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Who's to Blame? How Attributions of Blame Impact Perceptions of Effective Leaders

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WHO'S TO BLAME? HOW ATTRIBUTIONS OF BLAME IMPACT PERCEPTIONS OF

EFFECTIVE LEADERS

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts

in

Honours Psychology

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to examine third-party observers' perceptions of a coach and the leadership qualities that he exhibited when he engaged in different attributions of blame in a high-stakes scenario. When a leader blames himself for a negative outcome, there may be a link to transformational leadership such that the leader is actively caring about the well-being of his followers and putting them first. In contrast, when a leader blames one of his followers for a negative outcome, there may be a link to transactional leadership such that he is putting responsibility on a follower and dealing with an immediate concern (Eberlin & Tatum, 2008). Most of the research regarding leadership styles and blame has been conducted regarding businesses, so the current study aims to extend this research into a sport context by having undergraduate university participants ($N = 57$) read a scenario about a high school football player and his coach. Both individuals make a number of mistakes that result in the football team's disqualification from the state playoffs. Individuals either read that the coach blamed the player for the disqualification, or that he blamed himself. Results showed that the coach was seen as more transformational and more competent when engaged in self-blame but was not seen as more transactional when engaged in player-blame. Additionally, results showed that all participants, regardless of condition, attributed the most blame to the player. The findings from the current study can inform best leadership practices in a sport context, as well as provide information on how undergraduate university students perceive effective leadership in relation to attributions of blame.

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Introduction

Effective leadership can be defined in many different ways, and important leadership qualities and behaviours can differ based on situations and tasks. In some contexts, it is primarily important for leaders to be communicative and able to work in a team, such as when working in group projects. In other contexts, it is critical that leaders are organized and pay attention to detail. There is an extensive body of research aimed towards defining effective leadership. For example, Kouzes and Posner (2011) studied credibility in leaders. They define leadership as "a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow" (p. xviii). According to Kouzes and Posner (2011), credible leaders are honest, forward-looking, inspiring and competent. They should also serve constituents, be the first to accept responsibility and hold themselves accountable. Additionally, in a review of research on conflict and leadership, Ayoko and Muchirir (2014) argue that the ideal leader puts the followers' needs above their own. Birch (2008) further described an effective manager in a business organization as one who holds five key traits: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity and sociability. Enveloped in the trait of sociability is being sensitive to others' needs and recognizing employees as the most valuable resource (Birch, 2008). The overall qualities and character of an effective leader across different contexts from these sources suggest that there is a recurring theme of humility and putting the followers' needs first, as well as emphasis on maintaining interpersonal relationships. Much of the recent leadership literature has further characterized leadership in terms of two styles: transformational and transactional leadership. Transformational leadership focuses on the inspiration of followers and caring about their well-being and needs, as well as maintaining interpersonal relationships (Eberlin & Tatum, 2008). Transactional leadership, on the other hand, focuses on solving immediate problems, delegating responsibility and following an exchange

process whereby rewards and punishment are contingent on followers' behaviours (Eberlin & Tatum, 2008). While these leadership styles have different leader behaviours and priorities associated with them, they are, in fact, complimentary in many ways.

In the present research, I explore the effectiveness of these two leadership styles and other leader qualities in a sport context. Specifically, I focus on the perceptions of effective coaches based on how they manage high-stakes situations.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership Styles

According to Bass and Avolio (1989), transformational leadership is characterized by charisma, inspiration and individualized consideration. Transformational leaders strive to increase followers' awareness of important goals and long-term visions. Eberlin and Tatum (2008) further define transformational leaders as those who look at the greater picture and care about the needs and well-being of the followers. In a transformational leadership network, leaders and followers raise each other up to higher levels of motivation and morality (Birch, 2008). Transformational leadership goes beyond an exchange relationship between leader and follower by fostering intellectual stimulation, inspiring followers and taking on greater responsibility for their followers' development (Howell & Avolio, 1993).

In contrast, transactional leadership is explained by Bass and Avolio (1989) as focusing on the presence and encouragement of a contingent-exchange system. In such a relationship, followers enact their roles as agreed upon with the leader in exchange for a reward or avoidance of punishment (Bass & Avolio, 1989). This is a contingent leadership style emphasizing rewards for positive work and punishment or reprimand for mistakes. Transactional leaders focus on solving or avoiding immediate problems, as well as delegating responsibility to subordinates (Eberlin & Tatum, 2008). Transactional leadership is an exchange relationship between leaders

and followers characterized by corrective criticism, rewards for achieving agreed-upon objectives and negative feedback for intentional or unintentional errors (Birch, 2008).

Transformational and transactional leaders not only differ on key characteristics and traits, but also in their decision-making processes. Transactional leaders are high on structural justice, meaning they focus on policies and procedures, while transformational leaders focus on social justice, taking into consideration employees' needs, desires and concerns. Eberlin and Tatum (2008) found that leaders' justice ratings were significantly influenced by their leadership style (i.e. transformational or transactional) and their decision-making ability when related to decisions with far-ranging ethical and moral consequences. They also found that transactional leaders tend to be classified as restricted decision-makers, implying that they deal with more immediate concerns. In contrast, transformational leaders tend to be comprehensive decision-makers, meaning they integrate more information during the decision-making process. Additionally, according to Glick (2013), rational decision-makers have full understanding of the situation and consequences and make proper decisions based on an integration of all relevant information. Thus, it follows that transformational leaders who engage in comprehensive decision-making are considered more rational than transactional leaders who engage in restricted decision-making. Additionally, while there is officially no "preferred" leadership style, leaders were perceived as more just and fair when engaging in transformational leadership practices and comprehensive decision-making processes (Eberlin & Tatum, 2008).

There are certain contexts in which some goals are particularly prevalent and salient, and transformational and transactional leadership may play specific roles in achieving those goals. While both are necessary for effective leadership, in order to achieve certain outcomes, one may be more preferable than another in particular situations. For example, transformational leader

behaviours are important when attempting to achieve team potency (i.e. the team believing in themselves in order to accomplish a task successfully) and team cohesion (Hargis, Watt & Piotrowski, 2011). Additionally, transformational leadership behaviours are often seen to complement and build upon transactional leadership behaviours. For instance, in actual task performance, transactional leadership behaviours become more salient than in practices, team meetings or other leader-follower settings, even though transformational leadership is also important (Hargis et al., 2011). Effective leaders combine both the benefits of transformational and transactional leadership styles to complement each other in different contexts in order to achieve their goals, so they need to have the full range of leader behaviours to draw from – not just one or the other.

It is evident that transformational and transactional leadership styles differ on specific traits, priorities and decision-making processes. Whereas transformational leadership focuses on team cohesion, employee inspiration and overall higher goals, transactional leadership focuses more on specific rules and regulations of the organization, emphasizes a contingent reward system and incorporates discipline to a much greater extent than transformational leadership. These leadership styles have different levels of effectiveness based on the context in which they are utilized, but both contribute to the overall definition of an effective leader.

