

DEFINING ALTRUISTIC LEADERSHIP IN THE MANAGEMENT OF INTERCOLLEGIATE COACHING

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ABSTRACT

Altruistic leadership is defined as guiding others with the ultimate goal of improving their wellness. Research on altruistic leadership in coaching has not been published. This study explored intercollegiate coaches' perceptions of altruistic leadership. The findings from the participants' responses to interview questions are presented. An analysis was enacted to determine similarities and differences among coaches' responses. Fifteen NCAA Division I head coaches from the Midwest United States participated in this study. Seven coaches were female and eight were male. Eight coaches were from team sports, and seven were from individual sports. Their coaching experience ranged from 8 to 36 years. The average years of head coaching experience were 17 years. Results indicated that coaches perceived similar definitions for altruistic leadership in intercollegiate coaching. The factors they included were (a) character, (b) caring, (c) empowerment, and (d) balance. These findings are discussed in relation to theoretical and empirical literature on altruism, leadership, and motivation and in practical terms for higher education and sport management.

DEFINING ALTRUISTIC LEADERSHIP IN INTERCOLLEGIATE COACHING

Altruism is a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's well-being (Batson, 1991). No attempts have been made to apply an altruism framework to examine coaches'

motivation. The role of a coach as a leader within intercollegiate athletics has been criticized for rule violations and ethical problems to achieve the ultimate goal of winning (Byers, 1995; Simon, 1991; Sperber, 1990; Zimbalist, 1999). Critics of intercollegiate coaches' have described their behavior as greedy and selfish. These behaviors include: demanding high salaries, pushing to win at all costs, lacking time spent with players, breaking contracts, scalping tickets, focusing on their own income from summer camp revenue, and asking for bonuses based on wins in order to gain greater financial incentives (Byers, 1995; Sperber, 1990; Zimbalist, 1999). On the opposite side, research is lacking on coaches' motivation to improve the wellness of their athletes. This would be defined as altruistic leadership in coaching.

Altruistic leadership is defined as guiding others with the ultimate goal of improving their wellness

Due to the lack of literature on altruistic leadership, it is important to examine this understudied area of leadership in intercollegiate athletics to determine if it exists, to what extent it exists, and how coaches define altruistic leadership. This study has the primary purpose of exploring coaches' definitions of altruistic leadership in their profession. The study is

intended to provide a valuable resource for researchers and coaches interested in the wellness of student-athletes and leadership motivation of coaches.

LEADERSHIP IN INTERCOLLEGIATE COACHING

Despite the dearth of literature on altruistic leadership, much research has been conducted on the conditions of intercollegiate coaching (Gaal, Glazier, & Evans, 2002; Leland, 1988; Martin, Arena, Rosencrans, Hunter, & Holly, 1986; Pastore, 1991; Pastore, Goldfine, & Riemer, 1996; Sabock, 1979). For example, Sabock (1979) discussed the roles that a coach must fill in intercollegiate athletics. These roles included a teacher, disciplinarian, psychologist, mother, father, community citizen, university citizen, and role model. Unfortunately, coaches do not always serve as a good role model within these roles. Sperber (1990) wrote a section about coaches in his book on intercollegiate athletics, and this section was entitled "Greed City." The author described many unethical and selfish behaviors of coaches. These leadership problems in intercollegiate coaching are often reported in the media, such as rule violations, unethical decisions, and selfish overemphasis on winning. Others have reinforced the existence of these "greedy" problems in intercollegiate coaching (Byers, 1995; Simon, 1991; Zimbalist, 1999). Despite the focus on selfish behaviors, the paradigm of unselfish, altruistic leadership has not been studied as a contrast to selfish behaviors in intercollegiate coaching.

