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THE EFFECTS NCAA DIVISION 1 WOMEN SOCCER COACHES HAVE ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING OF THEIR PLAYERS: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

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THE EFFECTS NCAA DIVISION 1 WOMEN SOCCER COACHES HAVE ON THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING OF THEIR PLAYERS: A QUALITATIVE
ANALYSIS

By

Molly C. Williams

ABSTRACT

NCAA Division I college coaches interact with their players on a daily basis, sometimes more than once a day. Research has claimed that a coach-athlete relationship is a critical relationship when talking about psychological effects, and was even compared to that of a parent-child relationship (Sterling & Kerr, 2013). The importance of this relationship stems from the fact that coaches influence athletes' lives in a plethora of different ways. A coach can influence the atmosphere in which an athlete performs; for example a motivational climate is said to be created by the coach from the perception of the athlete (Olympiou, Jowett & Duda, 2008). A coach's role in an athlete's life is not limited to simply the performance of the athlete or the environment in which the athlete is performing, but expands to the mental health, the psychological well being of the athlete because the actions of coaches and their relationships with athletes directly affects the athletes' psychological needs and functioning (Felton & Jowett, 2013). The current research will examine the effects coaches have on the psychological well being of their players. From conducting this research, it was found that NCAA Division 1 women soccer coaches' actions and words can have both a positive and negative affect on the psychological well being of their players that be carried on to the field as well as off.

The effects NCAA Division 1 women soccer coaches have on the psychological well being of their players: A Qualitative Analysis

Molly Williams
Honor's Thesis/Capstone

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Chapter 1- INTRODUCTION

NCAA Division I college coaches interact with their players on a daily basis, sometimes more than once a day. Not all coaches interact with their players as frequently as college coaches, but every coach is involved in some capacity in an athlete's life. Research has claimed that a coach-athlete relationship is a critical relationship when talking about psychological effects, and was even compared to that of a parent-child relationship (Sterling & Kerr, 2013). The importance of this relationship stems from the fact that coaches influence athletes' lives in a plethora of different ways. A coach can influence the atmosphere in which an athlete performs; for example a motivational climate is said to be created by the coach from the perception of the athlete (Olympiou, Jowett & Duda, 2008). Coaches have the ability to influence other aspects like perception of stress, athlete performance, and perception of coach-athlete environment.

Most coaches do not realize the scope of their influence on an athlete; a coach may only consider himself or herself as a mentor or someone who simply teaches the basics of a sport, but the reality is that coaches have an affect on a lot more than just how well a player performs. Coaches have the ability and power to influence the psychological well being of athletes. This is supported by research that has studied how well basic psychological needs of athletes were met by coaches. The actions of coaches and their relationships with athletes directly affect the athletes' psychological needs and

functioning (Felton & Jowett, 2013). Studies have exposed the fact that the leadership styles of coaches have an effect on how well the basic psychological needs of athletes are fulfilled as well as the communication skills of the athletes (Sarı, Soyer & Yiğiter, 2012). This research shows us that a coach's role in an athlete's life can be a bigger role than one might have expected because their influence is not limited to simply the performance of the athlete or the environment in which the athlete is performing, but expands to the mental health, the psychological well being of the athlete.

A study to show how coaches influence the psychological well being of an athlete is needed to provide information on not just whether or not basic psychological needs are being met, but how exactly a coach effects the psychological state of an athlete.

Psychological well being is comprised of both negative and positive influences and therefore both the negative and positive experiences of coach-athlete relationships will have to be researched (Bradburn & Noll, 1969). Studying the effects coaches have on athletes will help provide essential information on the role and influence a coach has. Research has the possibility to change the manner in which coaches interact with their athletes. This could help create better sports' environments that are more suited for healthier states of psychological well being of the athletes.

The study will be limited to NCAA Division 1 women soccer players at Georgia Southern University. Additionally, the participants will not be able to include new upcoming freshmen soccer players due to the fact that they have not undergone any influence from a NCAA Division 1 college coach. Research has to be completed while the players are currently in school and participating in soccer, which will limit the interview process time to that of the soccer season. Depending on the day that the soccer

player is interviewed could affect how the participant answers to the semi-structured interview questions. A bad day at practice or a loss from a game could influence players' answers. To combat this, questions about both positive and negative experiences will be asked to the player so that a more complete picture of the influence a coach has can be observed. It is assumed that people's psychological well being is shaped by life experiences. Additionally, it is assumed that coaches influence players life in some manner or form and therefore will be able to provide answers to the interview questions.