Leadership in Business and Sport

While most of the literature regarding leadership has focused primarily on businesses and organizations in the workforce, leaders do exist in other contexts, such as in sports, with coaches and captains leading a team of players. However, there is less research on effective leadership qualities and the effects of transformational and transactional leadership for sport coaches. There are some elements of business leadership that overlap with sport leadership, such as managing

individuals with different tasks. According to Boyea (1995), there is a core set of abilities, characteristics and behaviours that effective leaders possess in businesses that is consistent with that of effective coaches. The key dimensions associated with successful coaching are competence, relationship, character and vision (Boyea, 1995). Coaches have to be competent such that they know the sport well, they know how to manage team dynamics and they know specific strategies in order to achieve success. The ability to build and manage relationships is important when coaching a team because of the close coach-player dynamic and the constant interpersonal interactions. A coach must also be of sound character in order to follow the rules of the sport and positively influence their team to play fair. Lastly, vision is critical for a coach because every game the team plays is a steppingstone toward achieving a higher goal, most often a championship title. It is important for a coach of a team to be able to focus on that ultimate goal during the highs and lows of the sport season. While Kouzes and Posner (2011) focused on credible leaders in business, they also specifically identified competence and vision as key leadership traits. Other business literature previously mentioned has also identified characteristics such as sociability (Birch, 2008) and putting the needs of followers above their own (Ayoko & Muchirir, 2014) as critical for effective leadership, which is related to the concept of relationship as outlined by Boyea (1995).

While coaches and leaders in sport do display similar leadership qualities as those in business, there are some important distinctions; specifically, that coaches are not just seen as a leader. According to Lee and Chelladurai (2017), coaches provide human services which "define or alter the person's behaviour, attributes, and social status to maintain or enhance their well-being" (p. 395). Coaches are often viewed as mentors or even parental figures and can have the ability to shape athletes' lives, especially those who are young and in a developmentally

challenging period (Lee & Chelladurai, 2017). Coaches may have more of a personal impact on athletes, especially youth, than a manager or other business leader would on their employees, and therefore may be held to a different standard.

Coaching Culture

Despite leadership in businesses and sport looking different because of the standards followers hold their leaders to in each context, the aspect of a coaching culture can be incorporated and is often encouraged in a business organization. A coaching culture in a business consists of characteristics common to a sports team – frequent performance feedback, positive coaching role models, a supportive environment and a focus on employee development (Watkins, 2008). The supportive leadership shown in coaching cultures in businesses is highly correlated with transformational leadership, especially in relation to developing and maintaining interpersonal coach-follower relationships, as well as a focus on employee needs, concerns and development (Watkins, 2008). Additionally, the supportive leadership found in a coaching culture also correlates with higher follower performance and the feeling of follower empowerment, implying that coaching should be a predominant leadership style (Watkins, 2008). Although there are differences among effective leaders in business and in sport, it can be argued that transformational leadership is the most effective leadership style in a coaching culture, whether applied to the overall context of a business organization or to a sports team.

Effective Leadership in Sport

According to Lee and Chelladurai (2017), an important characteristic of an effective coach is emotional intelligence, which is defined as the appraisal, understanding, management and utilization of emotions in an appropriate manner. They argue that a higher level of emotional intelligence is related to leadership effectiveness such that it contributes to the quality of

interpersonal relationships, which are critical for the occupation of a coach, as a positive coach-athlete relationship ensures success. These qualities, as well as those previously mentioned to overlap with business leaders (e.g. vision and relationships, as described by Boyea, 1995), are also often seen in transformational leaders. It can be argued that effective coaches are also transformational leaders, given the ability to inspire their team and form interpersonal relationships with the players.

For example, Smith, Young, Figgins and Arthur (2016) conducted a study examining transformational leadership in a sport context. They interviewed the players and coaches of a cricket team and found that the concept of individualized consideration, also known as being aware of followers' needs, was a part of transformational leadership that was present in the team. Players also reported that coaches were impactful by caring about and motivating the players. The coaches set high expectations but also showed an ability to understand the players within the team and offer support. According to Smith et al. (2016), transformational leaders in a sport context can inspire followers and predict positive outcomes, including satisfaction, commitment, effort and social cohesion. This study suggests that transformational leadership may be more effective in a sport context than transactional leadership.

Further argument as to why transformational leadership is more effective in a sport context than transactional leadership comes from research by Howell and Avolio (1993). According to them, transactional leadership focuses on contingent rewards. Transactional leaders focus on mistakes and avoid intervening until something goes wrong. In contrast, transformational leaders inspire followers to look beyond their own self-interests and follow the vision of the team as a whole. Transformational leaders encourage followers to take on greater responsibility for their own development (Howell & Avolio, 1993). Howell and Avolio (1993)

argue that transactional leadership on its own is not completely ineffective; if a transactional exchange is mutually rewarding to both parties, it is likely to continue. However, when used in place of more constructive forms of leadership over an extended period of time, it can have a negative impact on the satisfaction and performance of followers. In contrast, transformational leadership may make followers put in extra effort and impact their intrinsic motivation to succeed, which can in turn maximize their performance. Howell and Avolio (1993) found that a more positive contribution to performance came from behaviours associated with transformational leadership.

In sum, although leadership in general looks different in businesses and in sports, research suggests that transformational leadership qualities are seen as more effective and lead to more positive outcomes than transactional leadership qualities. Transformational and transactional leadership can be more effective in different contexts depending on the overall goals of the leader/organization, but in a sports team context, transformational leader behaviours may be more effective because of the focus on team cohesion, potency and interpersonal relationships.

Intragroup Conflict and Blame

Within any business organization or sports team, there are bound to be conflicts and problems that arise due to mistakes. Intragroup conflict is characterized by a disagreement where one group member perceives an obstruction of goals by another group member (Ayoko & Muchirir, 2014). In other words, two (or more) members of the same group/organization are in conflict with each other because one member is perceived as making a mistake or obstructing goals. One plausible reaction to intragroup conflict is attribution of blame – placing responsibility on someone else for making an (often costly) error. Horvath (2001) extensively

analyzed attributions of blame in organizations and suggests that there is often an assumption that there is a single and unambiguous source of an error. As such, an attribution of blame to that person is relatively easy to make. However, in organizational settings such as business and sports, there are often several possible sources of errors, which can make it difficult to assign blame to only one of them. Covariation theory states that in these situations, the individual will rely on their schemas of how individuals should act based on their role in the organization to attribute blame (Kelley, 1967). Therefore, it is critical to examine how roles in an organization influence attribution of blame in order to determine best practices for organizations moving forward. Specifically, it is important to analyze how leaders engage in or perceive attribution of blame as the role models or directors of organizations with a substantial amount of influence due to their positions.

Past research has shown how conflict and blame are viewed from the perspective of either the victim or the perpetrator, but little has been done on how third-party observers perceive attributions of blame. Kluemper, Taylor, Bowler, Bing and Halbesleben (2019) examined how leaders perceive conflict between two employees. According to their findings, leaders (and the general population) often assume that people contribute to their own mistreatment in order to keep the principle and perception of fairness, so blaming others for creating/maintaining conflict is natural.

When leaders are involved in attributions of blame, most research focuses on leaders as the "victims" of blame. This means that they are often the ones who are blamed after an error is made. According to Zemba, Young and Morris (2006), social perceivers assign blame to persons that are proximal to an error or harmful outcome. This could involve blaming low-level employees who might be more proximal to an error than a higher-level leader; however,

oftentimes perceivers lack understanding of each individuals' causal roles in an error or negative outcome. Perhaps they lack understanding because they simply don't have enough information about the incident, or it's too complex, so perceivers will often blame the leader or manager on behalf of the organization (Zemba et al., 2006). Furthermore, sometimes leaders can even assign blame to themselves, rather than it being attributed to them by outside perceivers. According to Shaver and Drown (1986), leaders often take responsibility, rather than blame, for mistakes. However, Shaver and Drown (1986) also acknowledge that these constructs are often combined for naïve perceivers, so they either assign blame to leaders or assume that leaders are accepting blame for a negative outcome rather than taking responsibility.