Altruistic leadership is the guidance of others with the ultimate goal of improving their wellness. Unfortunately, few studies exist regarding altruistic leadership (Barker, 1997; Staub, 1991; Staub, 1992). Barker (1997) described altruistic leadership as a common higher calling to social compassion from a universal ethical conscious. This definition may apply within intercollegiate coaching for those coaches who have a higher motivation beyond performance records. Perhaps even a universal ethical conscious of helping student-athletes exists within the profession of intercollegiate coaching. Greenleaf (1992) referred

to a similar form of leadership called servant leadership. He defined servant leadership as social leaders who transcend self-interest to serve the needs of others. A difference between servant leadership and altruistic leadership is the foundational components; servant leadership is based on behaviors of helping and altruistic leadership is based on the motivation behind helping. Further studies of altruistic leadership would facilitate the delineation and definition of the construct.

The focus in this study is defining altruistic leadership in intercollegiate coaching. This type of leadership could be studied in the relationship between coaches and student-athletes in intercollegiate athletics. Coaches provide guidance for their student-athletes, and the motivation behind this guidance may or may not be altruistic. Therefore, knowledge of altruistic leadership is important to investigate within intercollegiate coaching. The purpose of this study is to gather information from intercollegiate coaches regarding their perspectives on altruistic leadership in intercollegiate athletics in order to answer the research question of how is altruistic leadership defined in intercollegiate athletics

METHOD PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 15 (8 male and 7 female) NCAA Division I-A coaches from a large Midwestern university in the United States. The range of coaching experience was 8 to 36 years with an average of 17 years of head coaching experience. Coaches represented both men's and women's teams, and individual and team sports. Participants were asked to respond to questions regarding altruistic leadership. They were ensured confidentiality of their identity. Data was reported with pseudo-names of the participants.

INTERVIEW AND INTERVIEW GUIDE

Coaches responded to questions in a semi-structured interview process. The interview followed an interview guide that was developed for this study. Each participant signed a form of confidentiality and responded to demographic

survey questions prior to being interviewed. Examples of the demographic questions included (a) years of coaching, (b) sport currently coaching, and (c) gender of athletes being coached. The interviews extended between 30 to 60 minutes. One researcher conducted the interviews, and each interview was tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Thirteen interviews were conducted in person and two were conducted over the telephone.

The interview guide described altruism and contained five questions regarding altruistic leadership in intercollegiate coaching. Questions referred to the definition of altruistic leadership specifically in intercollegiate coaching in addition to examples in alignment with or opposite to altruistic leadership. An expert panel of ten people in sport psychology, sport management, human resource development, and coaching reviewed the guide and offered suggestions for changes. The experts recommended changing two questions from the interview section to the demographic section, and another change was asking participants for descriptive stories. Probes that diverged from the interview guide occurred when appropriate to gain more information.

DATA ANALYSIS

For this study, the procedures of analysis involved systematically organizing evidence from the interviews. Glense and Peshkin (1992) explained that working with data helps researchers create explanations, pose hypotheses, develop theories, and link stories to other stories. Several steps were taken to work with this data. The oral data had to be transcribed to written form. This allowed the information to be carefully reviewed to see patterns and themes. To facilitate the review, analytical coding was used for categorizing and classifying the data. Each sentence was analyzed for connections to the themes. Analytical files helped organize the coding. The researcher labeled sentences that reflected central themes, such as character and empowerment. Also, the NUDIST N-6 computer program was useful for this examining process. Results of patterns and relationships were obtained after data entry and coding. These results were related back to the research questions.

TRUSTWORTHINESS AND VALIDITY

Marshall and Rossman (1992) stated that qualitative validity depended on the researcher as an instrument. The researcher influences information through his or her knowledge, skills, and abilities. In qualitative terminology, the trustworthiness, dependability, and credibility of the researcher's processes must be ensured. This is often accomplished through triangulation, member checks, a reflective journal, and peer debriefing. Each of these procedures was utilized in this study.