Chapter 2 - REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The study, “Broken Promises: The Effect of Psychological Contract Violation on Student-Athlete Trust and Intentions to Leave Their Team” researches the trust athletes have in their coaches and the athletes’ intentions to leave their team based on the breach of psychological contract between the student-athletes and their coach. A total of two hundred and forty-eight NCAA Division I and Division II student-athletes were used in this study. Each student completed a questionnaire that used a scale for each question that ranged from strongly disagrees to strongly agree. The questionnaire and research relied heavily on the psychological contract theory, which is described as, “individual beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding the terms of an exchange agreement between individuals and their organization (Barnhill & Turner, 2013). The results of this research showed that athletes who believe that their coach has failed to keep up their contractual agreements or promises have resulted in altered coach-athlete relationships. Furthermore, it was found that there was a decrease in cognitive trust in coaches as well as psychological contract violation or negative emotional reaction. If feelings of psychological contract breach were high enough, then the athletes had higher rates of considering leaving the team. The research also showed that fourth year student-athletes showed higher rates of this than first year students. Athletes who had experienced a head coaching change, which was forty-seven of the participants, had higher rates of psychological contract breach as well. Additionally, the researchers discovered that the study, “illustrated the destructive power that emotional feelings, known as psychological

contract violation can have on trust and student-athletes' intentions to leave their team" (Barnhill & Turner, 2013).

The book, "The Structure of Psychological Well Being" was found to describe the basis of the theory on psychological well being in good detail. The overall definition given of psychological well being stated that both positive and negative feelings were important in the conceptualization of well being. It was also found that certain experiences and a person's interpretation of those experiences influenced their state of psychological well being. This can be related to the coaches and athletes in the way that how athletes perceive certain experiences with their coaches can influence their personal psychological state.

"The Association Between the Perceived Coach–Athlete Relationship and Athletes' Basic Psychological Needs" researches coach-athlete relationships and how athletes' basic psychological needs are met based on three specific basic needs. These needs include competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Three hundred and twenty eight Korean collegiate athletes from a variety of sports participated in this study. Each of the athletes filled out a Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire and a Basic Psychological Needs Questionnaire to provide the results. The first questionnaire measured the perceived relationships between the coaches and their athletes, while the second questionnaire examined the degree to which certain psychological needs were being met. The results of this study found that there was a positive correlation between athletes' perceived competence and autonomy of coaches with commitment and closeness, but that there was no correlation with relatedness. A positive correlation was also found with complementarity. The research showed that, "the more athletes held positive and

favorable perceptions of their relationships with coaches, the greater was their satisfaction in terms of BPN (basic psychological needs).” Suggested future research included, a study on the effect basic psychological needs have on the coach-athlete relationship and athletes’ motivation.

The research article, “”What do coaches do” and “how do they relate”: Their effects on athletes' psychological needs and functioning” uses the self-determination theory as a basis for their study. This study was completed in order to examine, “ the links of the social environment, as defined by coach interpersonal behaviors and coach-athlete relationships, with athletes’ psychological need satisfaction and indexes of well-being” (Felton & Jowett, 2013). The researchers wanted to study the relationship between athletes and coaches based on the coaches’ actions and how this affected the athletes to further their knowledge on the subject. Three hundred athletes participated in the study; one hundred and nine of which were males and one hundred and ninety-nine of which were females. Their ages ranged from fifteen to thirty, and their level of play ranged from club to international. Majority of the subjects that participated in the study were white British athletes who played an individual or team sport. The study included multiple questionnaire parts that graded aspects of coach-athlete relationship on a graded scale that went from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The findings of this research included that, “...in order for the coach to create an environment in which the athlete can satisfy their basic needs, the coach must allow the athlete to feel that they can openly contribute to training sessions and have input into what they do” (Felton & Jowett, 2013). This study showed that the actions of coaches and their relationships with athletes affect the athletes’ psychological needs and functioning.

“Understanding Adolescents’ Positive and Negative Developmental Experiences in Sport” studies both the positive and negative developmental experiences in youth participating in sports. The study uses a group of Canadian swimmers with an average age of 16.6 years of age to research what each of the athletes’ experiences were. An interview process was implemented that started off with two generic questions and then used more probing questions to find out more information about the initial statements. The results of this study showed that there were both positive and negative experiences had from their sport. Positive experiences included: “athletes were challenged”, “athletes had meaningful adult relationships”, “athletes had meaningful peer relationships”, “athletes experienced a sense of community”, and “athletes had other positive life experiences.” Negative experiences included: “athletes had poor relationships with coaches”, “athletes were negatively influenced by peers”, “athletes were burdened with parent pressure”, and “athletes experienced a challenging psychological environment.” The discussion of these results also includes that there a research void in the direct study of coach-athlete relationships. The researchers state that, “further exploration of coach-athlete relationships in youth contexts using innovative methodologies (e.g., longitudinal observation of coach-athlete interactions coupled with qualitative interviews focused on the dynamic, intertwined, and reciprocal nature of relationships) would advance current knowledge.”