The Present Research

While there is evidence that leaders can be (and are often) blamed for negative outcomes, less research has examined how leaders are perceived by third parties after they assign blame in a high-stakes situation. I propose that leaders, whether in a business or sport context, will be perceived as having more transformational leadership qualities when they blame themselves, and more transactional qualities when they blame someone else for negative outcomes. Self-blame may be linked to transformational leadership qualities because it involves actively caring about the needs and well-being of the followers, putting them first, and integrating more information when making a decision about who to blame (Eberlin & Tatum, 2008). In contrast, blaming others may reflect transactional leadership qualities because the leader is putting responsibility on the follower and dealing with an immediate concern without looking at all the factors involved (Eberlin & Tatum, 2008). Additionally, transformational leadership can be considered more effective overall in a sport context than transactional leadership (e.g. Howell & Avolio, 1993). Based on these findings, it is also hypothesized that the coach will be perceived as more

fair and more effective, and participants will feel more confident in his leadership ability, when he blames himself compared to when blaming someone else.

To test these ideas in a sport context, participants in the present study read a scenario in which a sports team is disqualified from playing for the state championship because of a number of mistakes made by the coach and one of the players. In this scenario, the coach either blamed the player for the disqualification or accepted blame himself. Then, participants indicated their perceptions of the coach's leadership qualities, effectiveness, and fairness.

Method

Participants

A total of 62 students at Huron University College enrolled in an undergraduate program participated in the study. One participant was excluded because they did not complete the dependent variable measures, and four participants were excluded because they answered the manipulation check incorrectly. The final sample consisted of 57 participants (20 men, 37 women; Mage = 19.56, SD = 1.99). Of the 57 participants, 28 were introductory psychology students, and the other 29 participants were friends of the researcher who were in the upper years of their study. Ages of the introductory psychology students ranged from 18 to 31 (M = 18.89, SD = 2.44), and ages of the researcher's friends ranged from 19 to 22 (M = 20.21, SD = 1.15). An independent samples t-test showed that the age of the two groups differed significantly, $t(55)$ = 2.62, p = .011. Some previous research has shown that there are age differences in perceptions of leadership (e.g. Chong & Wolf, 2010; Haber, 2012). Therefore, the analyses compared responses from these two groups of participants (i.e. introductory psychology students and upper-year friends of the researcher) to examine whether there were differences in their responses to the hypothetical scenario.

Of the 57 participants, 15 were introductory psychology students in the player-blame condition, and 13 were introductory psychology students in the self-blame condition. Additionally, 16 participants were friends of the researcher in the player-blame condition, and 13 were friends in the self-blame condition. Therefore, the number of participants in each condition was relatively evenly distributed.

Materials and Procedure

Students enrolled in the introductory psychology course were recruited through the participant pool and received partial course credit. The first six participants were invited to come into the lab and complete the survey that was administered through Qualtrics. Due to a low number of sign-ups for the in-lab study, the researcher decided to upload the questionnaire online and distribute it to introductory psychology students through an online link. Again, due to an unusually low number of sign-ups, the researcher decided to extend the participant pool to include upper-year students who were friends of the researcher, recruited via social media.

Participants were provided with a link to the online survey via Qualtrics. After consent was obtained, participants were directed to the first part of the questionnaire which asked about basic demographical questions, including age, gender and ethnicity. Participants then read a basic set of instructions that told them to pay close attention to a story they were about to read. Participants were then given a general description about some of the rules regarding high school football recruitment in Texas. The description outlined how high school football players are not allowed to accept recruitment gifts from college recruiters, or else their team would face disqualification from the state championship. Participants were all given the same story to read about a high school football player named Mike, who was being recruited by colleges, and his football coach, Coach Miller. In the story, Mike was trying to organize meetings with recruiters

through Coach Miller, who was not very reliable or available to the player. When Coach Miller did finally organize a meeting for Mike with a recruiter, he had to cancel last minute. However, Mike went through with the meeting anyway and accepted recruitment gifts from the college recruiter. A rival coach witnessed this interaction and reported it, which ultimately resulted in the state commissioner calling Coach Miller and disqualifying the team. Throughout the story, it was clear that both Mike and Coach Miller made mistakes that contributed to the negative outcome of the team getting disqualified. Additionally, after every paragraph of the story, participants were asked a multiple-choice comprehension check in order to ensure that they were properly understanding the details of the story. These questions included, "What sport does Mike play?", "A recruiter from which university are Mike and Coach Miller going to meet with?", and "What is one of the gifts that Mike receives from the recruiter?" The full story, as well as the complete set of comprehension questions, can be found in the Appendix.

After participants read the majority of the story, they were randomly assigned to either the player-blame or self-blame condition. Each of the conditions had different endings regarding the coach's response to the disqualification. Those in the player-blame condition read that Coach Miller stormed into the locker room where the entire team was assembled and yelled at Mike in front of everyone, telling him that he was responsible for costing the team a chance to win a state championship. Participants in the self-blame condition read that Coach Miller apologized to the entire team for not being available to them, taking full responsibility for the fact that the team was disqualified from the playoffs.

After participants finished reading the story, they were asked to answer a question about who the coach blamed for the team being disqualified from the playoffs. Participants were given six parties that the coach could have blamed: Mike, the rival team's coach, the state league,

himself, no one, or other. This question served as a manipulation check, and any participant that answered this question incorrectly was excluded from analysis.

After reading the story and answering the comprehension questions and manipulation check, participants completed a modified version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which was originally designed to test a combination of seven different subfactors of the transformational and transactional leadership styles (Bass & Avolio, 1997). These subfactors include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, contingent reward, management-by-exception and laissez-faire (Bass & Avolio, 1997). In the modified version used in the current study, the subfactors of idealized influence, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration were grouped together based on their likeness to transformational leadership styles, while the subfactors of contingent reward, management-by-exception, and laissez-faire were grouped together based on their likeness to transactional leadership styles, in order to provide scores for these two separate leadership styles. For example, the subfactor of idealized influence is under the scope of transformational leadership because it includes maintaining respect and trust from followers, showing dedication to them and acting as their role model. The subfactor of contingent reward, on the other hand, is related to transactional leadership, as it includes telling others what to do in order to be rewarded and emphasizing expectations. The subfactor of intellectual stimulation was left out of the modified MLQ used in the study because it did not accurately fit the description for either transformational or transactional leadership styles. These modifications to the MLQ were made in order to look at the two over-arching styles of leadership in more general terms and to compare these directly in relation to attributions of blame, rather than examine the different subfactors separately.

Once the subfactors of the original MLQ were grouped together according to the corresponding overarching leadership style, there were 17 items left on the modified MLQ. These 17 items were organized randomly in a questionnaire, in which participants were asked to judge how the statements applied to Coach Miller and his leadership style based on what they knew about him from the story. Each statement was rated on a 5-point scale, with 0 being "Not at all" and 4 being "Frequently, if not always". Transformational leadership qualities were measured using eight items and were averaged to create an overall mean transformational leadership score (Cronbach's α = .88). Some examples of items related to transformational leadership qualities were, "He makes others feel good to be around him", "He helps others develop themselves", and "He helps others find meaning in their work". Transactional leadership qualities were assessed with nine items averaged to create an overall mean transactional leadership score (Cronbach's α = .77). Some examples of items related to transactional leadership qualities were, "He is satisfied when others meet agreed-upon standards", "He provides recognition/rewards when others reach their goals", and "He tells others the standards they have to know to carry out their work."