TRIANGULATION

In order to determine whether the same conclusion would be obtained from multiple data collection processes, coder triangulation was enacted. Triangulation allowed the researcher to explore perceptions from different standpoints. In this study, conclusions were analyzed from background questionnaires, interviews, and field notes. These multiple coders of information were used as cross-checks on the interpretations. In addition, multiple coders were utilized to increase perspectives and perceptions on altruistic leadership.

MEMBER CHECKS

Respondents were contacted for member checks. Member checks involve going back to the respondents with information collected and interpretations made in order to clarify or modify the data. Lincoln and Guba (1989) stated that member checks are the most important technique for establishing credibility. The process in this study involved giving the participants copies of their transcripts. They were asked to confirm the accuracy of the statements, and they could add additional comments and delete or change comments. The researcher changed the data recommended from one participant. Other participants responded with a "thank you" for the information. This process added credibility to the research design.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

A reflective journal was utilized in this study to record the researcher's perceptions. This process allowed the researcher to be aware of issues,

biases, and subjectivity (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Therefore, a more trustworthy interpretation was produced. In this study, the researcher kept a journal as a way of recording thoughts and questions. The researcher wrote in the reflective journal after each interview and anytime an important issue occurred in the process. This information was also used to identify important themes for coding. As the study progressed, this record provided the researcher with a dependable resource to review during the interpretive process.

PEER DEBRIEFING

Peer debriefing was also useful to check credibility of data interpretation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described peer debriefing as an external check of the research process. In the peer debriefing process, a peer unrelated to the dissertation process helps explore aspects of the study that might remain unchallenged and encourages the researcher to expand the assumed viewpoint. Two peer debriefers were chosen in this study. One was a doctoral student with an interest in sport psychology and qualitative research. The second was a doctoral student in policy and leadership also with an interest in qualitative research

ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

Marshall and Rossman (1995) described the role of the researcher in qualitative research as an additional “instrument” to be considered. In their view, the researcher changes the paradigm from which the data are viewed. The researcher influences the trust, mutual respect, and reciprocity involved in the interview (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). The researcher was aware of the influence that an individual’s paradigm could have and the role that the qualitative researcher should maintain. The researcher was aware of a bias toward the existence and helpfulness of altruistic leadership to intercollegiate athletics. With knowledge of this bias, the researcher was vigilant to avoid influencing desirable responses by coaches. This was accomplished by using neutral wording in questions and comments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Four themes emerged from coaches’ responses to questions regarding the definition of altruistic

leadership in intercollegiate athletics. These themes are presented in the order of the number of coaches that endorsed each theme. The themes are character, caring, empowerment, and balance. Each of these themes is discussed in the following section.

CHARACTER

Webster’s Dictionary (2000) defines character as “the pattern of behavior or moral constitution found in an individual” (p. 246). Coaches indicated the importance of character in defining altruistic leadership. When asked to define altruistic leadership in intercollegiate coaching, 14 out of 15 coaches discussed the importance of morals, ethics, integrity, trust, honesty, humility, and fairness. For example, Coach Leonard said:

It comes down to your ideology, down to your ethics, and down to your integrity because you stand before them. They know you after having you for four years as a coach. They know whether you're an honest person or whether you're a fair person or not, whether you're moral.

In addition, examples of exceptionally good altruistic leadership in intercollegiate coaching were related to coaches’ philosophy or values. Coach Pam offered an example of one coach with exceptional altruistic leadership, “He has all kinds of things [in his office] about family, university pride, values, faith, and work ethic. You can see that all over almost everywhere in his auditorium.” Coach Kate described the importance of ethical decisions in her program:

I've never seen a live example but you read in magazines about athletes making bad decisions that maybe you'll sweep under the rug. Probably because you want to win that game for nationals or it's good for them since the draft is coming up. In our program if someone violates a rule or goes outside of what we want as a team, they will be disciplined whether it's a national championship or an exhibition. I would never think of giving in for wins for something I think is right.