The research article, “The effects of head and assistant coaches' uses of humor on collegiate soccer players' evaluation of their coaches” studied the link between humor and the likeness of coaches and assistant coaches at a large university. There were no direct theories referenced that the study was modeled or based off of, but the study noted that

the use of humor from teachers and its effect on teacher evaluations had been done before. The author made the connection that teachers and coaches were of a similar position in this regard. Georgia Southern division 1 men and women soccer players were used for this study. More specifically, twenty men and thirteen women soccer players participated in the research by completing two questionnaires; one about the head coach and one about the assistant coach for their respected teams. The results of this study showed that head and assistant coaches who had a sense of humor were more liked by their players. The head and assistant coaches who did not have a sense of humor did not show a positive correlation for likeability by their players. There was not as strong a correlation for assistant coaches; this was explained by the fact that the assistant coaches play a secondary and therefore not as influential role as the head coach.

The, "Relationship Between Anxiety, Self-Confidence, and Evaluation of Coaching Behaviors" uses the Smoll and Smith's (1998) model of leadership as a basis for this study. The main purpose was to examine the, "coaching behaviors of a male head coach of a collegiate women's basketball team" (Kenow & Williams, 1992). Both the coach and athletes perspectives were used to examine the behaviors of the coach; this was accomplished by the overall study being divided into to two smaller "studies". The first study examined anxiety, self-confidence, and evaluation of coaching behavior in a hypothetical setting of facing one of the top three toughest teams in the conference. The second study tried to support the results found in the first study by examining the same variables in the actual setting of facing one of the top three teams from the conference. Eleven division III women basketball players and their male head coach were the subjects for the study. The Sports Competition Anxiety Test was implemented to measure anxiety

levels for the subjects. Additionally, a twenty-eight-question questionnaire was taken to assess coaching behaviors. From the research, the authors found that the players perceived the coach to be more stressed than he perceived himself to be. An interesting finding was that the coach was more likely to perceive his own actions as being a factor in the players playing poorly than the athletes did.

The study, “The Psychological Interface Between the Coach-Created Motivational Climate and the Coach-Athlete Relationship in Team Sports” examines the motivational importance of coach-athlete relationships in team sports. Participants of this study included five hundred and ninety-one British athletes who competed in a variety of team sports including: rugby, football, volleyball, hockey, and basketball. The age range of the athletes was from sixteen to thirty six and the athletes participated in a wide range of levels of play. Two Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaires were implemented in this study, as well as a Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire. The results from the questionnaires showed that the, “athletes’ direct and meta-perceptions of relationships with the coach were highly associated with the perceived coach-created motivational climate.” Additionally, the research supported the fact that both the relationship the athlete has with the coach and the relationship the coach has with the athlete corresponds to the perception of how task-involved and ego-involved the coach-created atmosphere is. Overall, the study supported the fact that the coach-athlete relationship is an area in which an athlete’s needs can be expressed as well as full-filled.

“The Relationship Among Sports Coaches' Perceived Leadership Behaviours, Athletes' Communication Skills And Satisfaction Of The Basic Psychological Needs: A Study On Athletes” focuses on three different areas: the relationship among coaches’

perceived leadership behaviors, the communication skills of athletes, and the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs. A group of two hundred and fifty athletes participated in the study; each of the athletes were students at a variety of universities in Turkey. The athletes participated in a wide range of sports and had an average age of 22.03. All of the athletes completed a Leadership Scale for Sport, a Basic Psychological Needs Scale, and The Communication Skills Evaluation Scale. The results from these scales showed that there was a significant difference in gender regarding communication skills. Additionally, the results provided a negative significant correlation between positive feedback behavior and both the need for relatedness and the need for competence. Need for competence also had a negative significant difference with social support behavior and instruction behavior. Positive significant correlations were present between autocratic behavior and both need for competence and need for autonomy. Communication skills were found to have a positive significant correlation with positive feedback, instruction behaviors of coaches, and social support and training. In comparison, communication skills had a negative significant correlation with the basic psychological needs of the athletes. All of the results supported the concepts of the self-determination theory. The researches also discussed that the satisfaction of three psychological needs can result in higher psychological well being. This lead to the inference that, “Coaches’ leadership styles definitely affect the extent to which the basic psychological needs of athletes are fulfilled.” The results of this study exposed the fact that the leadership styles of coaches have an effect on how well the basic psychological needs of athletes are fulfilled as well as the communication skills of the athletes.