After completing the items assessing transformational and transactional leadership qualities, participants were asked a series of blameworthiness questions. Participants answered how blameworthy they found the player, the rival team's coach, the state league, and the coach himself. Each party's blameworthiness was rated on a 7-point scale, with 1 being "Not deserving at all [of blame]" and 7 being "Very deserving [of blame]".

Lastly, participants were asked how fair they felt the coach's response was, how confident they felt in the coach's leadership ability, and how effective they felt the coach was as a leader overall. Fairness of response was rated on a 7-point scale, with 1 as "Extremely fair" and

7 as "Extremely unfair". The participants' confidence in the coach's leadership ability was also rated on a 7-point scale, with 1 being "Extremely confident" and 7 being "Extremely unconfident". Lastly, overall effectiveness of the coach as a leader was also rated on a 7-point scale, with 1 being "Extremely ineffective" and 7 being "Extremely effective". These three items were averaged (with fairness and confidence reverse-scored) to create a composite measure of competence (Cronbach's α = .71), where higher numbers indicated more competence overall. Finally, participants were debriefed, thanked for their participation, and instructed to exit the browser.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Comprehension questions. An analysis of the total number of comprehension questions answered correctly (out of seven) showed that the mean correct answers for the entire sample was 6.75 (*SD* = .51, range = 5 to 7). Thus, participants answered most, if not all, of the comprehension questions correctly. To test whether the responses to the comprehension questions differed between conditions and participant sample, a 2 (condition: player-blame vs. self-blame) X 2 (sample: introductory psychology students vs. friends of the researcher) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The number of correct responses did not differ significantly between participants in the player-blame condition (*M* = 6.81, *SD* = .40) and those who were in the self-blame condition (*M* = 6.69, *SD* = .63), $F(1, 53) = .74$, $p = .394$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. The number of correct responses also did not differ significantly between introductory psychology students (*M* = 6.86, *SD* = .36) and friends of the researcher (*M* = 6.65, *SD* = .61), $F(1, 53) = 2.50$, $p = .122$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Finally, there was no significant interaction between condition and sample on number of correct responses, $F(1, 53) = .50$, $p = .482$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. These

results show that there were no differences across groups regarding their comprehension and understanding of the story, indicating that they understood the premise of the story and paid attention to the details.

Main Analyses

To test the main hypotheses of the study, 2 (condition: player-blame vs. self-blame) X 2 (sample: introductory psychology students vs. friends) ANOVAs were conducted for the following dependent variables related to perceptions of the coach: transformational leadership qualities, transactional leadership qualities, and overall competence.[1]

Transformational and transactional leadership qualities. There was a significant main effect of condition on perception of transformational leadership qualities, $F(1, 53) = 7.00$, $p = .011$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$. Participants who were in the self-blame condition perceived the coach as more of a transformational leader ($M = 3.66$, $SD = .71$) than participants who were in the player-blame condition ($M = 3.13$, $SD = .82$). There was also a significant main effect of sample on perception of transformational leadership qualities, $F(1, 53) = 5.93$, $p = .018$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. Participants in the introductory psychology course perceived the coach as more of a transformational leader ($M = 3.62$, $SD = .86$) than participants who were friends of the researcher ($M = 3.14$, $SD = .73$). Lastly, there was no significant interaction between condition and sample on participants' perception of the coach's transformational leadership qualities, $F(1, 53) = 1.05$, $p = .311$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$.

There was no main effect of condition on transactional leadership qualities, $F(1, 53) = 3.15$, $p = .082$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. Participants in the player-blame condition did not see the coach as more or less of a transactional leader ($M = 3.07$, $SD = .61$) than participants in the self-blame condition ($M = 3.38$, $SD = .67$). There was also no main effect of sample on perception transactional

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[1] Analyses on the dependent variables were also conducted with participants' age as a covariate and yielded similar results.

leadership qualities, $F(1, 53) = 2.59$, $p = .114$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Participants enrolled in introductory psychology did not see the coach as more or less of a transactional leader ($M = 3.62$, $SD = .86$) than those who were friends of the researcher ($M = 3.14$, $SD = .73$). There was also no significant interaction between condition and sample on participants' perception of the coach's transactional leadership qualities, $F(1, 53) = 1.05$, $p = .309$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$.

These analyses show that there were significant perceptual differences between both conditions (player-blame and self-blame) and samples (introductory psychology students and friends) for ratings of transformational leadership qualities, but there were no such differences for ratings of transactional leadership qualities.

Overall competence. A significant main effect of condition on participants' overall competence ratings of the coach was found, $F(1, 53) = 10.12$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$. Participants in the self-blame condition perceived the coach significantly more competent ($M = 5.36$, $SD = 1.14$) than participants in the player-blame condition ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.55$). There was no main effect of sample on participants' mean competence ratings of the coach, $F(1, 53) = .86$, $p = .359$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. Participants in introductory psychology ($M = 4.89$, $SD = 1.54$) did not find the coach significantly more or less competent than participants who were friends of the researcher ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 1.45$). There was also no significant interaction between condition and sample on mean overall competence ratings of the coach, $F(1, 53) = .36$, $p = .550$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. Thus, when the coach blamed himself for being disqualified from the state playoffs, he was perceived as more competent than when he blamed the player.

Attributions of blame. To test whether participants' perceptions of blame differed for each of the parties, a 2 (condition: player-blame vs. self-blame) x 2 (sample: introductory psychology students vs. friends) x 4 (party: player vs. rival coach vs. state league vs. coach)

ANOVA was conducted with the last factor as within-subjects. Since the sphericity assumption was violated, the Greenhouse-Geisser correction was used. There was a significant main effect for party, $F(2.58, 131.59) = 19.64$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .28$. Post-hoc tests using a Bonferroni adjustment showed that participants found the player, Mike ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 1.52$), significantly more blameworthy than all of the other parties: the rival coach ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 2.02$), $p < .001$, Coach Miller ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.85$), $p = .029$, and the state league ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 1.76$), $p < .001$. Participants also found both the rival coach, $p < .001$, and Coach Miller, $p = .002$, significantly more blameworthy than the state league. Finally, the participants did not differ in how much blame they assigned to Coach Miller and the rival coach, $p = 1.00$. No other significant effects were observed. There was no main effect for sample, $F(1, 51) = 2.81$, $p = .100$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$, or for condition, $F(1, 51) = .57$, $p = .452$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. There were also no significant two-way interactions: blame x condition, $F(2.58, 131.59) = .19$, $p = .881$, $\eta_p^2 = .004$; blame x sample, $F(2.58, 131.59) = .19$, $p = .875$, $\eta_p^2 = .004$; sample x condition, $F(1,51) = .03$, $p = .875$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$. Finally, the three-way interaction was also not significant, $F(2.58, 131.59) = 2.52$, $p = .070$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Overall, these findings showed that all participants, regardless of sample or condition, perceived Mike as the most responsible for the negative outcome of the story (i.e., the team getting disqualified).

Correlations. To examine the relations between the dependent variables, a series of Pearson's bivariate correlations were conducted (see Table 1). Of primary interest, when participants viewed Coach Miller as more transformational, they also viewed him as more transactional. In addition, they perceived him as more competent, assigned less blame to him and assigned more blame to the player, Mike.

Table 1. Summary of Pearson's Bivariate Correlations Between Dependent Variables.

