athletes, sport psychology consultants, and those who may encounter Christian prayer within sport by providing insight into how coaches may use prayer.
- Findings suggest that Division I Christian coaches recognize the independence of the spiritual or religious practices of their athletes on their team.
- Future research might want to address other Christian head coaches at levels of competition other than Division I because the nature of Division I athletics may differ from lower levels of sport.

- \( n = 79 \)
- The purpose of this study is to examine sport and physical activity participation for adolescence and how that translates to the theory of planned behavior in terms of social norms, attitudes, behavioral control, etc.
- A questionnaire was administered to grade 8 students to assess their physical activity participation, sport participation and perceptions of physical activity.
- Significant differences were seen between sport status levels, attitudes towards physical activity and behavioral control.
- Post hoc test needed to identify the differences between starting athletes and non-athletes in regards to attitudes, intentions and vigorous physical activity levels.


- \( n = 78 \)
- Purpose of the study is to assess the perceived legitimacy of unethical sport situations.
- Coach aggression, player aggression, cheating, disrespect, and rule bending were the five domains being studied in high school athletes across sex, grade level, level of physical contact, and level of competition.
- Findings showed that male athletes were more accepting of aggressive behavior, compared to female athletes.
• Varsity athletes were also more approving of aggressive and disrespectful players than junior varsity athletes.


• n=75 871

• The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which participation in high school interscholastic sports contributes to male violence.

• Contrary to social control expectations, results indicate that athletic involvement does not deter male violence, with a strong relationship between contact sports and violence.

• A survey questionnaire was administered to students in grades 7-12 during one 45-60 min. class period.

• The questionnaire included basic demographic characteristics, school-related activities (including sports participation), and risk behaviors (including a measure of violence).

• Students also nominated their five best male and five best female friends. This allows for the construction of friendship data taken directly from friends, thereby avoiding possible measurement error associated with self-reported friends’ behavior.

• Approximately 40 percent of male respondents reported getting into a serious physical fight.

- In Western society, a double standard exists for men and women. The two genders are held to different standards as it pertains to sexual conduct.
- Boys and men are rewarded and praised for heterosexual sexual contacts, whereas girls and women are derogated and stigmatized for similar behaviors.
- The purpose of this study is to analyze the follow up on research that measures the social status of sexually permissive youth.
- Results suggest that the number of sexual partners a person has varies significantly by gender.
- Greater numbers of sexual partners are positively correlated with boys' peer acceptance, but negatively correlated with girls' peer acceptance.
- The relationship between boys' sexual behaviors and peer acceptance is influenced by socioeconomic origins; sexually permissive boys from disadvantaged backgrounds are predicted to have more friendships than permissive boys from more advantaged backgrounds.


- n=344
- Contact athlete group=43; Non-contact athlete group= 43; Control group 1=43; Control group 2=43.
• Participants in the two control groups were matched to the athletes in physical size.

• Larger participants scored higher on hostile aggression than smaller athletes, and also reported more fighting incidents than smaller athletes.

• However, in general athletes did not differ from non-athletes in hostile aggression.

• Findings contradict both the learning and catharsis theories of aggression in sport, and go against the image presented by the media of the confrontational off-field athlete.


• n= 2436

• Purpose of the study is to examine whether high school athletes are more violent, delinquent or both than non-athletes

• Study is conducted via a survey

• Results data suggests that there is no significant difference for violent or delinquent behaviors between athletes and non-athletes

• Results also suggest that there is a difference between contact and non-contact athletes.

• Contact athletes are more likely to engage in violent and delinquent behaviors than non-contact athletes.
• Results also consistent across genders


• n=504.

• Purpose of the study was to assess self-deceptive enhancement and impression management on sexuality self-reports.

• Positive relationships were identified between self-deceptive enhancement and sexual adjustment variables for both males and females.

• A negative relationship was observed between impression management and intrapersonal and interpersonal sexual behaviors for females, and to unrestricted sexual attitudes and fantasies for males.

• Self-deceptive enhancement and impression management were significantly associated with personality for males, but they were only associated with conservatism for females.