The study, “The perceived effects of elite athletes' experiences of emotional abuse in the coach–athlete relationship” investigates coach-athlete relationships and the perceived effects of elite athletes' experiences of emotional abuse. Participants of the study included fourteen retired elite athletes, six of which were male and eight of which were female. The athletes competed in a variety of different sports and an open-ended interview was implemented to collect data on each of the subjects. Three different areas, perceived psychological effects, training effects, and performance effects were discussed in relation to emotional abuse experiences in the interviews. Each of the three areas are composed of sub dividers. For psychological effects it is broken down into low mood, anger, low self-efficacy, low self-esteem, anxiety, and sense of accomplishment. Training effects included increased motivation, decreased motivation, reduced enjoyment, impaired focus, and difficulty with skill acquisition. Performance effects divided into performance decrements and enhanced performance. The results of this study showed that the emotional abuse from coaches resulted in negative psychological effects. The authors point out that this research is a good basis for more research to be done on the critical relationship of coach-athlete. In comparison with other research that states that the quality of the coach-athlete relationship determines satisfaction and motivation, this study reveals both the positive and negative influence coaches have on athlete motivation and enjoyment.

Chapter 3- METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the following section will be to outline the specific subjects, procedures, organization of data, and expectations used for research that studies how the positive and negative experiences with a coach affect the psychological well-being of a NCAA Division 1 women soccer player.

Selection of subjects

The participants in this study will contain the following qualities: They will be NCAA Division 1 women soccer players. All subjects will be soccer players for Georgia Southern University in the school year 2014-2015. Participants will not include inactive, ineligible, or injured players to help obtain the best data. Additionally, only sophomores to redshirt seniors will be used for this study to limit the study to athletes whose psychological well being has been affected by NCAA Division 1 college coaches. A minimum of eight and a maximum of twelve soccer players will undergo the semi-structured interview process. Participation in the study will be voluntary and each participant will be asked to be interviewed in person.

Procedures

Voluntary, in-person interviews will be used to collect data. The interviews will be semi-structured; prompted by the initial question, "Give an example of both a positive and negative experience in which a coach has affected your psychological state of well

being.” A consent form will be created for each participant to sign prior to starting the interview and the participant can leave or drop from the interview at anytime they wish. The interview will take place in a private setting to ensure comfort, openness, and no outside influences. Interviews will be transcribed after the actual interviews and the participants can look over the transcriptions to assure accurateness. The interview material will be kept confidential from everyone except the participant, the professor mentor, and myself. Before the beginning of the interview, the participant will be made aware of all of the following:

- a.) Interviews will be taped to ensure accuracy and thoroughness.
- b.) The interview may cease at any time the participant wishes.
- c.) Any clarifications about the research study will be answered if asked.
- d.) The participant agrees to answer in a voluntary manner and no compensation will be awarded for participation.
- e.) Once completed, the participants may read over the interview.
- f.) Transcripts of the interviews will only be seen by the researcher and those assisting with the study.
- g.) Participants will be thanked for their time at the end of the interview.

Anyone assisting in the research process will sign a confidentiality form to respect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. The research group will consist of my advisor and myself. All members of the research team will have an understanding of the qualitative process through readings, classes and actual experience with the method (Freakley, 2013).

Organization of Data

For this research, a qualitative approach will be used to gather data. Procedures used by Freakley et al., 2013 and developed by Czech et al., 2004 will be used for this study. These procedures are outlined below:

A. Interview Process

- Collect data through interviews
- Transcribe the interviews
- Obtain a grasp of the interview

B. Organizing the data

- Organize actual interviews
- Group the text into themes

C. Summarizing the interviews

- Preparing themes as summaries of the data
- Verifying the themes with other colleagues

D. Understanding the data

- Bringing meaning to themes
- Explaining the meaning as it relates to coaching leadership at the NCAA division

I level

Expectations

Is it expected that from the semi-structured interviews themes will arise that can be grouped and analyzed. Additionally, it is expected that the analyzed data from this research will provide substantial information on the effects NCAA Division 1 women soccer coaches have on the psychological well being of their players.