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Transactional Leadership Qualities	(0.77)	.811***	.349**	.091	.188	-.420**	.544***
2. Transformational Leadership Qualities		(0.88)	.307*	.109	.152	-.358**	.678***
3. Level of blameworthiness – Player				.043	.137	-.590***	.522***
4. Level of blameworthiness – Rival Coach					.519***	-.065	.015
5. Level of blameworthiness – State						-.151	.127
6. Level of blameworthiness – Coach Miller							-.363**
7. Overall Competence							(0.71)

$* \ p < .05$
$** \ p < .01$
$*** \ p < .001$
  Note: Italicized numbers in parentheses represent reliability coefficients.

Discussion

The objective of the current study was to examine third-party observers' evaluations of a coach and the leadership qualities that he exhibited when he engaged in different attributions of blame in a high-stakes scenario. Specifically, it aimed to show that when the coach blamed himself for the disqualification of the team, participants would perceive his leadership as more transformational in nature, and subsequently view him as more competent overall. In contrast, when the coach blamed the player (Mike) for the disqualification of the team, it was hypothesized that participants would perceive his leadership as more transactional in nature, as well as view him as less competent overall. Results partially supported the hypotheses such that participants in the self-blame condition did perceive the coach as more transformational and more competent than participants in the player-blame condition; however, participants in the player-blame condition did not perceive the coach as more transactional.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership Qualities

As was expected based on findings from previous research on leadership styles, as well as attributions of blame, participants did find the coach more transformational when he attributed blame to himself. As shown by Eberlin and Tatum (2008), transformational leaders tend to make more comprehensive decisions by incorporating more information. It follows that the coach, when integrating more details into his decision about who to blame, including details about his own mistakes and contribution to the team's disqualification, and subsequently blaming himself for the mistake, would be seen as demonstrating more transformational leadership qualities. In contrast, transactional leaders, according to Eberlin and Tatum (2008), are more restricted decision-makers and deal with more immediate concerns. Thus, it was predicted that participants would perceive the coach as concentrating on limited information and failing to take into account

the whole situation when engaging in player-blame. Therefore, it was expected that participants would find the coach to be more of a transactional leader when he blamed the player, rather than considering all the contributions to the disqualification, including his own. However, results showed that participants did not find him more transactional when he attributed blame to the player. In fact, correlations showed that when participants rated the coach higher on transformational leadership, they also rated him higher on transactional leadership. One possible explanation for this finding is that transformational and transactional leadership may not be mutually exclusive; rather, as Hargis et al. (2011) point out, they can build off and add value to each other. Seeing as the coach was not perceived as having significantly more transactional leadership qualities when engaging in player-blame compared to self-blame, perhaps it is the case that the coach may have "lost" some transformational leadership qualities when attributing blame to someone else rather than himself.

Participants may have also recognized the high-stress situation the coach was in, having just received a phone call explaining the team's disqualification, when he engaged in blaming either himself or the player. According to Glick (2014), high stress situations can interfere with decision-making processes and increase the possibility of errors in these processes. The story clearly stated that the coach was furious at the end of the phone call, and participants may have realized that he was in a high-stress and highly emotional situation, which may have impacted his decision to react and blame. Participants may have believed that the coach was overall a transformational leader who either reacted well (in the self-blame condition) or inappropriately (in the player-blame condition) when faced with a high-stress decision, rather than as simply a transactional leader when blaming the player. Thus, context seemed to be an important consideration in the decisions that were made by the coach.

Two additional possible explanations as to why the participants did not perceive the coach as more transactional when engaging in player-blame both relate to a methodological flaw of the study itself in relation to the use of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure transformational and transactional leadership qualities. First, the participants had a very limited view of the coach's behaviours and leadership style; simply just his actions as portrayed in the story. This may have made it difficult to rate the items on the MLQ concordantly, because the coach had not directly exhibited some of the behaviours on the questionnaire (for instance, "He helps others develop themselves", "He provides appealing images about what the team can do" and, "As long as things are working, he tries not to change anything"). Additionally, according to Smith et al. (2017), the MLQ is designed for business organizations and may have limited utility within a sport context. This may have also contributed to participants' difficulty in reporting the extent of transformational and transactional leadership qualities seen in the story. However, if the scale truly did not represent the coach's behaviours harmoniously, one would not expect to see significant results for transformational leadership qualities, as was the case for transactional leadership qualities.

The other methodological flaw in relation to the use of the MLQ is in the design modifications made for use in this study. While these modifications were made in order to directly compare transformational and transactional leadership styles and their relation to attributions of blame, they may have taken away some of the original utility of the measure. As this study focused on the intersection of leadership styles and attributions of blame, which has not been extensively researched in the past, the modifications allowed for larger, more general findings. Therefore, these findings are still valuable in order to compare the two overarching leadership styles of transformational and transactional and how they relate to attributions of

blame and overall competence. However, future research should extend on these findings by examining these leadership styles separated into the seven specific subfactors of the original MLQ and examine how each one specifically relates to effective leadership and attributions of blame.

In addition, the items used on the MLQ do not fully relate to the definitions of transformational and transactional leadership qualities as described by some researchers (e.g. Bass and Avolio, 1989; Birch, 2008; Eberlin and Tatum, 2008). The current study was designed based on these definitions, rather than the items used in the MLQ.

Overall Competence

As hypothesized, participants found the coach more competent when he engaged in self-blame than when he engaged in player-blame. It is interesting to note that when participants viewed the coach as a more transformational or transactional leader, they also rated him as more competent. In other words, in the current study, both transformational and transactional leadership styles were equal in overall effectiveness and competence, demonstrating that one is not preferred over the other. It makes sense that both transformational and transactional leadership contribute to the overall competence of a leader. A leader who is simply transformational and inspires and motivates their followers, yet never provides direct performance feedback, would not be considered as effective as one who incorporates both styles. Furthermore, a leader who is simply transactional and engages in contingent rewards and corrective criticism, but never attempts to build interpersonal relationships with their followers, would also not be considered as effective. This point relates to Hargis et al.'s (2011) argument that transformational leadership can add value to transactional leadership behaviours, and both are necessary to effectively perform as a leader. There may be some contexts in which

transactional or transformational leadership is more important and certain behaviours become more salient. For instance, according to Howell and Avolio (1993), in organizations that are receptive to change, a transformational leadership style may be more effective, but in organizations with traditions, rules and sanctions (such as a sports team), transactional leadership may be just as, if not, more effective. In evaluating actual task performance, transactional leadership behaviours may become more salient (Hargis et al., 2011). It is clear that context plays an influential role in determining the effectiveness of both leadership styles.

Attributions of Blame

While there was no hypothesis directly related to which of the parties in the story participants would attribute the most blame to, interesting results were found indicating that all participants, regardless of sample or condition, attributed the most blame to the player, and the least blame to the state league. All participants, again regardless of sample or condition, also believed that both Coach Miller and the rival coach were more responsible than the state league, and less responsible than the player, but were not more or less responsible than each other. One of the most unexpected findings is that the participants did not differ on who they found the most responsible for the disqualification (i.e. the player), regardless of who the coach actually blamed in the story (in other words, regardless of condition). It was expected that blame would be attributed primarily to the player or Coach Miller himself, as the primary characters, because the story purposely included details about mistakes made by both parties. Because all participants blamed the player more than they blamed the coach for the disqualification, it is possible that participants focused more on the mistakes made by the player rather than those made by the coach. According to Zemba et al. (2006), people often blame individuals, especially lower-level employees/followers, that are proximal or close to a harmful outcome. In the current study, it is

quite probable that the participants perceived the player's poor actions as more obvious, noticeable and directly related to the disqualification. The player directly accepted recruitment gifts, and that was the primary reason for the disqualification. While Coach Miller also made mistakes, including not being available for the player, they were less obvious and direct. Additionally, the coach may have seemed less blameworthy because he had apologized for his mistakes (i.e. not making it to the meeting) and requested that it be rescheduled. Participants were also not told why the coach could not attend the original meeting time, so they may have thought that perhaps he had a good reason to miss. Lastly, participants may have thought that because Coach Miller was an authority figure, the player should have listened to him. More research should be done on the effects of ambiguous situations contributing to negative outcomes, as well as the role of authority and superiority, in mistakes and blame attributions.