• n=600

• It is believed that organized sport helps to deter delinquent behavior through character building, time management and rewarding socially approved behavior.
• The study is being conducted to identify if there is any truth to this notion.
• The study examined how self-reported jock identity, school athlete status, and frequency of athletic activity influenced a range of delinquent behaviors.
• Neither athlete status nor frequency of athletic activity predicted these behaviors; however, jock identity was associated with significantly more incidents of delinquency in both males and females.
• Jock identity was associated with both minor and major delinquency, with major delinquency effects for white but not black adolescents.


• N = 611
• Participants were adolescents from Western New York.
• Multivariate analysis of covariance was used to test hypotheses about sexual behavior and sports.
• In order to be included in the study, households needed to have at least one adolescent between the ages of 13-16 and at least one biological or surrogate parent.
• Study has determined that participation in athletics and gender both interact to influence adolescent sexual outcomes.
• The control theory implies that engaging in athletics is only partly reduces deviance. Attachment to coaches and teammates may also help to suppress deviance.

• Significantly lower rates of sexual activity was reported by female athletes as compared to female non-athletes.

• Gender-specific effect of sports on sexual behavior remains.


• n = 7

• Prospect Theory suggests that cognitive biases, including whether the messages they receive are framed as a gain or a loss and how they evaluate that loss relative to a reference point or point of view influences the way in which individuals respond to risk decisions.

• Motivational and cultural constructs also need to be analyzed when evaluating the value of risk decisions as stated by recent research.

• 7 professional athletes (M=31.00, SD=11.05) were interviewed using the semi-structured interview technique.

• The objective was to obtain insight into the factors that might explain an athlete’s decision to use performance enhancing drugs despite the risks associated with use.
• Three major themes emerged from the data: goals, normalization and affect. The findings are discussed and recommendations are made for future decision-making research on risk behaviors within sport.

• Anti-doping authorities should ensure that the effects of message framing are built into future drug-compliance programs.

London, United Kingdom: Sage Publications Inc.

• Three kinds of qualitative data: Interviews, observations, and documents
• Interviews – open-ended questions and probes produce in-depth responses about people’s experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge.
• Observations – fieldwork descriptions of activities, behaviors, actions, conversations, interpersonal interactions, organizational or community processes or any observable human experience.
• Documents – written materials and other documents from organizational, clinical or program records. Data consists of documents captured in a way that records and preserves context.


• n=1000
The purpose of this study was to examine how adolescents' alcohol use and sports activities were related both to childhood sport and problem behavior and to heavy drinking in early adulthood via a pattern-centered method.

Pattern-centered approaches to data analysis are ideally suited for examining hypotheses involving functionally interconnected variables that combine differently within different people both within and across time.

The data was obtained from four waves of the Michigan Study of Adolescent Life Transitions (MSALT) that began in 1983, when participants were approximately age 12, and continued into early adulthood, when participants were approximately age 28.

Pattern-centered analyses revealed that participants at age 28 who used more heavy alcohol primarily for sport participation, also used more than the average amount of alcohol and other drugs at age 18.

Children who were characterized by relatively high levels of sport participation, aggression and other problem behavior at age 12 were more likely to become sport participants who used more than the average amount of alcohol and other drugs at age eighteen.


In high profile criminal cases, the inequities of the criminal justice system are highly noticeable when the defendant is a celebrity.
• The three most common crimes that are committed by athletes are domestic violence, sexual assault, and drug-related crimes.

• One of the reasons why some athletes disregard the law and possess the “I can do what I want” attitude is due to the fact that they feel they have an entitlement.

• Some athletes feel that they are entitled to break the rules because of the disrespect that they have for the NCAA. The NCAA has rules that prohibit student-athletes from receiving monetary compensation while in college.

• Some student-athletes may feel invincible because they are not held accountable for their mistakes. Since these students are vital to the school receiving financial assistance in the form of basketball tournaments or bowl appearances these institutions may turn a blind eye to these transgressions.

• Even judges can be biased in high profile cases. Judges may be unable to adjudicate fairly without the aid of specialized training (training designed to help judges deal with the influence from the media).