Chapter 4 – RESULTS

There were eight NCAA Division 1 women soccer players who participated in this study. All participants were active, sophomore to senior, non-injured players at Georgia Southern University. For the protection of the players, they will be referred to as participants and not by their names. The players' experiences were categorized into two categories, positive and negative. From the interviews, three major theme groups surfaced in both the positive and negative categories.

CATEGORY 1

Positive Experiences

Playing Time

Throughout the interviews, playing time was mentioned the most as a being directly correlated to a positive experience. Participants stated that when they received more playing time that they felt more confident on the field as well as off. Participant 1 stated that when the coach gave her playing time that it, “made me feel really confident going out there.” Another participant explained the correlation when she stated, “I kept starting games, it made me feel more confident in my role as a forward on the team...”

Individual Meetings

The second theme that emerged from the descriptions of players' positive experiences was individual meetings. When the players had personalized one on one time with the coach, they felt as if they were important, valued, and cared about. Participant 2 stated when she was able to talk individually with the coach that she played her best when he did that. Individual meeting time made the players feel as though the coach cared more about them than just a player. Participant 2 also stated, "...and he took care of you personally instead of just an athlete." Participant 5 claimed that individual meetings, "made me feel like I was important to him and he valued what I had to say."

Positive Feedback

The third theme found from the positive experiences was positive feedback. Almost all the participants stated that when they received positive feedback that they felt more confident, supported, and excited, which helped fuel their desire to play more soccer. Participant 8 stated that, "...they made me feel confident like reinforced that I was doing well and stuff and just gave positive feedback." Another participant described how after receiving positive feedback at halftime that it, "made me pumped and I wanted to play some more." Participant 4 stated that after receiving just one compliment at practice it, "gave me some confidence to do better."

CATEGORY 2

Negative Experiences

No Communication

The first theme to arise from the negative experiences in the interviews was the use of no communication. Several of the participants exclaimed that many times the

coaches would just cease communication all together, which caused them to feel poorly about themselves as a player and as a person. Participant 3 explained that when she did something wrong, the coach “wouldn’t say a single word to us and it just kind of made me feel like not well.” Another player, participant 8 described how everything was great with a coach and she felt of value until she, “got hurt and she wouldn’t speak a word to me.” Lack of communication caused players to have self-doubt. Participant 3 illustrated this when she stated, “I didn’t know what I did wrong and I didn’t know how I could fix it.”

Injury

The next theme from the negative experiences was injury. How the coach treated the player after they were injured caused players to feel unwanted and not part of the team. Participant 1 showed this when she stated, “I had a coach that made me feel like I wasn’t good enough because I had been injured.” This caused the player to feel as though they were not good enough to play college soccer at all anymore. Another participant expressed how that when she had to tell the coach she needed surgery the coach, “said not so nice things and was not very supportive.”

Unrealistic Expectations

The third theme that emerged from the negative categories of the interviews was unrealistic expectations. Physically unrealistic standards set by the coaches caused the players to be self-conscious, stressed, and pressured to change. Participant 5 stated, “no matter how much effort I put in sometimes I would feel like it was never enough,” and that the coaches were, “asking me to do things that aren’t physically possible.” In another interview, a participant expressed how body fat testing and strict nutrition suggestions.

She stated that, “it made me more self-conscious because I was always thinking about it and yeah it was always on my mind like every time I ate...” Participant 8 discussed how after being cleared from injury to run she was expected to complete a fitness test just a few days later and pass.

Chapter 5 – DISCUSSION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to see how NCAA Division 1 Women soccer coaches affected the psychological well being of their players. This was researched by asking the players to describe both a positive and negative experience in which a Division 1 college coach had affected their psychological well being.

MAJOR FINDINGS

From this research, two categories were formed and from those two categories themes emerged. When the participants described a time when a coach had positively affected their psychological well being, the themes of playing time, positive feedback, and individual meetings were found. In each of these major themes, it was found that positive interactions caused the players to be more confident, feel valued, important, and cared for. These findings expose the fact that what a coach does verbally as well as non-verbally, affects the psychological well being of the player. A player can carry one compliment from one practice with them for four years. This shows the power the actions and words the coaches use actually have.

