

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF  
A SOUTH KOREAN AND US HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

By

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A Dissertation Approved on

June 29, 2021

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## DEDICATION

Dedicated to my wife, Jeongmin Yun, and my heart, Ella Hayoon Lee.

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## ABSTRACT

### A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF A SOUTH KOREAN AND US HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

Youngjik Lee

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In South Korea, many high school athletics practitioners are interested in adapting US high school athletics policies to South Korean high school athletics. However, due to the cultural differences in the overall systems and environments of high school athletics in each country, directly applying US high school athletic policies does not always fit in South Korea.

The purpose of this study was to examine and compare the perceptions of principals and athletic directors of the organizational cultures of a high school athletic department in South Korea and in the USA. Also, this study examined the effect of the organizational culture of each country's high school athletic department on its members' lives and thought. Utilizing a qualitative comparative case study research perspective, the study incorporated Organizational Culture and Stakeholder theories as the theoretical lenses. This study was able to identify all three levels of organizational culture – artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions (Schein, 2010) – of each



country's selected high school athletic department through the analyses of official websites and documents and in-depth interviews with the principals and athletic directors.

One main finding from the study was the differences in espoused beliefs and values between the schools. The South Korean high school athletic director and principal who participated in the study discussed the following espoused beliefs/values of their athletic department: (a) student-athletes' athletic performance, and (b) balancing athletics and academics. On the other hand, the US high school athletic director and principal emphasized student-athletes competing at the college level with a scholarship. Both schools were concerned about student-athletes' athletic performance and achievement since those directly affected their future college or professional careers.

A second finding dealt with underlying assumptions. The South Korean administrators identified the underlying assumption of the importance of following the rules implemented by the provincial Office of Education. On the other hand, the underlying assumption at the US high school was making their student-athletes better people.

This study provided valuable insights for South Korean high school athletics practitioners who are interested in adapting policies of US high school athletics. Most importantly, South Korean high school athletics practitioners will need to understand the cultural differences in the overall systems and environments between high school athletics in the US and South Korea before adapting the policies of US high school athletics. Athletic departments in each country exhibit their own unique factors at all three levels of organizational culture (i.e., artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumption).

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

High school sports can be viewed as an integral part of secondary students' educational experiences, given their benefits and importance (Boekel et al., 2016). According to the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), in the US almost eight million high school students (57% of all high school students in the US) participate in some kind of sport (NFHS, 2019). Previous research regarding the role of high school sports indicates participation in high school sport positively affects students' academic achievement, enhances psychological and physical well-being, and improves relationships with peers (Boekel et al., 2016; Ransom & Ransom, 2018; Wretman, 2017). High school sports look different by types of school, grade levels, district resources, and sports (i.e., team or individual) (Wretman, 2017). In addition, the system and environment of high school sports varies widely by countries. For example, most European countries do not have high school sports, just club sports. England has a high school sports system, but it is overshadowed by club sports. In other words, most European and UK high school age students play their sports through participating in community based or/and intramural club teams and not their high schools (Forbes, 2012). In South Korea, there are around twenty thousand high school student-athletes (0.02% of all high school students in South Korea) competing in a total of sixty different sports (Korean Sport & Olympic Committee, 2020). Both public and private high schools offer athletic opportunities. This study focuses on high school sport in

South Korea and the United States, so the following sections present overall information of those two countries.

### **Comparing High School Athletics in South Korea and the United States**

In the following section, overall information of South Korea and US high school athletics (e.g., history, number of participants) will be explored.

#### **South Korean High School Athletics**

South Korean high school sports began in the 1970s. The main purpose of South Korean high school athletics was fostering national level elite student-athletes who could enhance the nation's image in international sporting events such as the Olympic Games (Lee, 2005). At that time, South Korean government officials used sport as a platform to enhance the image of South Korea (Lim & Huh, 2009). For example, South Korea not only hosted the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympic Games but also pressed their athletes to win gold medals to advertise the country's development and economic success (Lee, 2006).

To develop high profile athletes, the government of South Korea supported elite athletes through national level policies which focused primarily on athletic performance and achievement (Heo, 2011; Hong & Ryu, 2007). One of those policies dealt with organizing high school athletics to develop elite level student-athletes in high schools. Since the primary purpose of high school athletics was solely the athletic achievement of student-athletes, especially gold medals from international sporting events, South Korean high school student-athletes were required to devote all their time and attention to training for their sports (Heo, 2011). Beyond that, these athletes were not allowed to pursue a proper education during their time in high school since it would take them away

from training (Heo, 2010). In other words, South Korean high school athletics were viewed as a farm system for elite level athletes (Ham, 2003).

This imbalanced culture caused many negative effects for South Korean high school student-athletes including lack of academic skills, numerous injuries, and psychological pressure (Ham, 2003; Kim et al., 2014; Kim, 2021). Furthermore, this culture also affects the sporting careers of South Korean athletes as well. Even though student-athletes devote all their time and energy to their sports, only a limited number of athletes could become professional athletes due to unpredictable variables such as injuries and family circumstances (Ham, 2003; Huml et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2014). Also, the competitive life span of a South Korean professional athlete is short with the average age of retired professional athletes at only 23.8 years old (Yoo, 2016). In other words, most South Korean high school student-athletes will need to integrate into society as a normal member of South Korean society early in their adulthood without the title of athlete (Otto et al., 2019). However, as previously mentioned, since the South Korean sport culture requires high school student-athletes to spend more time training than developing academic skills and knowledge, upon retirement, these South Korean student-athletes struggle to integrate successfully into society (Heo, 2010).