When asked about behaviors and attitudes that are the opposite of altruistic leadership, coaches described opposites by discussing unethical actions and attitudes. They often mentioned intimidation and harsh comments and behaviors. Coach Al stated:

My philosophy is, as a coach, I will never embarrass anybody or talk negatively to somebody in front of other people or their own teammates. I've seen coaches get right into kids' faces and start swearing at them and everything. I've never done that and hope I never will do that. I know I never will do it. It kind of embarrasses the kid, and he feels bad and the coaches feel bad.

Coach Guy reported:

I've seen that happen plenty of times on television and I've seen it in real life and from other coaches on occasion. They coach through intimidation. You have to do this because I said so. I told you to do this. They motivate differently. They may get in somebody's face or they put their hands on a kid or they intimidate, which I don't buy.

Coaches also mentioned character as a way of improving altruistic leadership in intercollegiate coaching. Coach Howard felt that altruistic leadership started with the hiring process of selection:

Well, we have a group of coaches put together by our administration that are the right kind of people and the right kind of teachers. It starts with the athletic director's beliefs in core values that everyone of them heard during the interview process and is truly what he wants the university's athletics to be all about. I think the people that choose to come here to coach that that is important to them. We're fortunate. We have outstanding people on our staffs, and while there is the reality that you better win some games in order to stay employed, we all really buy into the values philosophy

that really what is most important is the experience we give the student-athletes and the way we represent the institution. We all have the understanding that this is part of orientation.

This statement indicated the importance of taking character into consideration during the hiring process of intercollegiate coaches. One coach voiced concern for altruism due to lack of feedback and difficulties with players' character flaws. Coach Annie stated:

You have to get feedback on how you're doing. If you're winning all the time, there might not be any feedback. Then, the only situation they might be facing is when a kid does something wrong, and it's frustrating. So, you need constant feedback, and keep them up to date on where you think problems are going to be.

From the coaches' comments, character is perceived to be a component of altruistic leadership. Several coaches discussed the importance of working from inside out to develop altruistic coaches. They were referring to building good character within a leader in order to increase student-athletes' welfare. Coaches perceive that character is important to provide an altruistic role model of ethical and moral values.

CARING

Webster's Dictionary (2000) defines caring as "to feel concern, interest, love, or liking" (p. 221). Thirteen of the 15 intercollegiate coaches perceived caring to be part of altruistic leadership. They included topics such as meeting student-athletes needs, providing individual attention, having a parent's mentality, and thinking of the greater good. Coach Shaun spoke about caring:

You can yell and scream all you want, but motivate by knowing it comes from love, support, and care. It is the type of style I have, and other coaches that I have coached exhibit the same type of care.

Many coaches suggested the use of individual attention. They suggested setting aside time to get to know each player. For example, Coach Leonard said:

You can't coach everybody the same way. In my business, I think I have to be more knowledgeable about more things if I'm going to have more success with more people than any other job I could imagine. You just don't put the blinders on and do it, because then you only meet the certain aspects of a certain clientele. The rest of them you lose.

Caring was also communicated as having a parent's mentality. Coaches described themselves as being like a father or a mother to their student-athletes. Coach Marcus stated, "You want to treat them like one of your sons or daughters. I think the administration always looks at it from a standpoint of whether they would want their son or daughter playing for you. You have to always remember that." Lastly, concern for the greater good was also acknowledged in the coaches' responses. For example, Coach Shaun provided this explanation:

Letting someone know that there is something more than yourself. We talk a lot on this team about you're not just doing it for yourself. You have to be willing to be giving of yourself. You have to be willing to do it for the person standing next to you, for your parents, and for the university and so many other things besides yourself. You have to look beyond yourself for you to train hard and your team to do well. I think we've had a lot of leaders on this team and just for myself watching these young men mature. I'm working for these guys who really want to be unselfish and do so much for this team. It's not hard. It's not hard for these young men to give of themselves. As far as myself in terms of being the coach, I'm always available. They may have a test, and they can't make the normal workout. Unlike football or basketball where you have to put an offense or a defense together

to get an effective workout, it is an individual sport. Yeah, it's a team, but as a young man they know the coach is going to be there if I have to come in at 9 o'clock or I have to stay late, whatever, so they can do well in school. They see me being willing to give as much as I can of myself to them. In terms of following my lead, they need to be as giving as you can for their teammates, for their coaches, and for their university. That type of leadership leads them to what they want.