In the second category, the negative experiences, the three major themes that arose were no communication, injury, and unrealistic expectations. From these themes, it was discovered that the coach had the ability to make players feel unwanted, not good

enough, self-conscious, and stressed. The significance of these findings is that it shows how a coach's opinion can resonate in a player's mind and can negatively affect their psychological state of well-being. Additionally, when asked to describe both a positive and negative experience, more than half of the participants started describing the negative experience first, even though prompted to share the positive experience first. From this research, it was found that the negative experiences players have had with their coaches that has affected their psychological well-being has just as much impact as the positive experience, if not a slight bit more.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

There were parts of this study that presented limitations. All interviews were conducted on Georgia Southern soccer players. This may have narrowed results to their experiences with only one to four different coaches depending on what year they were and if they had transferred. Although interviews were conducted privately and their names are being omitted from any quotes, nervousness about being recorded may have caused the participants to hold back on telling certain experiences in fear of a coach finding out what they had said.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In the future, it could be valuable to expand interviews to Division 1 soccer programs across the nation. This could help confirm or deny if these types of trends found in this study are limited to a certain region or are monogamous across the nation. Another suggestion for future research would be the inclusion of other Division 1 women sports. This could allow researchers to see if the coach/player interactions are the same

for all sports, and if coaches have the same impact on the psychological well being of their players.

CONCLUSIONS

As of now, NCAA Division 1 women soccer coaches have the ability to coach their players in the manner they deem most appropriate, within the guidelines set by the NCAA. There are fitness tests, grade reports, and physicals that coaches can use to see how their players are performing physically, educationally, and athletically, but there is nothing for coaches to see how their players are doing mentally. More importantly, coaches may not be aware of the impact their actions have on the psychological well being of their players. This research has showed that the words and actions of the coaches can affect the psychological well being of their players in both a positive and negative way. When coaches are made aware of this fact, they will have the power and knowledge to make changes in their actions to ensure the total health of their players, as well as have the possibility to create a better atmosphere to play in. By seeing how NCAA Division 1 women soccer coaches affect the psychological well being of their players, coaches, players, athletic directors, and parents can use this information to better the athletic collegiate experience for women soccer players.

KEY WORDS

Psychological – affecting, or arising in the mind; related to the mental and emotional state of a person.

NCAA Division 1 – national collegiate athletic association highest division of sport competition.

Well Being – the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.

Playing Time – the amount of time a player spends on the field of play during a regulation game.

Positive Feedback – the giving of encouraging or positive words back to a player after they have done something well, ie. a compliment.

Unrealistic Expectations – unattainable goals or standards set by someone for another person or themselves.

Appendix A

Research Question

1. How do NCAA Division 1 women soccer coaches both positively and negatively affect the psychological well being of their players?

Limitations

1. The participants will only be NCAA Division 1 active women soccer players at Georgia Southern University. Therefore, experiences are limited to these specific players.
2. Data will be collected in a single interview session, which could not allow time for more in depth discussions on relationships with coaches.
3. The sample size will be small. This limits the experiences and information to only this small sample.

Delimitations

1. Participant's ages will range from 20 – 22.
2. The participants will be female Division 1 soccer players at Georgia Southern University.
3. All participants will be on the active roster for the 2014-2015 season.

Assumptions

1. All participants experienced some type of psychological effect from their coach.
2. All participants will understand the interview question asked.
3. All participants will answer the interview question to the best of their ability.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barnhill, C. R., & Turner, B. A. (2013). Broken Promises: The Effect of Psychological Contract Violation on Student-Athlete Trust and Intentions to Leave Their Team. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*, 6(2), 179-196.

This study researches the trust athletes have in their coaches and the athletes' intentions to leave their team based on the breach of psychological contract between the student-athletes and their coach. The results of this research showed that athletes who believe that their coach has failed to keep up their contractual agreements or promises have resulted in altered coach-athlete relationships. Furthermore, it was found that there was a decrease in cognitive trust in coaches as well as psychological contract violation or negative emotional reaction. If feelings of psychological contract breach were high enough, then the athletes had higher rates of considering leaving the team. The research also showed that fourth year student-athletes showed higher rates of this than first year students. Athletes who had experienced a head coaching change, which was forty-seven of the participants, had higher rates of psychological contract breach as well. Additionally, the researchers discovered that the study, "illustrated the destructive power that emotional feelings, known as psychological contract violation can have on trust and student-athletes' intentions to leave their team."

Bradburn, N. M., & Noll, C. E. (1969). *The structure of psychological well-being*. Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co..

This book was found to describe the basis of the theory on psychological well being in good detail. The overall definition given of psychological well being stated that both positive and negative feelings were important in the conceptualization of well being. It

was also found that certain experiences and a person's interpretation of those experiences influenced their state of psychological well being.

Choi, H., Cho, S., & Huh, J. (2013). The Association Between the Perceived Coach–Athlete Relationship and Athletes' Basic Psychological Needs. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 41(9), 1547-1556.