Since the 1970s, however, little has changed. The perception of South Korean athletes as being successful only when they are recognized as high-profile athletes has resulted in South Korean student-athletes behaving like parts of a ‘sport machine’ whereby they focused all their time and energy on training (Ham, 2003).



## **US High School Athletics**

US high school sports began in the mid-1800s. At the start, students organized the events and competed amongst themselves. However, as physical education became a part of the formal educational curriculum, many schools invested resources in high school sports (Zdroik, 2016). In the 1920s, the national governing body of high school sport, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), was formed in reaction to the increasing participation and demand for high school sport.

With the passage of Title IX in 1972, female high school students' sport participation increased significantly. By the early 2000s, the rate of female participation in sport began to increase steadily. Today, almost every high school in the United States provides interscholastic programs for both boys and girls to enhance their overall well-being, including behavioral, physical, and psychological benefits (NFHS, 2020). For example, previous research illustrated a significant positive relationship between high school students' academic achievement and their level of athletic participation. As such, most US high schools provide their students with opportunities to participate in school sport. As evidenced, almost eight million US high school students participate in high school sport (NFHS, 2019). In other words, high school sport is the largest sports program in the US.

Even though many positive outcomes result from participation in high school athletics, there are also unhealthy and negative outcomes. For example, previous research found that sport participation caused higher levels of alcohol consumption by student-athletes who played contact sports (Veliz et al., 2015). Additionally, the high rates of concussion injuries in high school football players and general physical injuries in contact

sports has become a controversial issue (Green, 2015). Due to these reasons, some people have advocated the separation of competitive sport from US high schools' educational program (Coakley, 2015; Coleman & Johnstone, 1961). Even though there are some controversial issues in US high school athletics, the system and academic policies of US high school athletics have been regarded as a model which potentially could address the current problems that exist in South Korean high school athletics.

### **Academic Issues in South Korean High School Athletics**

The South Korean government has tried to remedy the current environment which requires South Korean high school student-athletes to focus only on their athletic performance by adapting policies from US high school athletics. In 2013, the South Korean Ministry of Education and Ministry of Sports implemented a minimum GPA requirement policy for Korean student-athletes whereby students who do not meet this minimum GPA will not be able to compete for a semester. However, decisions about the new policy were based on policies for American high school athletics (i.e., No-pass, No-play). In fact, many South Korean sport scholars and practitioners who are interested in improving the existing high school sport culture in South Korea have turned to policies used in foreign countries, such as the US, in an attempt to adapt and implement those policies within the South Korean sport context (Kim, 2011; Kim & Park, 2009).

However, one criticism of this approach is that these scholars and practitioners have made little attempt to understand how the culture-specific organizational culture of US high school athletics comes into play. As a result, although there are similarities between American high school athletics and South Korean high school athletics, there are

also many discrepancies between what the policies recommend and what is actually implemented in South Korean high school athletics.

For example, many issues complicate the minimum required GPA policy for Korean high school student-athletes. There is a lack of education on this policy among stakeholders, including student-athletes themselves, teachers, coaches, and parents (Lim & Park, 2019). Additionally, due to the lack of consistent enforcement, this minimum GPA requirement policy does not actually promote student-athletes' academic performance. In other words, the policy was implemented but it has yet to have an impact on Korean high school student-athletes. For example, there was no significant difference in student-athletes' academic performance before and after the policy was implemented (Kang, 2018).

Furthermore, South Korean sport scholars and practitioners have tried to adapt the US high schools' team sport system for South Korean high schools (Han et al., 2019; Jang, 2018; Lee & Lee, 2017). These scholars and practitioners argued that South Korean high school athletics need be available and accessible to every student, not just the elite student-athletes. While these scholars have read handbooks and manuals of governing organizations of US high school athletics such as the NFHS and state high school athletic associations, directly applying US high school athletic policies does not always fit in the South Korean context.

## **Summary**

High school sports can be viewed as an integral part of secondary students' educational experiences, given their benefits and importance (Boekel et al., 2016). High school sports look different by types of school, grade levels, district resources, and sports

(i.e., team or individual) (Wretman, 2017). In addition, the system and environment of high school sports varies widely by countries.

The main purpose of South Korean high school athletics was initially fostering national level elite student-athletes who could enhance the nation's image in international sporting events such as the Olympic Games (Lee, 2005). To develop high profile athletes, the government of South Korea supported elite athletes through national level policies which focused primarily on athletic performance and achievement (Heo, 2011; Hong & Ryu, 2007).

US high school sports began in the mid-1800s. At the start, students organized the events and competed amongst themselves. However, as physical education became a part of the formal educational curriculum, many schools invested resources in high school sports (Zdroik, 2016). Today, almost every high school in the United States provides interscholastic programs for both boys and girls to enhance their overall well-being, including behavioral, physical, and psychological benefits (NFHS, 2020).

The South Korea government has tried to remedy the current environment, which requires South Korean high school student-athletes to focus only on their athletic performance, by adapting policies from US high school athletics. Due to the differences in the overall systems and environments of high school athletics from each country, however, directly applying US high school athletic policies does not always fit in the South Korean context.