The other puzzling result is that there was no difference in the amount of responsibility assigned to Coach Miller and the rival coach, despite Coach Miller being a central character in the story and, in the self-blame condition, expressing his own fault in contributing to the disqualification. This finding can be partially explained by the temporal order bias, as defined by Payir and Guttentag (2019): "when people create counterfactuals for a series of independent events, they tend to mutate the later event rather than the earlier event" (p. 262). In other words, participants may have paid more attention to events and actions that happened later in the story as opposed to those that occurred earlier, despite these events being relevant and contributing to the overall outcome. The story in the current study described the coach as making a series of mistakes that led up to the player accepting recruitment gifts, but the coach did not make any contributing mistakes after the rule sanction. Rather, after the pivotal action of the player accepting recruitment gifts, the rival coach actually contributed more than Coach Miller to the

disqualification by reporting the sanction. Although the rival coach's actions did not lead up to the pivotal event, they did directly contribute to the negative outcome. In summary, it is possible that participants attributed less blame than expected to Coach Miller, and more blame than expected to the rival coach, because the rival coach's actions happened later in the story and may have overshadowed some of Coach Miller's prior mistakes.

Another possible explanation for the findings regarding the levels of blameworthiness of each of the parties involved is that of participants' preconceived biases about the parties' responsibility. According to Horvath's (2002) attribution theory, individuals are less likely to evaluate each possible contributing action of an outcome, but rather are more likely to simply make a decision about which party or action caused that outcome. In the current study, it is possible that participants came to their own conclusion about who they felt was responsible for the disqualification before even reading who Coach Miller blamed. Instead of looking at all the details, including the coach's response near the end of the story, they may have had a preconceived belief that the player was responsible, and this decision was likely unchanged by the coach's own attribution of blame to either himself or the player.

Sample as an Independent Variable

Due to the unusually low number of sign-ups from participants in the introductory psychology class, upper-year students also had to be recruited to participate in the study. Sample was not expected to be an independent variable when designing the study, but due to the significant differences in ages between the two groups, it was necessary to include it as a factor. Results showed that there was one significant main effect for sample, such that students in the introductory psychology course perceived the coach as more of a transformational leader than

upper-year students who were friends of the researcher. While this result was not expected, it provides an interesting avenue to explore possible age effects in perceptions of leadership styles.

According to Chong and Wolf (2010), age is positively related to a desire for a more directive leadership style. They argue that older employees value more transactional leadership qualities because they perceive their leaders as having less influence within the organization due to their more experienced outlook. Additionally, they found that the performance of more experienced employees in an organization was not correlated with their level of relationship with their leaders, indicating that they rely less on the transformational qualities of leadership (such as having a personal relationship between the leader and follower, as described by Howell and Avolio, 1993) for their own success and satisfaction. In contrast, inexperienced (and often younger) followers tend to think leaders have more influence because of their limited experience. In relation to the current study, the younger participant sample (those in the introductory psychology class) may have rated the coach as more transformational (and subsequently, more influential) because they have limited experience with leadership and value leader influence more than upper-year students. The transformational leadership qualities that the coach exhibited may have been more salient to the younger participants. In contrast, the older students may have more experience with leaders, and may have more opportunities for student leadership as well, and therefore, might appreciate directive, transactional leadership more so than transformational leadership. Because of this, older students may pay less attention to the transformational leadership qualities exhibited by the coach and subsequently, rate him as less of a transformational leader.

Haber (2012) showed similar findings within the student population, with a much smaller variation in ages than Chong and Wolf's (2010) study. According to Haber (2012), students aged

24 and older may have more life and work experience prior to or during college/university that are often in settings managed in a transactional, hierarchical structure (e.g. retail or the service industry). Because of this experience, older students may have more of a transactional understanding of leadership as opposed to a relational, transformational one. In contrast, younger students with less life and work experience than their older peers may be more idealistic about leadership and place more value on the influential and relational nature of transformational leadership.

Despite the findings by Chong and Wolf (2010) and Haber (2012) emphasizing the established age difference in perception of transformational and transactional leadership qualities, there was actually only a very small age difference in the samples in the current study. While Haber (2012) did focus on the student population as well, the "older students" he referred to were at least age 24, and the "younger students" were just starting their college education. In the current study, the participants in the introductory psychology class were only, on average, about two years younger ($M = 18.89$) than the upper-year participants ($M = 20.21$), and some were actually older than some of the upper-year participants. While it is plausible that there could be age differences in perception of leadership styles (Chong and Wolf, 2010; Haber, 2012), it can also be argued that the age gap in the current study is too small to conclusively attribute any effects shown to true age or life stage differences. In summary, it is unclear why there was an effect of sample in the current study, and future research should examine the relation between age and leadership perceptions further.

General Limitations

While there have been multiple limitations outlined already, such as the use of the MLQ and two different samples, there are a couple of other limitations to consider regarding the design

and implementation of the current study. Despite only a few participants completing the study in the lab, those participants may have felt pressured by each other. For instance, if one person finished the study and left the room while the others were still reading, they may have rushed to finish the story because of social pressure. While this limitation was reduced when the study moved to an online-only format, there are additional problems that can arise with this design. When a participant is able to fill out a questionnaire online on their own time, it is never certain what else they are doing at that time that may distract them from the content of the study. For instance, participants can have multiple tabs open on their computers and be engaged with other social media, or they may complete the study in the presence of others which could affect their performance. Additionally, if participants were distracted, they may have simply guessed the correct answer for the manipulation check. Because they answered it correctly, their data would still have been included in the study, despite the participant not truly understanding the story or some of the details, which takes away some of the effectiveness of the manipulation check. However, in the current study, it is likely that distractions were not too prevalent, because most participants were able to answer the majority of the comprehension questions and the manipulation check correctly.

Another limitation to the current study is the use of a hypothetical scenario that may not be relevant to all participants. While the acceptance of recruitment gifts does result in disqualification in Texas, most of the participants in this study were likely not very familiar with these rules. Even if they did have previous knowledge about high school football in Texas, the story was still fictional and likely did not truly resonate with the participants. The participants' answers may not reflect how they would respond if the situation were to actually occur due to their lack of connection to the story. Furthermore, while the study also addressed the broader

concept of leadership in a sport context, some participants may have had limited personal exposure to sports. However, sports are still a very prevalent topic in today's society, whether through playing or watching, and most participants likely have at least a general idea of how a coach should act. Additionally, all participants would have experienced varying amounts of formal education, and through this also encountered leadership from a teacher or student leader. Lastly, participants have all experienced rules and understand the consequences of breaking them, from behaving in school to homework and exam policies to the law. Even if participants did not have any exposure to the rules of high school football in Texas, they still understand what a rule is and what it could mean to break one. In summary, although participants may not have direct experience with or connection to the fictional story, they would certainly understand the general themes of the story due to previous experience and therefore, be able to answer the questions accurately.