• Some have suggested eliminating the jury trial all together for high profile cases involving high profile defendants. Such cases would be adjudicated by a high profile judge only.

• This would not violate the Sixth Amendment right to a jury trial because this would only be used in petty offenses, and the Supreme Court has stated that defendants charged with petty offenses have no Sixth Amendment right to a jury trial.

- The purpose of this study is to analyze the extent to which athletic involvement influences the likelihood of a student committing deviant behavior.
- Data was used from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to test the effects of sports involvement on delinquency among youth in grades 7 through 12.
- Approximately 90000 students from grades 7-12 answered the questionnaire in one 45-60min. class period.
- Surveys addressed information about the students themselves and other aspects of their lives, including their health, friendships, self-esteem, and expectations for the future.
- Parental permission was required through approved school procedures prior to each student being allowed to participate.
- For the male participants in the survey, 48.1% of non-athletes and 47.9% of athletes were delinquent.
- For the female participates, 55.6% reported participating in athletics, with those that were involved in sports and were also delinquent accounting for 33.7%. 35.9% of non-athletes were found delinquent.


- N = 2987
• Participants of the study were 18 years and older.

• A social support survey that was developed for patients in the Medical Outcomes Study (MOS) was self-administered.

• Survey is comprehensive in terms of recent thinking about the various dimensions of social support.

• Two-year longitudinal study.

• The study involved the process and outcomes of care for patients with prevalent and treatable chronic conditions.

• Patients that were excluded included those under the age of 18, those who did not speak English, or were physically impaired in a way that would prevent them from completing the forms (e.g., blind).

• Seeking and receiving help from others is important in our ability to cope.


• High school sport programs can have a positive effect on school culture.

• Support groups such as cheerleaders, band members, student managers, ticket takers, etc. feel a level of satisfaction and success, albeit vicariously by being involved in the events.

• Lewis (2002) stated that high school students who engaged in competitive high school sports had higher grades and more often attended college when compared to their non-athlete counterparts.
• Jock culture is a negative side of high school sports.

• High school athletes are placed on pedestals and mistakes are often more easily forgiven than non-athletic students.

• Elevated level of status and social position can result in these athletes feeling a sense of entitlement and superiority.

• This can result in non-athletic peers experiencing resentment towards the athletes.

• In order to deter this behavior on both parts, those involved in athletics should never be made to feel different or special from the rest of the school.


• n=75; 40 football players and 35 non-athletes.

• Participants were only males between the ages of 18-25 enrolled in college.

• Purpose of this study is to identify which college football players may be at risk of not conforming to team or societal rules, which may ultimately limit them from being successful on the playing field.

• The study wishes to engage in factors such as entitlement, personality, head trauma, and exposure to violence that may be correlated to criminal behavior among college football players.

• An electronic survey assessment was used, consisting of the Entitlement Attitudes Scale (EAS), and Mini-Markers. A background survey was also used assessing exposure to violence, head trauma, and participation in criminal behavior.
• The Balanced Inventory of Desired Responses (BIDR) was also used to ensure that participants were being truthful in their responses.

• No differences were observed in the BIDR, meaning that the participants of both groups responded to the questionnaire with the same level of honesty.

• Groups consisted of a high crime group and a low crime group. Participants were placed in the corresponding group depending on if their responses fell above or below the 50th percentile on the criminal questionnaire.


• N = 7700

• Participants were 6\textsuperscript{th} – 12\textsuperscript{th} graders from North Dakota.

• Participation in sports was negatively associated with marijuana use and police contact while involvement in school organizations was associated with reduced use.

• Parents commonly believe that one way to prevent deviant behavior in their children is to promote the benefits of extracurricular activities and organizations.

• Delinquents contribute to this mindset with statements such as, “There are not enough places to go and not enough things to do”.

• Gang members who have been surveyed reported that they would have discontinued the gang life had more opportunities such as boys clubs, sports, or music been available to them.
• Findings pertaining to the effect of organizational participation outside of school have been mixed.