This study researches coach-athlete relationships and how athletes' basic psychological needs are met based on three specific basic needs. These needs include competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Questionnaires were completed to measure the perceived relationships between the coaches and their athletes, and examined the degree to which certain psychological needs were being met. The results of this study found that there was a positive correlation between athletes' perceived competence and autonomy of coaches with commitment and closeness, but that there was no correlation with relatedness. A positive correlation was also found with complementarity. The research showed that, "the more athletes held positive and favorable perceptions of their relationships with coaches, the greater was their satisfaction in terms of BPN (basic psychological needs)."

Czech, D.R., Wrisberg, C., Fisher, L., Thompson, C., & Hayes, G. (2004). The experience of Christian prayer in sport - An Existential Phenomenological Investigation. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 2, 1-19.

The purpose of using this study was to implement the data analysis outline, system that was created in this study.

Felton, L., & Jowett, S. (2013). "What do coaches do" and "how do they relate": Their effects on athletes' psychological needs and functioning. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*, 23(2), e130-e139.

The purpose of this study was to use the self-determination theory as a basis to examine, "the links of the social environment, as defined by coach interpersonal behaviors and coach-athlete relationships, with athletes' psychological need satisfaction and indexes of well-being." The researchers wanted to study the relationship between athletes and coaches based on the coaches' actions and how this affected the athletes to further their knowledge on the subject. The study included multiple questionnaire parts that graded aspects of coach-athlete relationship on a graded scale that went from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The findings of this research included that, "...in order for the coach to create an environment in which the athlete can satisfy their basic needs, the coach must allow the athlete to feel that they can openly contribute to training sessions and have input into what they do."

Fraser-Thomas, J., & Côté, J. (2009). Understanding Adolescents' Positive and Negative Developmental Experiences in Sport. *Sport Psychologist*, 23(1), 3-23.

This study examines both the positive and negative developmental experiences in youth participating in sports. The results of this study showed that there were both positive and negative experiences had from their sport. Positive experiences included: “athletes were challenged”, “athletes had meaningful adult relationships”, “athletes had meaningful peer relationships”, “athletes experienced a sense of community”, and “athletes had other positive life experiences.” Negative experiences included: “athletes had poor relationships with coaches”, “athletes were negatively influenced by peers”, “athletes were burdened with parent pressure”, and “athletes experienced a challenging psychological environment.” The discussion of these results also includes that there a research void in the direct study of coach-athlete relationships. The researchers state that, “further exploration of coach-athlete relationships in youth contexts using innovative methodologies (e.g., longitudinal observation of coach-athlete interactions coupled with qualitative interviews focused on the dynamic, intertwined, and reciprocal nature of relationships) would advance current knowledge.”

Freakley, Benjamin C.. "OLD SCHOOL, NEW SCHOOL OR BOTH: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF NCAA DIVISION I MEN'S SOCCER COACHES' PERCEPTIONS ON LEADERSHIP.." *Georgia Southern University* 1 (2013): 1-66. Print.

The purpose of using this study was to have a reference to how a thesis should be constructed and also use the data analysis outline, system that was created by Dr. Czech and used by Benjamin Freakley.

Grisaffe, C., Blom, L., & Burke, K. (2003). The effects of head and assistant coaches' uses of humor on collegiate soccer players' evaluation of their coaches.. *Journal of Sport Behavior* ,26(2), 103-108.

This study researched the link between humor and the likeness of coaches and assistant coaches at a large university. There were no direct theories referenced that the study was modeled or based off of, but the study noted that the use of humor from teachers and its effect on teacher evaluations had been done before. The author made the connection that teachers and coaches were of a similar position in this regard. Georgia Southern division 1 men and women soccer players were used for this study. More specifically, twenty men and thirteen women soccer players participated in the research by completing two questionnaires; one about the head coach and one about the assistant coach for their respected teams. The results of this study showed that head and assistant coaches who had a sense of humor were more liked by their players. The head and assistant coaches

who did not have a sense of humor did not show a positive correlation for likeability by their players. There was not as strong a correlation for assistant coaches; this was explained by the fact that the assistant coaches play a secondary and therefore not as influential role as the head coach.

Kenow, L. J., & Williams, J. M. (1992). Relationship Between Anxiety, Self-Confidence, and Evaluation of Coaching Behaviors. *The Sport Psychologist*, 6(4), 344-357.