In order to make comparisons between the systems, the following review of theoretical frameworks, organizational culture theory and stakeholder theory, will be explored as the frameworks for this proposed study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Traditionally, the culture high school athletics in South Korea places a heavy emphasis on student-athletes' athletic achievement. This emphasis creates issues such as excessive time commitments to practice and training, questionable coaching practices, and retired athletes struggling to integrate back into society with only their sports skills. The South Korean high school athletics practitioners have tried to remedy the current situation by adapting policies from US high school athletics. However, one criticism of this approach is that the practitioners and the policy makers of South Korean high school athletics have made little attempt to understand how the culture-specific organizational culture of US high school athletics comes into play. In other words, they are trying to understand only surface level of US high school athletics by reading handbooks. However, due to the cultural differences in the overall systems and environments of high school athletics in each country, directly applying US high school athletic policies does not always fit in South Korea. Therefore, it is important to understand a deeper level of the organizational culture with samples of each country's high school athletic departments and understand the differences in contexts before adapting the US policies.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine and compare the organizational culture of a high school athletic department in South Korea and in the USA by using a qualitative

comparative case study research perspective applying organizational culture and stakeholder theories as the theoretical lenses. According to Schein (2010), it is necessary to examine all three levels of culture (i.e., artifacts, espoused beliefs and values and underlying assumptions) to identify the culture of an organization. Especially, understanding a deeper level of the organizational culture (i.e., espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions) is important because surface level artifacts do not reflect deeper meanings of the organization. Espoused beliefs and values and underlying assumptions can be identified by examining the organization members' perceptions toward culture of their organization (Bailey et al., 2017; Cole & Martin, 2018; Schein, 2010). By applying Schein's (2010) three levels of organizational culture, this study aimed to provide a better understanding of the organizational culture of a high school athletic department in South Korea and in the USA. This will be done by analyzing the official websites and handbooks of each athletic department as well as examining the perceptions of two of the main stakeholders of the high school athletic department - principals and athletic directors. Furthermore, by identifying each athletic department's unique features at all three levels of organizational culture, this study aims to provide insights for South Korean practitioners in how best to adapt policies that ensures the policies are culturally relevant to South Korean student-athletes.

This study also employed stakeholder theory. Stakeholder theory is applicable for this study, as such it is essential to understand the relationships between decision makers and stakeholders in organization's decision-making process to assess how the organization operates (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). In addition, previous research in education and sport management fields utilized stakeholder theory to examine how

organizations manage their stakeholders in organizational decision-making processes (Friedman, 2004; Schlechty, 2001). Therefore, the structure provided by stakeholder theory supports the examination of stakeholder management in departmental decision-making processes by two decision makers of the athletic department – principals and athletic directors. Specifically, this study investigated how each country’s principal and athletic director account for other stakeholders in their departmental decision-making processes.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

Two theoretical frameworks, organizational culture theory and stakeholder theory, were utilized for this study. Organizational culture theory provides the lens for examining the culture of a South Korean and a US High school athletic department for thoroughly understanding how each organization operates. Stakeholder theory allows the researcher to examine the thoughts and behaviors of the stakeholders who both affect and are affected by the organization (Freeman, 1984). It is important to note that those two theories are closely intertwined, therefore it is necessary to understand the thoughts and behaviors of an organization’s various stakeholders since each stakeholder can affect or be affected by that organization (Freeman, 1984).

#### **Organizational Culture Theory**

As discussed earlier, even though there are many differences between South Korean and US high school athletics, many South Korean high school athletics practitioners who are interested in US high school athletics policies, only understand the surface level details in US high school athletics by reading/analyzing handbooks of US high school athletic department.

Based on organizational culture theory, however, it is important to examine the culture for understanding of one's organization since the culture can be viewed as beliefs, assumptions, expectations, norms, and values of its organization (Lunenburg, 2011). Also, organizational culture has a crucial influence on the attitudes, behaviors, thoughts, and lives of organizational members (Lunenburg, 2011; Valencia et al., 2019).

Organizational culture theory has been a popular framework within sport management research to investigate unique culture of various sport organization such as professional rugby team (Cole & Martin, 2018), cross-fit gym (Bailey et al., 2017), organizing body of UK soccer (Norman et al., 2018), and Danish high-performance swim team (Junggren et al., 2018). It is important to note that most of those studies (Bailey et al., 2017; Cole & Martin, 2018; Junggren et al., 2018) applied Schein's (2010) three levels of organizational culture to gain deeper understanding of the culture of its organization by examining the perceptions of main stakeholders toward their organizations' values and underlying assumptions. Also, Jayakumar and Commeaux (2016) examined the effect of college athletic department's organizational culture on the lives of college student-athletes. Jayakumar and Commeaux (2016) found that the organizational culture of the college athletic department, which focus on athletics, affect their student-athletes' lives by asking them to focus their time on enhancing athletics rather than academics.

In this aspect, organizational culture theory is an appropriate approach to examine the effect of a high school athletic department's culture on its members' lives and thought, as it could identify the organizational culture of a high school athletic department from South Korean and US by examining the perceptions of two main



stakeholders – principals and athletic directors. Therefore, the first and second research questions examined in this study were:

RQ1. What is the organizational culture of a South Korean high school athletic department?

RQ2. What is the organizational culture of a US high school athletic department?

After investigating the athletic department's organizational culture using Schein's (2010) conceptual framework, this study investigated the similarities and differences between the organizational culture of each country's selected high school athletic departments based on the perceptions of both principals and athletic directors. Therefore, the third research question examined in this study was:

RQ3. What are the similarities and differences between the organizational culture of a South Korean and US high school athletic department?

### **Stakeholder Theory**

Stakeholder theory originally emerged from the management/business fields and can be viewed as one of the most prominent theories of business/management used to understand managerial decision-making. It has been widely used in various fields over time (Hughes & Dann, 2009; Ibrahim et al., 2017; Kivits, 2011; Laplume et al., 2008; Mitchell et al., 1997). Stakeholders can be defined as “any group of individuals who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives” (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). Different classes of stakeholders can be identified based on their possession of following attributes (1) power, (2) legitimacy, and (3) urgency (Mitchell et al., 1997).