• Howell (1995) found that community based after school programs reduced juvenile crime in the areas surrounding the recreation center, but this study used the community rather than the individual as the unit of analysis.


• The Rochester Youth Developmental Study began in 1986 as one of three projects in the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s Program of Research on the Causes and Correlates of Delinquency.

• The purpose of the study was to examine the causes and consequences of adolescent delinquency, focusing primarily on serious chronic offenders.

• Rochester study incorporates two theoretical models; interactional theory and social network theory.

• Based on the interactional theory, the cause of delinquency is the weakening of social controls caused by a deterioration of a person’s bond with society.

• For adolescents this bond is fostered through strong relationships with family and parents.

• Adolescents who are strongly attached to their parents and have formed great relationships are unlikely to engage in delinquent behavior.
• In contrast, adolescents who have greater behavioral freedom are more likely to be delinquent.

• The Social Network Theory was developed to compliment the interactional theory.

• A social network is defined as a “specified set of links among social actors”

• Delinquent behavior is expected when individuals are involved with multiple networks that allow or encourage such behavior.


• Michael Oher lived in poverty as a child

• Introduced to a life of drug dealing and gang banging as a youth

• Lived with many different families but finally settled in with the Tuohys

• The Tuohys were a wealthy white family and faced a lot of prejudice from other wealthy families because they were taking in a poor black youth

• Oher’s sheer size and strength led him to play high school football where he gained a lot of recognition for his play

• By focusing on football he was able to distance himself from his past destructive lifestyle

• Obtained a full scholarship to the University of Mississippi to play football

• Ended up getting drafted by the Baltimore Ravens in the first round of the 2009 NFL draft.

- N=48
- Ethnic youth between the ages of 14-16 participated in sex-specific focus groups and individual interviews.
- The purpose of this study is to fill a void in the literature by ascertaining the perceptions of critical triggers to violence and aggression for males and females.
- The highest incidence of violent behaviors occurs during the middle and early high school years with first year high school students exhibiting the highest rates as compared to their older high school counterparts (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008).
- The age group of 14-16 year olds was used because adolescents within the high school setting are better able to communicate their perceptions and experiences within a focus group and/or interview setting than younger middle school students.
- The Interactive Qualitative Analysis methods were used to create the Sex-specific Systems Influence Diagrams (SID), models of influence and outcomes.
- Results indicate that the influences on violent aggressive behavior, peer relationships, popularity, and emotions are sex-specific.
• It is hoped that by understanding the evidence, school and health professionals will be better equipped to create a health learning environment and improve the effectiveness of violence prevention programs.


• N = 366

• The purpose of this study is to understand how the effects of the participating in sports.

• Survey data on 366 high school students from disadvantaged neighborhoods was used.

• The relationship between individual and group sports activities and creating socially acceptable norms was investigated.

• Juvenile delinquency can decrease with the socialization and internalization of social norms due to sports participation.

• A positive correlation between sports participation and lower rates of juvenile delinquency was seen using regression analysis.

• This study supports the social benefits of sport, but the overestimation of the role of sports to solve social problems should be noted.
APPENDIX C

Instructions: Please respond to the following as briefly as possible, but keep in mind that your responses will affect the actions of the Board. Clearly label your responses in sections that correspond to the specific information requested. The Narrative should include a step by step plan of how you will obtain your subjects, conduct the research and analyze the data. Make sure the narrative clearly explains aspects of the methodology that provide protections for your human subjects. You may insert your responses in each section on this page in bold text, leaving a space between the question and your answers. Narrative should not exceed 5 pages.

The application should be submitted electronically (email attachment) or sent to the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs, at P. O. Box 8005, Statesboro, GA 30460, fax (912) 478-0719, and should contain, in this order: a signed cover page (fax, pdf or mail), the project proposal narrative, signed copy of certification of investigator responsibility (CIR) (fax, pdf or mail), human subject training certificate (within the last 3 years), and the informed consent that you will use in your project., the informed consent checklist (optional). Additional information, such as copies of survey instruments, letter of cooperation from institutions where subjects will be accessed (e.g., public schools), advertisements, or any instruments used to interact with participants should be attached at the end of the proposal clearly designated as an Appendix. For electronic submission: First complete the proposal narrative in entirety and “Save As” a word document to your computer or disk named “lastname, First initial _propnarr_Year_Month_Date.doc”. Open and complete cover page. Email all documents to IRB@georgiasouthern.edu. Documents that require signature may be faxed to 912-478-0719, mailed or uploaded in PDF. (Electronic submission is not required.)