This study uses the Smoll and Smith's (1998) model of leadership as a basis for this study. The main purpose was to examine the, "coaching behaviors of a male head coach of a collegiate women's basketball team." Both the coach and athletes perspectives were used to examine the behaviors of the coach; this was accomplished by the overall study being divided into two smaller "studies". The first study examined anxiety, self-confidence, and evaluation of coaching behavior in a hypothetical setting of facing one of the top three toughest teams in the conference. The second study tried to support the results found in the first study by examining the same variables in the actual setting of facing one of the top three teams from the conference. The Sports Competition Anxiety Test was implemented to measure anxiety levels for the subjects. Additionally, a twenty-eight-question questionnaire was taken to assess coaching behaviors. From the research, the authors found that the players perceived the coach to be more stressed than he perceived himself to be.

Olympiou, A., Jowett, S., & Duda, J. L. (2008). The Psychological Interface Between the Coach-Created Motivational Climate and the Coach-Athlete Relationship in Team Sports. *Sport Psychologist*, 22(4), 423-439.

The purpose of this study was to examine the motivational importance of coach-athlete relationships in team sports. Participants of this study included five hundred and ninety-one British athletes who competed in a variety of team sports including: rugby, football, volleyball, hockey, and basketball. Two Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaires were implemented in this study, as well as a Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire. The results from the questionnaires showed that the, "athletes' direct and meta-perceptions of relationships with the coach were highly associated with the perceived coach-created motivational climate." Additionally, the research supported the fact that both the relationship the athlete has with the coach and the relationship the coach has with the athlete corresponds to the perception of how task-involved and ego-involved the coach-created atmosphere is. Overall, the study supported the fact that the coach-athlete relationship is an area in which an athlete's needs can be expressed as well as fulfilled.

Sarı, İ., Soyer, F., & Yiğiter, K. (2012). The Relationship Among Sports Coaches' Perceived Leadership Behaviours, Athletes' Communication Skills And Satisfaction Of The Basic Psychological Needs: A Study On Athletes. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL Of ACADEMIC RESEARCH*, 4(1), 112-119.

This study focused on three different areas: the relationship among coaches' perceived leadership behaviors, the communication skills of athletes, and the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs. A group of two hundred and fifty athletes participated in the study; each of the athletes were students at a variety of universities in Turkey. All of the athletes completed a Leadership Scale for Sport, a Basic Psychological Needs Scale, and The Communication Skills Evaluation Scale. The results from these scales showed that there was a significant difference in gender regarding communication skills. Additionally, the results provided a negative significant correlation between positive feedback behavior and both the need for relatedness and the need for competence. Need for competence also had a negative significant difference with social support behavior and instruction behavior. Positive significant correlations were present between autocratic behavior and both need for competence and need for autonomy. Communication skills were found to have a positive significant correlation with positive feedback, instruction behaviors of coaches, and social support and training. In comparison, communication skills had a negative significant correlation with the basic psychological needs of the athletes. All of the results supported the concepts of the self-determination theory. The researches also discussed that the satisfaction of three psychological needs can result in higher psychological well being. This lead to the inference that, "Coaches' leadership styles definitely affect the extent to which the basic psychological needs of athletes are fulfilled." The results of this study exposed the fact that the leadership styles of coaches have an effect on how well the basic psychological needs of athletes are fulfilled as well as the communication skills of the athletes.

Stirling, A. E., & Kerr, G. A. (2013). The perceived effects of elite athletes' experiences of emotional abuse in the coach–athlete relationship. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 11(1), 87-100.

This study investigated coach-athlete relationships and the perceived effects of elite athletes' experiences of emotional abuse. Participants of the study included fourteen retired elite athletes, six of which were male and eight of which were female. The athletes competed in a variety of different sports and an open-ended interview was implemented to collect data on each of the subjects. Three different areas, perceived psychological effects, training effects, and performance effects were discussed in relation to emotional abuse experiences in the interviews. Each of the three areas are composed of sub dividers. For psychological effects it is broken down into low mood, anger, low self-efficacy, low

self-esteem, anxiety, and sense of accomplishment. Training effects included increased motivation, decreased motivation, reduced enjoyment, impaired focus, and difficulty with skill acquisition. Performance effects divided into performance decrements and enhanced performance. The results of this study showed that the emotional abuse from coaches resulted in negative psychological effects. The authors point out that this research is a good basis for more research to be done on the critical relationship of coach-athlete. In comparison with other research that states that the quality of the coach-athlete relationship determines satisfaction and motivation, this study reveals both the positive and negative influence coaches have on athlete motivation and enjoyment.

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