As the initial main aim of stakeholder theory was to offer pragmatic strategies for organizations to manage their stakeholders to achieve superior performance in organization (Freeman, 1984), previous research has utilized stakeholder theory to examine the relationship between organizational performance and stakeholder management. For example, Kivits (2011) found that incorporating stakeholders' opinions was important for improving organization's decision-making process. In addition, Alexander et al. (2005) argued that making and maintaining strong positive relationships between organizations and their stakeholders is crucial for an organization's success. In other words, stakeholder management can be viewed as an inevitable factor in organizational decision-making processes and successes (Alexander et al., 2005; Kivits, 2011; Laplume et al., 2008).

There is a growing interest stakeholder theorizing in sport management field. Trail and Chelladurai (2000, 2002) examined the goals and/or priorities of intercollegiate athletics' important stakeholders (i.e., faculty and students) based on stakeholder theory by developing a new instrument. The purpose of Trail and Chelladurai's (2000, 2002) instrument was to assess perceptions of two stakeholder groups in intercollegiate athletics (faculty and students) with regards to intercollegiate athletics' primary goals. Trail and Chelladurai's Scale of Athletic Department Goals (SADG) includes 10 subscales and 41 items to assess intercollegiate athletics' primary goals. Specifically, the 10 subscales were conceptually comprised and distinguished into performance goals (e.g., financial security, winning, national sport development etc) and development goals (e.g., student-athlete academic achievement, student-athletes careers etc). Putler and Wolfe (1999) also examined intercollegiate athletics' priorities and tradeoffs by assessing various

stakeholders' (i.e., faculty, student-athletes, potential students, university students, athletic department employees, and alumni) perceptions toward various factors of intercollegiate athletics such as win-loss record, graduation rates, number of teams, and NCAA violation. Putler and Wolfe (1999) found that finances were the most important priority for the stakeholders, followed by graduation rates, win-loss records, and violations. The least important priorities were attendance, followed by gender equity, and number of teams. Specifically, ethics and winning, and education and revenue can be viewed as competing athletic program priorities. Babiak and Kihl (2018) examined the stakeholders' perceptions toward the role of professional baseball teams' corporate social responsibility (CSR) using semi-structured interviews with 42 various stakeholders from a professional baseball team. Babiak and Kihl (2018) revealed what the stakeholders expected of their team's engagement with community, social benefits and value creation. Also, stakeholders believed that their teams' CSR played an important role in their team's business practices and provided valuable social benefits that aligned with community expectations. Huml et al. (2018). investigated how stakeholders would respond with attributes of stakeholder salience regarding their organization's governing structure change in intercollegiate contexts. Specifically, Huml et al. (2018) revealed that equity can be viewed as one of the most important attributes of stakeholder salience with those three traditional attributes (i.e., power, legitimacy, and urgency). Lastly, Walters and Tacon (2010) examined how CSR could be implemented by sport organizations (UK football) through stakeholder management strategies. Lastly, Friedman et al. (2004) employed stakeholder theory to examine how sport organizations include their stakeholders in their decision-making process. Friedman et al. (2004) suggests that sport

managers can achieve their organization's objectives by applying stakeholder engagement strategies. For example, by using stakeholder analysis, sport managers could identify stakeholders, their claims and relationships based on stakeholders' attributes toward various issues (Friedman et al., 2004; Mitchell et al., 1997). This allows sport managers balance various stakeholders' interests by distributing organization resources, which lead to satisfy stakeholders' needs to maintain good relationships between stakeholders and their organization (Friedman et al., 2004). This is applicable to both large (e.g., International Olympic Committee and National Collegiate Athletic Association) and small (e.g., local recreational sports team and interest-based volunteer club) sport organizations.

In the education field, Yaro et al., (2016) revealed that the participation of various education stakeholders (e.g., teachers, student, and parents) during the educational policy development process could result in better policies, and eventually improve the quality of education for students. For example, Yaro et al. (2016) described that sidelining various stakeholders in the policy development process in Nigeria caused low quality of education for Nigerian students. Specifically, in Nigeria, various education stakeholders (e.g., teachers, parents, students) were not engaged in development of educational policies such as enrollment in primary school and systems of higher education. Not engaging the proper groups in developing these policies resulted in lack of proper information dissemination and failure/weakness in the school management. These issues finally caused low quality of education for the students in Nigeria (Yaro et al., 2016). However, limited research has been done to examine the influence of stakeholder management in decision-making processes of high school athletic departments.

In this aspect, stakeholder theory is applicable for this study since understanding stakeholder management in the decision-making process of each country's high school athletic department will provide a better understanding of how each athletic department operates with various stakeholders and their relative importance in the high school athletics setting (Friedman et al., 2004). In high school athletics, there are various stakeholders such as parents, teachers, student-athletes, alumni association, coaches, and the community (Zdroik, 2016). Among these stakeholders, the principals and athletic directors can be viewed as two of the key stakeholders/decision makers who can affect the achievement of their athletic department's objectives with their possession of the three attributes (Freeman, 1984; Mitchell et al., 1997).

In terms of principals, for example, those attributes can be seen in their formal roles. Specifically, power can be illustrated by their authority over school staffing such as hiring and evaluating staff (Hefferman, 2018). In terms of urgency, it can be described by the urgency of principals' claim with the school such as facilitating school board meetings (Dowd, 2018). Legitimacy of principals with their schools is represented by principals' roles such as administering the school budget (Dowd, 2018). Also, principals are regarded by other educational stakeholders such as teachers, parents, students, and community as 'the leaders' of the school (Cranston, 2007). Most importantly, principals play critical roles in creating and maintaining the culture of secondary schools through their authority and responsibilities (Cobb, 2015; Rhodes et al., 2011).