Future Directions

As the current study was based on ideas that are relatively new in the field of social psychology in terms of the intersection between third-party perceptions of leadership styles and attributions of blame by a leader in a sport context, there are multiple avenues that could be explored in future research. First, while the current study inadvertently studied age and sample effects, future research should continue to examine the effects of age on perceptions of effective leadership through recruiting participants from a variety of age ranges and life stages, rather than just using undergraduate university students. Additionally, future research should incorporate the age of the parties in the story and how these supplementary details impact participants' perceptions of leadership qualities and attributions of blame. According to Blanchard-Fields and Beatty (2005), while the age of the participant as well as the age of the hypothetical character

have an impact on blame attributions, the extent to which one personally identifies with characters in the story may also affect blame attributions. Therefore, future research should also take the possibility for identification with characters into account when examining age and life stage of participants.

Another demographic variable that should be further explored is the role of gender in relation to both perceptions of effective leadership, as well as perceptions of the blameworthiness of individuals. According to Haber (2012), men tend to view leadership as more hierarchical and transactional, while women tend to view leadership as more collaborative and transformational. Future research should look at the gender differences in participants' perceptions of the coach's leadership style. Additionally, future research should include gender as an individual difference variable in order to examine the possibility that different genders may be more inclined to blame either the superior or the inferior party. It would also be interesting to examine how participants' perceptions of leadership style and blameworthiness would differ if any of the parties in the story were female. In the current study, the player, both coaches and the state league commissioner were all males, so future research should incorporate females or other genders into scenarios and examine the possible effects of prevalent gender stereotypes and social norms. It has been shown that women are motivated to engage in transformational leadership styles in order to make a positive impact and serve their communities (Haber, 2012), so it would be prudent to examine participants' perceptions of women leaders when engaged in this leadership style or, alternatively, when defying the social norms.

As has been previously mentioned, the current study incorporated a story that only gave participants a brief glimpse at the coach's leadership style and character in one specific situation. Future research should examine leadership behaviours over the long-term, rather than just

isolated events. According to Howell and Avolio (1993), ongoing, recurrent corrective action by a leader can lead to decreases in performance. It would be interesting to look at the long-term effects of the coach engaging in either transformational or transactional leadership styles on his competence and blaming behaviours, as well as the performance of the team in general.

Implications

When mistakes are made, it is a natural human reaction to blame someone for these mistakes. The findings of this study are important, especially for leaders, to recognize how their attributions of blame can impact third-party observers. This research has implications for informing best practices in leadership. Not only is it a helpful tool for leaders when they are considering their own leadership styles and how others may perceive them, it is also helpful in understanding the vision that undergraduate students have of leaders. According to Haber (2012), recognizing how students understand leadership can also help inform their expectations of leaders and how they might seek out leadership opportunities themselves.

This study also has practical implications for informing best leadership practices in a sport context. As shown in previous research (e.g. Howell & Avolio, 1993; Lee & Chelladurai, 2017; Smith et al., 2016), transformational leadership styles may be more effective in a sport context, because coaches are required to be able to inspire and motivate their team, form interpersonal relationships with players and improve team cohesion. Players may feel more confident in their coach and his/her ability to lead the team when the coach displays transformational leadership qualities. Therefore, coaches should be careful about assigning blame for mistakes and negative outcomes to their players, in order to not appear less transformational or effective. Especially in a sport context, where negative outcomes are very

likely to occur (i.e. losing a game), it is important for coaches to recognize the impact their attributions of blame can have on others' perceptions of them as an effective leader.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study aimed to evaluate the intersection between transformational and transactional leadership qualities and leaders' attributions of blame. It was shown that leaders are perceived as more transformational, as well as more competent, when they engage in self-blame as opposed to when they blame others for a negative outcome. These findings not only support and build on previous research in this area, but also explore a unique field in how third-party observers perceive leaders and their attributions of blame in a sport context. These findings are important when considering best practices for leadership, as well as when understanding how students view leaders. Future research should continue to examine this intersection by looking at the effects of age and gender, as well as using more relevant stimuli and measures.

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Appendix: Story and Comprehension Questions

Story Segment 1:
This is a general description about some of the rules regarding high school football recruitment in Texas:

High school football in Texas is a popular route for young players to make their way into colleges on scholarships. Recruiters from colleges all over the country travel to watch high school football games and survey the players. Recruitment season for the high school football league in Texas is a period of about a month in which recruiters meet with players that they are interested in and promote their respective schools. There are some restrictions for football recruitment in Texas, one of which being that players cannot accept any monetary gifts from recruiters while they're still playing on their high school varsity team. These gifts can include: a recruiter paying for a meal, T-shirts or other merchandise from the college, and tickets to a game or concert.

A player has to decline these gifts if they are offered to them during a recruitment meeting. If a player accepts a gift from a recruiter, their high school football team can be disqualified from playing in the playoffs to win state titles.

Comprehension Check 1:
What would happen if a high school football player accepted a gift (a meal, T-shirt or other college merchandise, tickets to a game/concert) from a college recruiter while still playing for their high school football team?
   a. The player would get kicked off the team
   b. The team could get disqualified from the state championships
   c. The coach would get fired

Story Segment 2:
The following is a scenario related to the rules regarding high school football recruitment in Texas that you just read.

Mike is a running back for the Mansfield Lions. He is a very competitive football player who has shown great success in his four years playing for the varsity football team. His dream is to play college football and eventually get drafted into the NFL, which he definitely has the talent for. He is very excited for recruitment season to begin and is looking forward to going to meetings with members of the coaching staff.

Coach Miller is the head coach of the Mansfield Lions and has been coaching there for about 6 years. He has been a very effective coach for the team, leading them to 2 state championships during his tenure. One of Coach Miller's favourite aspects of his role is to facilitate recruitment meetings for his players and ensure that they are getting fair deals from recruiters, as well as following league regulations. In past years, Coach Miller has tried to attend as many recruitment meetings with his players as he could. However, this year, Coach Miller has been less involved

with recruitment meetings in order to deal with personal issues, and has been spending less time at the school with the team.

Comprehension Check 2:
What sport does Mike play?
    a. Hockey
    b. Basketball
    c. Football

Story Segment 3:
As recruitment season comes closer, Coach Miller calls the team together and explains the recruitment process to them. He tells the team to set up all meetings with recruiters through him to ensure that he attends each meeting to facilitate. He also reminds them to not accept any gifts from recruiters, or else the team could get disqualified from the playoffs. One player asks why accepting a gift from a college recruiter would result in disqualification. Coach Miller explains that it is a high school league regulation, but does not give any more explanation.

Comprehension Check 3:
What is the regulation that the player asks about?
    a. Use of steroids
    b. Acceptance of recruitment gifts
    c. Minimum age of players

Story Segment 4:
Mike has received recruitment meeting offers from a few different universities and is excited to meet with the recruiters to hear about their programs. Mike attempts to talk to Coach Miller immediately following the team meeting to try to organize meetings with the recruiters, but Coach Miller leaves quickly. Mike tries to reach out to him for the next three days, but Coach Miller isn't very responsive. Finally, Coach Miller helps Mike arrange a meeting with himself, Mike, and a recruiter from Clemson University. Mike is looking forward to attending the recruitment meeting with Coach Miller.