An important concept in Coach Shaun's explanation is the phrase "willing to give as much as I can of myself to them." The coach reinforces the importance of striving for the greater good beyond one's self.

When asked to describe the opposite of altruistic leadership, coaches often gave examples of egoistic coaches who have their own goals as their ultimate motivation. Coach Leonard explained:

Yes, I've seen coaches use athletes for their own level of achievement. I think when they're done they haven't proved themselves. They may have survived, and they may have made a living. But, they haven't left a legacy. Coaching is probably the number one place where you're judged by the people you serve, because their success is totally dependent on what you truly are.

In summary, caring for individuals by meeting needs, providing individual attention, and taking a parent mentality in addition to caring for the greater good emerged from the coaches' responses regarding altruistic leadership. Coaches' perceptions of the opposite of altruistic leadership also aligned with a lack of caring for others. The opposite was egoistic leadership where the focus was on meeting one's own individual goals instead of caring for others.

EMPOWERMENT

Webster's Dictionary (2000) defined empowerment as "to give ability to or to enable" (p. 466). The

coaches' perceptions of altruistic leadership included many forms of empowerment. Ten out of 15 coaches mentioned their desire to teach, to improve life skills, to encourage striving for excellence, and to maintain a positive attitude.

Several coaches included teaching and educating athletes on a variety of life skills. Coach Leonard described actions and attitudes of altruistic leadership as teaching about more than just playing the sport. He said:

You impact them. I get involved with my athletes. I have a variety of speeches I give my kids. I feel as an educator I should. I talk about honesty. I actually talk about sexual issues. I first talked about it as respect for everyone else in their lives, but now it can make a difference of whether you live or die.

One coach's comments combined teaching and altruism. Coach Marcus was concerned with the selfishness of student-athletes coming into intercollegiate programs. He said, "Many players have their own personal reasons. Most coaches will try to take that selfish person and try to change him, but that takes time." He felt that changing the selfish ways of players would improve the student-athlete's interactions with coaches and teammates. Coach Annie focused more on teaching life skills in general. She commented:

I feel that each year I impacted them somewhat. So, life skills are very important. We guide them, show them what's good and what's bad. We see them grow so much between the ages 18 and 22 years old. You can't even imagine what we see.

Another coach when asked about the actions and attitudes of an altruistic leader described how he was taught by his coach to strive for excellence. Coach Guy said:

I didn't think I could do it. I became a little internally negative. I think the coach

probably saw that. I didn't see that. I was a high school sophomore or junior. All I saw was that I couldn't do it. I had this roadblock, it's too much to ask kind of thing. How can you ask this of me? I believe looking back today my coach believed I could do it. His vision was that I could handle it. He thought it would be something of value to me, an obstacle for me to overcome. I didn't handle it well. So, he kicked me out. The next day he made me do it again. I wasn't getting out of the set. I thought it was going to go away. Although, I learned a couple of valuable lessons: 1) if you don't do it right the first time, you're probably going to do it again, 2) you didn't accomplish, to attempt without full effort is not accomplishing. The attempt is not good enough. To complete something, to succeed, to believe you can do it, I obviously didn't believe I could do it. The coach was trying to teach me that. I needed to believe it first. Then, third was to stretch your limits to stretch your imagination to what your possibilities are. Those are the things athletics brings to most kids. Those are some of the values, as I look back today, that my coaches were trying to teach me.