Athletic directors also have attributes of stakeholder salience relative to their high school athletic department. For example, athletic directors have power with staffing (e.g., overseeing coaches), legitimacy with managing a budget, and developing both practice

and competition schedules, and urgency with arranging departmental meetings (Ha et al., 2011; Martin et al., 1999; Sullivan et al., 2014). Like principals, with their significant and various roles, athletic directors are essential in shaping the culture of high school athletics (Sturges, 2020). Furthermore, as gatekeepers of high school athletics, athletic directors are responsible for the well-being of their student-athletes and affect success of their athletic department (Sturges, 2020). Therefore, this study investigates how decision makers (i.e., principals and athletic directors) account for other stakeholders in the athletic department in their departmental decision-making process. The fourth and fifth research questions examined in this study are:

RQ4. As primary stakeholders in high school athletic department, how do a South Korean principal and AD manage other stakeholders in their high school athletic department's decision-making process?

RQ5. As primary stakeholders in high school athletic department, how do an US principal and AD manage other stakeholders in their high school athletic department's decision-making process?

**Stakeholders in High School Sport.** Based on previous research in education and sport management using stakeholder theory, principals and athletic directors can be viewed as two of the most important stakeholders who can affect the culture of high school athletics for the following reasons. First, principals are regarded by other educational stakeholders such as teachers, parents, students, and community as 'the leaders' of the school (Cranston, 2007). Second, principals play critical roles in creating and maintaining the culture of secondary schools through their authority and responsibilities (Cobb, 2015; Rhodes et al., 2011). Finally, athletic directors have various

responsibilities and roles with high school sport teams and athletes such as planning and overseeing coaches and student-athletes (Ha et al., 2011; Zdroik, 2016).

### **Significance of the Study**

This study provides several practical and theoretical contributions to organizational culture and stakeholder research within the context of high school athletics. Practical applications of this study include the following. First, the results of this study provide a more detailed understanding of the organizational culture as well as the operations within a US high school athletic department. This will inform South Korean high school athletics practitioners of the differences between South Korean and US high school athletics by examining all three levels of its organizational culture (i.e., artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions). By understanding each athletic department's unique factors at all three levels of organizational culture, this study identifies similarities and differences in organizational culture which provides insights for South Korean practitioners who are seeking to apply a set of different cultural expectations from US may not be applicable for South Korean context. Second, the findings of this study can also provide practical insights to both South Korean and US high school athletics practitioners regarding how to manage and maintain good relationships with their various stakeholders.

This study also has theoretical contributions for both the organizational culture and stakeholder theories. First, the result of this study has theoretical contributions for research on organizational culture as it examines and compares the organizational culture of a South Korean and US high school athletic department. This is important since there has been only limited research has been done to examine organizational culture of high

school athletic department, especially in cross-cultural setting. Second, the findings of this study extend the stakeholder theory in the context of high school athletics by investigating stakeholder management in two high school athletic departments' decision-making processes. Specifically, this study identified various stakeholders within high school athletic departments and how decision makers (i.e., principals and athletic directors) manage those various stakeholders in their departmental decision-making processes.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

Limitations in qualitative research are associated with validity and reliability of the research (Simon & Goes, 2013). "Because qualitative research occurs in the natural setting it is extremely difficult to replicate studies" (Wiersma, 2000, p. 211). In addition, a comparative case study design presents certain limitations. First, since this study examines two cases, it might be hard to generalize the results of this study to a wider population. The sample population here is limited to specific regions from both South Korea and the US. Second, the researcher's own beliefs could affect the data collection process and analysis. The researcher is a South Korean graduate student interested in South Korean student-athletes' well-being, and so must consciously try to collect and interpret the data with a fresh and unbiased perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, the researcher's previous experiences could influence the results of the study.

### **Delimitations**

The current study will not be able to identify every aspect associated with the organizational culture of South Korean and US high school athletic departments. Although various stakeholders in high school athletics exist, this study will examine only



principals' and athletic directors' perspectives to explore the organizational culture of high school athletic department. Principals and athletic directors can be viewed as two of the most important stakeholders in high school athletic department with their authority and responsibilities with high school athletics (e.g., budgeting, hiring, scheduling for sport teams). Investigating perspectives of other stakeholders such as parents, teachers, student-athletes, and coaches should be examined in another study, however, in order to better understand the various aspects of the organizational culture of a high school athletic department. The researcher plans to conduct this current study as part of an ongoing line of research. The researcher will later examine those various stakeholders' perspectives on the culture of high school athletic department to obtain a holistic understanding of high school athletics.

### **Definitions of Terms**

- High School Athletic Department – athletic departments in the context of high school setting.
- Organizational Culture – “A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaption and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, 2010, p. 18).
- Schein's (2010) three-level conceptual framework of organizational culture – (1) artifacts: the visible factors of an organization such as internal and external environment and observable rituals, (2) espoused beliefs and values: ideas and core values that tested in real life situation and considered as effective by

members, (3) basic underlying assumptions: the deepest level of Schein's model, tacit beliefs and values.

- Stakeholder– “Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (Freeman, 1984, p. 46).
- Power – “a relationship among social actors in which one social actor, A, can get another social actor, B, to do something that B would not otherwise have done” (Pfeffer, 1981, p. 3)
- Legitimacy – “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions (Suchman, 1995, p. 574)
- Urgency – “the immediacy with which the organization feels it has to act to resolve the stakeholder’s issue and operates as a multiplier effect on the influence of the stakeholder’s claim” (Hughes & Dann, 2009, p. 250)
- High School Principals - the highest-ranking administrator in high school. They are regarded by educational stakeholders such as teachers, parents, students, and community as ‘the leaders’ of the school (Cranston, 2007)
- High School Athletic Directors - administrators who supervise and oversee athletic departments of high school. They have the responsibility for budgeting, promotion, and scheduling for sports teams (Zdroik, 2016).