Personnel. Please list any individuals who will be participating in the research beyond the PI and advisor. Also please detail the experience, level of involvement in the process and the access to information that each may have.

None

Purpose. 1. Briefly describe in one or two sentences the purpose of your research. 2. What questions are you trying to answer in this experiment? Please include your hypothesis in this section. The jurisdiction of the IRB requires that we ensure the appropriateness of research. It is unethical to put participants at risk without the possibility of sound scientific result. For this reason, you should be very clear on how participants and others will benefit from knowledge gained in this project. 3. What current literature have you reviewed regarding this topic of research? How does it help you to frame the hypothesis and research you will be doing? Include citations in the description.
1. The purpose of this study is to understand the perceptions that male and female athletes and non-athletes have on the minor and major substrates of delinquency.

2. I am trying to answer the following questions: What is the perception that males have towards delinquency? What is the perception that females have towards delinquency? What is the perception that athletes have towards delinquency? What is the perception that non-athletes have towards delinquency? What is the perception that male athletes have towards delinquency? What is the perception that female athletes have towards delinquency? What is the perception that male non-athletes have towards delinquency? What is the perception that female non-athletes have towards delinquency?

3. Hypotheses: Previous research found that delinquency was more prevalent among males, significantly more frequent among whites, but decreased with age (Miller et al., 2006). The majority of research that exists is quantitative in nature. They have found the significance of delinquent behavior by analyzing the frequency that particular delinquent acts occur. My research is qualitative in nature, thus I wish to understand the perception of delinquency from the above mentioned groups which will help to give me an understanding as to why these groups engage in delinquent behavior. With conflicting results as to what delinquency is and how it pertains to athletes and non-athletes, and a lack of qualitative research on this topic, it is clear that further research is needed in order to fully comprehend the scope of this particular field.


Kregar (2007), notes that a negative relationship exists between sport participation and delinquency. As participation in sport increases, delinquency levels decrease. Thus programs such as Midnight basketball were created which promote sports as a way of improving self-esteem, locus of control, and graduation rates in inner cities by keeping urban males off of the dangerous streets.

There are those that believe that as participation in sport increases, delinquency levels also increase. This positive relationship is explained by Miller et al. (2006), who mentions that the jock identity is primarily responsible for more incidents of delinquency. Athletes thus engage in delinquency with the belief that they will be treated more favorably due to
their athletic status. This conflicting research indicates that further research is needed on the subject in order to obtain a consensus.

**Outcome.** Please state what results you expect to achieve? Who will benefit from this study? How will the participants benefit (if at all). Remember that the participants do not necessarily have to benefit directly. The results of your study may have broadly stated outcomes for a large number of people or society in general.

I expect to achieve the following results: I expect to achieve information rich testimonials and experiences from the participants which will help me to develop a variety of themes that can be used to draw conclusions on the subject. Athletes, non-athletes and parents can all benefit from this research. Athletes will learn what situations they should avoid in order to prevent themselves from engaging in delinquent behavior. They will also learn how they are perceived by being able to view the world through the eyes of a non-athlete. Non-athletes can also learn what they can do to prevent themselves from engaging in delinquent behavior as well as developing empathy to be able to see the world through someone else’s point of view. Parents will learn if the involvement in sport can help deter delinquent behavior through the promotion of discipline, sacrifice and building good character.

**Describe your subjects.** Give number of participants, approximate ages, gender requirements (if any). Describe how they will be recruited, how data will be collected (i.e., will names or social security numbers be collected, or will there be any other identification process used that might jeopardize confidentiality?), and/or describe any inducement (payment, etc.) that will be used to recruit subjects. Please use this section to justify how limits and inclusions to the population are going to be used and how they might affect the result (in general).