Another example this coach provided as an action or attitude that aligned with altruistic leadership focused on his way of teaching and motivating some student-athletes to strive for excellence. He explained:

I do believe that there are some people that need a strong person to demand excellence from them, not allow them to give no as an answer or 'I'm not going to do that' as an answer. Maybe that is a window in our lives when someone has to drive us that way and get us over the hump. Maybe it's because we're being a knucklehead. We're 16 or 18 or 19, and no one can teach us anything. We have points in our lives when we can't be taught anything. I think at that point in our lives we need to have someone strong who won't take no from us and help

us understand that there are no exits. There are no exits. I use that term with our guys. We're in this together. There are no exits. You can't get out. You can't just walk out the door. You can't crawl out through a window. You're either going to win it or lose it as a team. Nobody points fingers. Nobody is more or less responsible than another. You are responsible. You can't escape it. That's your responsibility to understand you win it or lose it as a team. This is our job today, to be the best we can be. We can't have any excuses. You can't say today was not my day. I felt bad today. So, I teach young people to do it right the first time, to be all into it, to give it all up, to challenge yourself to be in the here and now, to be in the moment, not I'll do it tomorrow.

In addition to Coach Guy's perception of teaching excellence as a part of altruistic leadership, he also encouraged teaching student-athletes to strive for excellence regardless of the expected outcome and to consider the impact this has on others. He encouraged:

If you do these things and you're still striving and you're teaching winning, you could be eighth and you could still be striving to be number one in everything and you're still teaching to be number one, you just didn't get to be number one. You're still teaching it. Here is a difference between the right things. You can fail at what you're doing. People fail all the time at what they're doing. Those folks who choose not to play the best or settle for less than the best, aren't doing justice to themselves, their team, their university, or their alumni.

Another related action and attitude to empowerment is maintaining a positive attitude. Coach Al had this to say about the importance of teaching student-athletes to be positive with themselves. He said:

The other thing is a positive influence on them and staying positive the whole way. In this sport it's easy to get down on yourself real quick. You're out there all by yourself. You can't call timeout. You don't have a half-time or anything like that. You just have to battle it out there. It's hard for the kids to keep it together. We try to keep it like a positive influence out there. I tell them a lot about positive self-talk. You're your own best friend out there, because you're probably the only one out there with you.

According to Coach Al's perception, a positive attitude empowers athletes to overcome obstacles. Therefore, the ability to teach how to maintain a positive attitude would align with altruistic leadership to improve the well-being of student-athletes.

This theme of empowerment also emerged when coaches were asked to provide an example of behaviors or attitudes that were the opposite of altruistic leadership. These opposites include dependence and negative attitude. Coach Kirby spoke about creating dependence on the coach by not allowing choices. She said:

I hate being put in a situation where I don't have a choice or where I'm told what to do. So, your choice may be not to do this, but don't feel like a victim. You always have a choice. Even when they might be in trouble, they still have a choice.

Another coach described a situation opposite of altruistic leadership. In this example, a negative attitude led the student-athletes to feel afraid and powerless. Coach Annie said:

I had a coach that came in after I left a university she told the seniors you can do whatever. I don't care if you like my program or not, because they were from my program. She came in, and she didn't care about what the kids needed. She was just worried about living up to what I built. I can't fault her for that. It's an insecurity. I

don't think that is who she is, but it came off like that. It turned those kids off. They had a terrible experience all the way down to the freshman that I recruited, because they heard how the seniors were treated.

Therefore, according to the coaches' perceptions, altruistic leadership in intercollegiate coaching involves empowerment. Coaches enable student-athletes by teaching them a variety of lessons about building life skills, striving for excellence, and maintaining a positive attitude. Coaches' perceptions of the opposite of altruistic leadership also aligned with empowerment by not allowing independence and presenting a negative attitude.