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to examine and compare the organizational culture of a high school athletic department in South Korea and in the USA. Utilizing a qualitative comparative case study research perspective, the study incorporated Organizational Culture and Stakeholder theories as the theoretical lenses. In this chapter, an extensive review of the literature for the two main theoretical frameworks (i.e., organizational culture and stakeholder theories) that guide this study will be provided. Firstly, it provides background on high school athletics in general and high school athletics in South Korea and the US. Secondly, it discusses an overview of organizational culture theory. Lastly, it describes overview of stakeholder theory.

#### **High School Athletics**

High school sports can be viewed as an integral part of secondary students' educational experiences, given their benefits and importance (Boekel et al., 2016). According to the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), in the US almost eight million high school students (57% of all high school students in the US) participate in some kind of sport (NFHS, 2019). Previous research regarding the role of high school sports indicates participation in high school sport positively affects students' academic achievement, enhances psychological and physical well-being, and improves relationships with peers (Boekel et al., 2016; Bowen & Hitt, 2016; Ransom & Ransom, 2018; Wretman, 2017). High school sports look different by types of school

(public or private, urban or rural), grade levels, district resources, and types of sports (i.e., team or individual) (Wretman, 2017). In addition, the system and environment of high school sports varies widely by countries. For example, most European countries do not have high school sports, just club sports. England has a high school sports system, but it is overshadowed by club sports. In other words, most of European and UK high school age students play their sports through participating in community based or/and intramural club teams and not their high schools (Forbes, 2012). In South Korea, around twenty thousand high school student-athletes (0.02% of all high school students in South Korea) compete in a total of sixty different sports (Korean Sport & Olympic Committee, 2020). Both public and private high schools offer athletic opportunities. This study focuses on high school sport in South Korea and the United States, so the following sections present overall information of those two countries.

### **South Korean High School Athletics**

South Korean high school sports began in the 1970s. The main purpose of South Korean high school athletics was developing national level elite student-athletes who could enhance the nation's image in international sporting events such as the Olympic Games (Lee, 2005). In other words, at that time, South Korean government officials used sport as a platform to enhance the image of South Korea as a country (Lim & Huh, 2009). For example, South Korea not only hosted the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympic Games but also pressed their athletes to win gold medals to showcase the country's development and economic success (Lee, 2006).

To develop high profile athletes, the government of South Korea supported elite athletes through national level policies which focused primarily on athletic performance and achievement (Heo, 2011; Hong & Ryu, 2007). One of those policies dealt with

organizing high school athletics to develop elite level student-athletes in high schools. Since the primary purpose of high school athletics was solely the athletic achievement of student-athletes, especially gold medals from international sporting events, South Korean high school student-athletes are required to devote all their time and attention to training for their sports (Heo, 2011). Beyond that, these athletes are not allowed to pursue a proper education during their time in high school since it would take them away from training (Heo, 2010). In other words, South Korean high school athletics can be viewed as a farm system for elite level athletes (Ham, 2003).

This imbalanced culture created many negative effects for South Korean high school student-athletes including lack of academic skills, numerous injuries, and psychological pressure (Ham, 2003). Furthermore, this culture also affects the sporting careers of South Korean athletes as well. Even though student-athlete devote all their time and energy to their sports, only a limited number of athletes could become professional athletes due to unpredictable variables such as injuries and family circumstances (Ham, 2003; Huml et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2014). Also, the competitive life span of a South Korean professional athlete is short with the average age of retired professional athletes at only 23.8 years old (Yoo, 2016). In other words, most South Korean high school student-athletes will need to integrate into society as a typical member of South Korean society early in their adulthood without the title of athlete they lived with their whole life (Otto et al., 2019). However, as previously mentioned, since the South Korean sport culture requires high school student-athletes to spend more time training than developing academic skills, upon retirement, these South Korean student-athletes struggle to integrate successfully into society (Heo, 2010).

Since the 1970s, however, little has changed. The perception of South Korean athletes as being successful only when they are recognized as high-profile athletes has resulted in South Korean student-athletes behaving like parts of a ‘sport machine’ whereby they focused all their time and energy on training (Ham, 2003).

This literature review will now shift to discuss high school sport in the US. This will provide background to compare these two sporting cultures

### **US High School Athletics**

US high school sports began in the mid-1800s. At the start, students organized the events and competed amongst themselves (Zdroik, 2016). However, as physical education became a part of the formal educational curriculum, many schools invested resources in high school sports. In the 1920s, a national governing body of high school sport, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), was formed in reaction to the increasing participation and demand for high school sport (Prueter & Project, 2013).

With the passage of Title IX in 1972, female high school students’ sport participation increased significantly. By the early 2000s, the rate of female participation in sport began to increase steadily. Today, almost every high school in the United States provides interscholastic programs for both boys and girls to enhance their overall well-being, including behavioral, physical, and psychological benefits (NFHS, 2020). For example, previous research illustrated a significant positive relationship between high school students’ academic achievement and their level of athletic participation. As such, most US high schools provide their students with opportunities to participate in school sport. As evidenced, almost eight million US high school students participate in high

school sport (NFHS, 2019). In other words, high school sport is the largest sports program in the US.