Participants will be randomly selected from a Southeastern Georgian University and randomly assigned to one of two groups: Athlete group (n=4) or non-athlete group (n=4). There will also be (n=4) male participants and (n=4) female participants. The result will be 4 subgroups categorized as: A male athlete group (n=2), female athlete group (n=2), male non-athlete group (n=2), and a female non-athlete group (n=2).

An individual classified as an athlete is any college-aged student who is currently playing on a varsity sports team at their university. A non-athlete is classified as any college-aged student who is not currently involved with varsity athletics at their university. Participants from all groups will be within the age range of 18-23, both male and female, and considered experts or novices in athletics.

Demographic information (age, gender, year of study) will be required and confidentiality will be assured. No names or identifiers of any kind are on the
survey except that the participants are instructed to indicate whether they are an athlete or a non-athlete based on the definition provided in the study.

Each co-participant will be given a pseudonym when being reviewed by the research team or anyone outside of the main researchers in order to maintain confidentiality. **Methodology (Procedures).** Enumerate specifically what will you be doing in this study, what kind of experimental manipulations you will use, what kinds of questions or recording of behavior you will use. If appropriate, attach a questionnaire to each submitted copy of this proposal. Describe in detail any physical procedures you may be performing.

Semi-structured interviews will take place in private, either in the primary investigator’s office or an agreed upon location, which will allow for confidentiality. Consent forms will be signed before each interview is conducted. It is anticipated that those who are interviewed over the telephone will agree to consent through e-mail correspondence. Co-participants will be informed that they are allowed to withdraw at any time since this is a voluntary study, and that there is no monetary reward for their participation. Each co-participant will be made aware that the sessions will be recorded for accuracy. Afterwards, each participant will be e-mailed a copy of the transcript to review, and he or she will be informed that the lead researcher and the research team will review the transcripts for data analysis. Anonymity of participation and the data will be explained to the co-participants. Each co-participant will be given a pseudonym when being reviewed by the research team or anyone outside of the main researchers in order to maintain confidentiality. The research team members who read the transcripts will also agree to confidentiality.

**Special Conditions:**

**Risk.** Is there greater than minimal risk from physical, mental or social discomfort? Describe the risks and the steps taken to minimize them. Justify the risk undertaken by outlining any benefits that might result from the study, both on a participant and societal level. Even minor discomfort in answering questions on a survey may pose some risk to subjects. Carefully consider how the subjects will react and address ANY potential risks. Do not simply state that no risk exists. Carefully examine possible subject reactions. If risk is no greater than risk associated with daily life experiences state risk in these terms.

The risks involved are no greater than risks associated with daily life experiences.

**Research involving minors.** Describe how the details of your study will be communicated to parents/guardians. If part of an in-school study (elementary, middle, or high school), describe how permission will be obtained from school officials/teachers, and indicate whether the study will be a part of the normal curriculum/school process.
Please provide both parental consent letters and child assent letters (or processes for children too young to read). If not applicable indicate N/A or delete this section.

N/A

**Deception.** Describe the deception and how the subject will be debriefed. Briefly address the rationale for using deception. Be sure to review the deception disclaimer language required in the informed consent. **Note:** All research in which deception will be used is required to be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board. If not applicable indicate N/A or delete this section.

N/A

**Medical procedures.** Describe your procedures, including safeguards. If appropriate, briefly describe the necessity for employing a medical procedure in this study. Be sure to review the medical disclaimer language required in the informed consent. If not applicable indicate N/A or delete this section.

N/A

**Cover page checklist.** Please provide additional information concerning risk elements checked on the cover page and not yet addressed in the narrative. If none, please state "none of the items listed on the cover page checklist apply." The cover page can be accessed from the IRB forms page. (Note – if a student, make sure your advisor has read your application and signed your cover page. (Your advisor is responsible for the research you undertake in the name of GSU.)

None of the items listed on the cover page checklist apply.

**Reminder:** No research can be undertaken until your proposal has been approved by the IRB.