BALANCE

Webster's Dictionary (2000) defines balance as "a state of equality in amount, value, or importance" (p. 108). In intercollegiate athletics, balance often refers to student-athletes' ability to balance athletics and academics. Seven of the 15 coaches discussed the importance of balance within student-athletes' lives and within their own life. Coach Marcus provided the encouragement he provides his players in regards to maintaining a balance of athletics and academics:

I graduated in four years. I wasn't a physics major or anything like that, but it helped me go out and pursue a professional sports career knowing I could fall back on my education. I was very lucky to have it, because I played up and down in the pros for five years. Then would I have come back to school? Probably not. I just want to stress how important that was to the young kids and getting the opportunity to stay in the game that I liked. It's extremely difficult for kids to accept the fact when I tell them is you better get your education in four years. If you have any intention of playing in the pros, you better get your education. I'm not saying he won't make it, but I'm saying there is a 70 to 80% chance that he won't make it. There is a 20 % chance that he will, but your education is going to be so important to the rest of your life. Kids can go one way or another. They

can go crazy on their education and making sure they understand that. A lot of kids are starting to understand....That's the hardest part of this job, getting them to understand the truth of what we're seeing. You can be a great intercollegiate player, but you're probably not going to make the big money in the pros. Having the experience of playing the minors and having an education after four years, go ahead and go. Try it for a few years. Experience it. You'll come back to your education. You're going to drop thirty to sixty thousand dollars in two years, because they don't pay you very well in the minors. With your education, you could be well ahead of the game. It's hard trying to tell them that when they're freshman or sophomores. Now, the seniors start to understand that. You hope you recruit good enough to combine that character of wanting to get an education and wanting to play intercollegiately, and the pros will be there when they get done. In the meantime, get your education, because you'll enjoy it more. You won't have to go back to school. Go give it a shot. Guys are starting to understand that.

This coach encourages balance between athletics and academics as a part of altruistic leadership. Coaches also show concern for student-athletes' entire college experience. Coach Pam stated:

I think balance is important. Those are things that I think you also have to understand that they're also students. I was just talking to the men's coach from [name of university], and he was talking about dealing with school and trying to play, too. Like this weekend, we're not doing anything. We're off. I think it's really important if you want them at maximum amount at practice and tournaments that they have some time away and time to be college students, too, and enjoy doing other things.

Therefore, coaches connect the importance of balance in student-athletes entire college experiences to altruistic leadership.

The opposite of balance also emerged as an opposite to altruistic leadership. Coach Kate described the overemphasis on athletics and winning, and she believes in balance for her team:

I think you see it sometimes with those higher profile sports, maybe basketball, hockey, and football. That is where it is win or lose at all costs. Maybe the athletes don't get the degree, or you don't have the follow-up and they flunk out of school. You're not looking at the whole picture of what is important about that student-athlete. I think you have to have that balance. If you asked me what was number one, I would say there is a tie of academics and the sport. You have to put emphasis on both of them. You can't let the sport overshadow academics. Academics has to be the top and the sport is right there with it. But, I would say with those other sports the big bucks are hanging there. The priority is that sport and then the academics.

Overall, coaches desire balance for their student-athletes, but also for themselves in the coaching career. One coach thought a coach could consciously choose to be both a winner and an altruistic leader. Although, the focus and requirement to win seems to build barriers that some coaches cannot overcome. Coach Guy provided a summary that also depicted winning as a monster threatening balance:

It's not just about win, win, win, or the university or the team doing well. I would say it is a monster. Winning is a monster. Winning drives us, yet at the same time, it's our method of evaluating ourselves against the competition. Yet, at the same time, it's the worst method of evaluating yourself in how you're doing in a healthy, holistic manner of people. Hopefully you're not going to put yourself in the position where you're evaluated by just that one thing. Many times it is the bottom line.

As this coach described, an overemphasis on winning is a threat to holistic wellness of athletes and coaches. Many coaches responded with desire for balance despite the pressure to win. An attitude that supports a balance of academics, athletics, and personal time was perceived to be in alignment with altruistic leadership.