Even though many positive outcomes result from participating in high school athletics, there are also unhealthy and negative outcomes. For example, previous research found that sport participation caused higher levels of alcohol consumption by student-athletes who played contact sports (Veliz et al., 2015). Additionally, the high rates of concussion injuries in high school football players and general physical injuries in contact sports has become a controversial issue (Green, 2015). Due to these reasons, some people have advocated the separation of competitive sport from US high schools' educational program (Coakley, 2015; Coleman & Johnstone, 1961). Even though there are some controversial issues in US high school athletics, the system and academic policies of US high school athletics have been regarded as a model which potentially could address the current problems that exist in South Korean high school athletics, particularly the balance between academics and athletics.

### **Academic Issues in South Korean High School Athletics**

The South Korea government has tried to remedy the current environment which requires South Korean high school student-athletes to focus only on their athletic performance, by adapting policies from US high school athletics. In 2013, the South Korean Ministry of Education and Ministry of Sports implemented a minimum GPA requirement policy for Korean student-athletes whereby students who do not meet this minimum GPA will not be able to compete for a semester. However, decisions about the new policy were based on policies for American high school athletics (i.e., No-pass, No-play). In fact, many South Korean sport scholars and practitioners who are interested in

improving the existing high school sport culture in South Korea have turned to policies used in foreign countries, such as the US, in an attempt to adapt and implement those policies within the South Korean sport context (Kim, 2011; Kim & Park, 2009).

However, one criticism of this approach is that these scholars and practitioners have made little attempt to understand how the country-specific organizational culture of US high school athletics comes into play. As a result, although there are similarities between American high school athletics and South Korean high school athletics, there are also many discrepancies between what the policies recommend and what is actually implemented in South Korean high school athletics.

For example, many issues complicate the minimum required GPA policy for Korean high school student-athletes. There is a lack education on this policy among stakeholders, including the student-athletes themselves, teachers, coaches, and parents (Lim & Park, 2019). Additionally, due to the lack of consistent enforcement, this minimum GPA requirement policy does not actually promote student-athletes' academic performance. In other words, the policy was implemented but it has yet to have an impact on Korean high school student-athletes. For example, no significant difference was observed in student-athletes' academic performance before and after the policy was implemented (Kang, 2018).

Furthermore, South Korean sport scholars and practitioners have tried to adapt the US high schools' team sport system for South Korean high schools (Han et al., 2019; Lee & Lee, 2017). These scholars and practitioners argued that South Korean high school athletics need be available and accessible to every student, not just the elite student-athletes. While these scholars have read handbooks and manuals of governing



organizations of US high school athletics such as the NFHS and state high school athletic associations, directly applying US high school athletic policies does not always fit in the South Korean context.

### **Summary**

High school sports can be viewed as an integral part of secondary students' educational experiences, given their benefits and importance (Boekel et al., 2016). High school sports look different by types of school, grade levels, district resources, and types of sports (i.e., team or individual) (Wretman, 2017). In addition, the system and environment of high school sports varies widely by countries.

South Korean high school sports began in the 1970s. The main purpose of South Korean high school athletics was fostering national level elite student-athletes who could enhance the nation's image in international sporting events such as the Olympic Games (Lee, 2005). To develop high profile athletes, the government of South Korea supported elite athletes through national level policies which focused primarily on athletic performance and achievement (Heo, 2011; Hong & Ryu, 2007).

US high school sports began in the mid-1800s. At the start, students organized the events and competed amongst themselves (Zdroik, 2016). However, as physical education became a part of the formal educational curriculum, many schools invested resources in high school sports. Today, almost every high school in the United States provides interscholastic programs for both boys and girls to enhance their overall well-being, including behavioral, physical, and psychological benefits (NFHS, 2020).

The South Korea government has tried to remedy the current environment, which requires South Korean high school student-athletes to focus only on their athletic performance, by adapting policies from US high school athletics. Due to the differences in the overall systems and environments of high school athletics from each country, however, directly applying US high school athletic policies does not always fit in the South Korean context.

In order to make comparisons between the systems, the following theoretical framework review of organizational culture theory and stakeholder theory will be explored as the frameworks for this proposed study. Organizational culture theory first provides the lens for examining the culture of South Korean and US High school athletic departments for thoroughly understanding how each organization operates.

## **Organizational Culture Theory**

### **Definition of Organizational Culture**

There are numerous definitions for organizational culture. However, to define organizational culture more precisely, one needs to consider all of these previous factors. Thus, organizational culture consists of an organization's assumptions, behaviors, shared values, and symbols (Goffee & Jones, 1998). In other words, organizational culture can be viewed as the way things are typically done in an organization (Martin, 2006).

Organizational culture includes two parts - espoused values and underlying assumptions. In terms of values, when an organization experiences a crisis, its leaders need to have a plan/strategy to minimize the danger. If the crisis is thwarted successfully, it would become a shared value of the organization (Martin, 2006) If a similar crisis

happens in the future, the organization will use the plan again. With repeated successes, the value finally becomes an underlying assumption of the organization (Martin, 2006; Schein, 1992). These underlying assumptions comprise the core of organization culture. Usually, underlying assumptions are difficult to recognize and understand since they are rarely articulated.

Three different levels are present in any organization - individual, group, and organization wide. At the individual level, the main thrust is to motivate employees to make them meet the goals of the employer. At the group level, the culture focuses on relationships among employees and formulating group identity. Finally, the goals of first two levels have to be achieved to meet the goals of the organizational level (Martin, 2006).

Culture is usually taught to new members through formal training programs, but more generally they learn the culture through informal methods such as myths, rituals, shared behaviors and stories. In other words, they learned how things are done by informal methods (Jordan, 2013).