Comprehension Check 4:
A recruiter from which university are Mike and Coach Miller going to meet with?
    a. Clemson University
    b. University of Notre Dame
    c. University of Texas

Story Segment 5:
Coach Miller has organized the meeting at a restaurant in town. When Mike arrives at the restaurant, the recruiter is waiting for him at a table, but Coach Miller has not arrived yet. Mike attempts to call Coach Miller a few times, but there is no answer. Finally, Coach Miller texts Mike and says something came up and that he will reschedule with the recruiter. Mike knows that they should try to reschedule, but is worried that the recruiter from Clemson may get annoyed and not want to come back. He notices that there is only one other person at the restaurant, sitting by himself at one of the tables, so Mike feels confident that no one would find

out if the meeting continued without Coach Miller. Mike and the recruiter from Clemson talk about the football program at Clemson over their meals, and when the server comes with the bill, the recruiter happily offers to pay for the meal. Mike assumes it's not a big deal for the recruiter to pay for dinner, so he is happy to comply. Additionally, the recruiter gives Mike a Clemson University sweater and 50-yard tickets to the next Clemson vs. University of Texas football game. Mike is very happy about the success of the meeting and is proud of himself for managing it without his coach.

Comprehension Check 5:
What is one of the gifts that Mike receives from the recruiter?
   a. A new football
   b. Concert tickets
   c. A Clemson University sweater

Story Segment 6:
Unbeknownst to Mike, the one other person at the restaurant was Coach Tyson, the coach of the Burleson Panthers, a rival football team from the high school in the next town over from Mansfield. Coach Tyson overhears the conversation between Mike and the recruiter from Clemson University, and witnesses Mike accepting a free meal, a sweater and football tickets. Coach Tyson knows that if he reports the meeting to the league, the Mansfield Lions may be disqualified from the playoffs. This means that the Burleson Panthers have a better chance at winning the state championship, as the Lions are one of their biggest competitors. Coach Tyson puts in a call to the league commissioner almost immediately and reports the recruitment sanction.

Comprehension Check 6:
Who witnesses the recruitment meeting at the restaurant?
   a. Coach Miller
   b. The league commissioner
   c. Coach Tyson

Manipulation Segment – Player-Blame Condition:
A couple of days later, Coach Miller receives a call from the league commissioner about Mike receiving gifts from a recruiter from Clemson University. The commissioner explains that he found out from the Burleson Panthers' coach. The commissioner expressed that the league had no choice but to disqualify the Mansfield Lions from the state championships. Coach Miller hangs up the phone with the commissioner and is furious. He storms into the locker room, where the entire team and coaching staff are assembled, about to begin practice. He goes directly up to Mike and yells at him in front of everyone, explaining the phone call that he just received and how Mike just cost the entire team the chance to win a state championship. He calls Mike selfish for accepting the recruitment gifts.

Manipulation Segment – Self-Blame Condition:
A couple of days later, Coach Miller receives a call from the league commissioner about Mike receiving gifts from a recruiter from Clemson University. The commissioner explains that he found out from the Burleson Panthers' head coach. The commissioner expressed that the league

had no choice but to disqualify the Mansfield Lions from the state championships. Coach Miller hangs up the phone with the commissioner and is furious. He thinks for a while and then goes into the locker room, where the entire team and coaching staff are assembled, about to begin practice. He stands at the front of the locker room and explains the situation. He apologizes to the team for not being available for them during this time of recruitment, and he apologizes for not facilitating their meetings in the way he should've. He tells the team that he takes full responsibility for the fact that they have been disqualified from the playoffs.

Comprehension Check 7:
What is Coach Miller's reaction to the phone call he receives?
    a. He laughs
    b. He is furious
    c. He cries

Manipulation Check:
Who did the coach blame for the fact that the team (the Mansfield Lions) could no longer play in the playoffs in the story that you read?
    a. Mike (the player)
    b. Coach Tyson (the rival team's coach)
    c. The state league and commissioner
    d. Himself
    e. He didn't blame anyone
    f. Other (not listed here)

Curriculum Vitae

Emily Madelaine Wildeboer
Place and Year of Birth: Ontario, 1998

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts, Honors Specialization, Psychology   2020
Huron at Western University   London, ON
- Dean's Honour List

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Centre for Undergraduate Research Learning Fellowship, Dr. Tsang   September 2019 – April 2020
Huron at Western University   London, ON
- Conducted research about infants' ability to remember aspects of lyrics and melodies in Dr. Tsang's Infant and Child Development Lab

Peer Mentor, Psychology Tri-Mentorship Program   January 2018 – April 2018
Huron at Western University   London, ON
- Taught two Introductory to Psychology labs weekly and facilitated discussions, assisted with research questions and designs and explained statistics

PUBLICATIONS

Wildeboer, E. (2019). *Dan Ariely: Behavioural Economist.* Poster presented at the Huron Centre for Undergraduate Research Learning Fall Exhibition Conference, November 28, 2019, London, Ontario.

CONFERENCES

Facilitator, Huron's Annual Leadership Summit   February 2020
Huron at Western University   London, ON
- "Collaborating with Other Personalities" Presentation and Workshop

Presenter, Centre for Undergraduate Learning Fall Conference   November 2019
Huron at Western University   London, ON
- "Writing Services: We're More Than Just Writing" Video Presentation

WORK EXPERIENCE

Peer Tutor   September 2019 – April 2020
Writing Services, Huron at Western University   London, ON
- Assisted students in various programs in writing papers, assignments and resumes, as well as brainstorming ideas
- Participated in peer-assisted learning, teaching students the tools to succeed in writing academically

Head Counsellor   February 2017 – September 2019
Campfire Summer Bible Camp   Markdale, ON
- Recruited, trained and supported over 170 volunteer counsellors each summer

- Facilitated and organized training events and interviews for first-time counsellors

HR Assistant   April 2018 – June 2018
Martinrea International Inc.   Vaughan, ON
- Addressed employee complaints and concerns and liaised between upper management and employees in a confidential work environment
- Calculated and analyzed safety and HR data for 17 manufacturing plants throughout North America

SPECIALIZED SKILLS

SafeTALK Workshop   May 2019
Huron at Western University   London, ON
- Learned effective strategies and techniques for assisting and supporting individuals struggling with mental health crises

Mental Health First Aid Course   June 2018
Redeemer University College   Hamilton, ON
- Learned effective techniques for supporting children and adults struggling with mental illnesses

AWARDS

Huron at Western University
Scholarship of Excellence ($10,000)   2016 – 2019

Centre for Undergraduate Research Learning Fellowship ($1,500)   2019

The Professor Frederick Walter Burd Prize in Psychology   2019

The Dr. Nelson Heapy Award in Social Psychology   2019

The BMO Financial Group Scholarship ($3,400)   2018

The Frank P. Leahy Third-Year Scholarship ($2,300)   2018

The John Cronyn Third-Year Scholarship ($1,200)   2018

The Dr. Stephen Erdle Award in Quantitative Psychology   2018

The Professor Mark R. Cole Award in Experimental Psychology   2018

The Eddy Smet Mathematics Prize in Linear Algebra and Finite Mathematics   2017

The Hamish Macdonald Memorial Prize in Introduction to Psychology   2017

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Western University's Orientation Program, Huron Head Soph   November 2018 – April 2020
- Led a team of 45 orientation volunteers in assisting 530 first year students transition to university through events and initiatives

Huron Psychology Association, Vice President Events   April 2019 – April 2020
- Planned events and initiatives for an academic-based club with about 60 members by coordinating with Students' Council and relevant faculty

Western University's Orientation Program, Huron Soph   January 2017 – April 2019
- Participated in assisting first year students transition to university through their orientation week

Outreach 360 Nicaragua, Student Team Leader   February 2018
- Guided 12 student volunteers on a service trip to a learning centre in Jinotega, Nicaragua to teach beginner and advanced English to 50+ children

Pan de Vida Children's Home, English Teacher   May 2017
- Taught beginner and advanced English in an orphanage in Queretaro, Mexico and supervised the girls' dormitory