To summarize the discussion, coaches aligned attitudes and behaviors consistently with altruistic leadership. These attitudes and behaviors that aligned with altruistic leadership included character, caring, empowerment, and balance. In order to guide the wellness of student-athletes, coaches in this study perceived an important need for character in terms of morals, ethics, integrity, trust, honesty, humility, and fairness (Gould, Hodge, Peterson, & Petlichkoff, 1987; Jordan, Gillentine, Hunt, 2004). This particular group of participants is from the highly competitive NCAA Division I-A, and they may be more stigmatized to character flaws when the pressure to win surmounts (Yuan, 2000). Therefore, the ability to maintain character was supported by coaches as a part of altruistic leadership. They also spoke of the importance of giving attention and thinking of the greater good for athletes in alignment with altruistic leadership. The caring attitudes discussed by this level of coaches may surprise those espousing a negative paradigm of selfishness in NCAA Division I-A coaching (Byers, 1995; Crawford, 1986; Murray, 1990; Wendt, 2000; Zimbalist, 1999). Another surprising altruistic leadership theme was empowerment of student-athletes' skills beyond their athletic responsibilities. Coaches spoke of teaching life skills, striving for excellence, and maintaining a positive attitude (Jordan, Gillentine, & Hunt, 2004; Sutliff, & Solomon, 1993). Many of these intercollegiate coaches felt an altruistic responsibility for teaching similar to that of a professor. Lastly, coaches also utilized the concept of life balance in alignment with altruistic leadership. A concern in intercollegiate athletics is the overemphasis of winning in comparison to other aspects of playing and other aspects of a balanced life (Weiss, Barber, Sisley, Ebbeck, 1991). In contrast to this

belief, the coaches in this study supported a life balance for their student-athletes as a part of altruistic leadership in intercollegiate coaching.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND SPORT MANAGEMENT

Coaches' perceptions of altruistic leadership included themes of character, caring, empowerment, and balance. These characteristics could be further validated for intercollegiate coaching management for selection, training, development, and evaluation purposes. Coaches understood how the concept of altruistic leadership applied to their careers in intercollegiate athletics. They easily defined altruistic leadership with coaches' behaviors and attitudes that aligned with having the ultimate goal of caring for the well-being of student-athletes. In addition, they easily suggested behaviors and attitudes of coaches that would be the opposite of altruistic leadership, such as intimidation, selfishness, dependence, lack of discipline, harsh comments and behaviors, negativity, and overemphasis on winning. Therefore, the coaches' perceptions of altruistic leadership provided clarifying, consistent, and helpful information that would be useful for defining this concept of altruistic leadership in intercollegiate coaching management.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the useful information, this study was limited by the nature of the data collected and the sample selected. For example, the data was collected through interviews that have little control over participants' responses. Participants could respond in a way to enhance their self-image, or they may respond arbitrarily without putting much thought into their answers. This study was also limited to Division I-A intercollegiate coaches' perceptions of altruistic leadership. Therefore, the results may not be generalized to other populations, such as head coaches in Division III or assistant coaches in Division I.

These limitations lead to recommendations for future studies on this topic. Based on the findings of this study, the continued examination of

altruistic leadership is warranted. One direction for future research could focus on the development of an altruistic leadership scale for management of intercollegiate coaching. A scale could provide for exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis of altruistic leadership in intercollegiate coaching. This would allow for valid and reliable assessment of coaches' altruistic leadership. Practical recommendations are also available for future study. For example, athletic directors could use these scales for managing the selection and development processes of intercollegiate coaches. In contrast to practical implications, development of altruistic leadership may seem like an ideal rather than an attainable objective in intercollegiate coaching. However, the conscientious effort to develop altruistic motivations in coaches may be the first step towards improving the sensitivity for athletes in a variety of sport contexts. This step moves forward to more support for positive intercollegiate sport management practices and more positive experiences for athletes in sport environments.

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