According to Lunenburg (2011), organizational culture can be defined as “shared philosophies, ideologies, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, expectations, attitudes, norms, and values” (p.2). All organizations have their own culture which can have a crucial influence on the attitudes, behaviors, and thoughts of their members (Lunenburg, 2011). Organizational culture can be viewed as an actual entity that has personality just like people. Also, it has a significant influence on the lives of organization members (Lunenburg, 2011).

## **Characteristics of Organizational Culture**

According to Schein (1990), organizational culture includes two parts - espoused values and underlying assumptions. In terms of values, when an organization experiences a crisis, its leaders have to plan/strategize to minimize the danger. If the crisis is thwarted successfully, it validates the plan and potentially becomes a shared value of the organization. If a similar crisis happens in the future, the organization will use the plan again. With repeated successes, the value finally becomes an underlying assumption of the organization (Schein, 1990). These underlying assumptions comprise the core of organization culture. Usually, underlying assumptions are difficult to recognize and understand since they are rarely articulated. They manifest themselves through the perceptions, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of members of the organization (Hatch, 2004).

With these characteristics, culture is usually taught to new members through formal training programs, but more generally they learn the culture through informal methods such as stories, myths, rituals, and shared behaviors. In other words, they learn how things are done by informal methods (Jordan, 2013).

**Schein's three levels of organizational culture.** According to Schein (2010), there are three levels of culture: (a) observable artifacts, (b) values, and (c) basic underlying assumptions. The problem with artifacts is that they are physical but hard to accurately decipher. In other words, they are not a most reliable indicator of how members of the organization react (Schein, 1990). In terms of values, they can be known through interviews, questionnaires, or surveys from people in the organization. More intensive observation, more focused questions, intensive self-analysis would be needed to

investigate basic underlying assumptions (Schein, 2010). Schein (2010) suggested that it is essential to examine all three levels of culture to identify the culture of an organization.

### **Organization Culture in the Sport Industry**

Many previous studies have been conducted to examine organizational culture in the sport industry. Cole and Martin (2018) examined the culture of the team and its importance, various factors that affect its development, and the role of leadership within the culture. The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with team members from a New Zealand professional rugby team (i.e., The Turbos). The results of the study indicated the Turbos recognized their team culture as the most important factor for their success. Also, the team's informal collective and flat leadership structure positively affected their team culture. The Turbos also recognized that the team experienced their highest level of success when team culture was allowed to grow informally through informal leaders (Cole & Martin, 2018).

Norman, Wright, and Allison (2018) used organizational theory as a theoretical lens to examine what factors of organizational culture affect the development of female as football coaches and coach developers in the UK. Longitudinal in-depth interviews were conducted with 26 women coaches and coach developers to investigate their personal experiences related to the structure and culture of their governing body. The results revealed that supportive organizational culture was crucial for progress of women football coaches and coach developers (Norman et al., 2018).

Jayakumar and Commeaux (2016) examined the role of organizational culture in the lives of college student-athletes using a combined grounded theory and case study method. A total of 20 Division I public university student-athletes and athletic department

stakeholders participated in the interviews. The results of the interviews revealed that although academics were viewed as the most important value for both the university in general as well as the athletic department, especially within an athletic department's academic support system, college student-athletes were asked to focus their time on enhancing athletics rather than academics.

Bailey et al. (2017) identified the organizational culture of CrossFit using Schein's (2010) model of organizational culture. Seventeen interviewees including new and veteran members, coaches and two owners from a CrossFit gym participated in the study. The results of interviews illustrated three levels of Schein's model: (a) artifacts: a rugged, stripped-down workout environment, unique gym outfits, and a friendly atmosphere; (b) espoused beliefs and values: members' commitment to promote inclusivity with a high degree of structure including communal values, and (c) basic underlying assumptions: creating sense of community through shared experiences (Bailey et al., 2017).

### **Organizational Culture Change in Sport Management Field**

Batuev and Robinson (2019) investigated the recent organizational changes in sport climbing governance organizations. The researchers focused on the impact of the sport's inclusion in the Olympic Games. The authors used new institutionalism and resource dependence theory as theoretical lenses for their study. A total of 12 interviewees participated in this study. Among those participants, interviews with athletes were viewed as the key source of data since sport climbing traditionally involves individual athletes rather than teams or organizations. In addition, previous documents, reports, news articles, and social media posts were analyzed for the study. The study

found that sport climbers themselves thought they “owned” their sport. This can be explained as cultural legitimacy. The recent inclusion of sport climbing on the Olympic program, however, created challenges because of strong traditionally held values inherent within the sport. The results of study illustrated that the values of sport climbing can expand and develop in order to adapt the regulatory legitimacy required by inclusion on the Olympic Games.

Wells and Walker (2016) examined ethical leadership, transparency, and organizational justice in the process of an athletic department consolidating NCAA Division I men’s and women’s programs. A total of nine various stakeholders from athletic department participated in the interviews. Also, public documents over the last decade were analyzed for the study. The results indicated transparent and ethical leaders agreed with and supported positive organizational justice perceptions. In addition, transparent ethical leadership had a positive impact on employees’ perceptions toward organizational change.

Wagstaff et al. (2016) investigated the relationship between organizational change and its impact on employees. Twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 employees from two organizations competing in the English Premier League. Employees provided both positive and negative emotional, behavioral, and attitudinal responses. Specifically, the main positive responses were related to autonomy, learning, performance, and resilience. The main negative responses were related to commitment, cynicism, engagement, motivation, organizational development, trust, and turnover. Wagstaff et al. (2016) suggested that cognitive appraisal for employees’ responses was important during organizational change.

## **Organizational Culture in Education Field**

School culture can be viewed as a main key of successful design and implementation of high school programs (Rhodes et al., 2011). School culture is one of the most important factors of the educational innovation process as well (Sarason, 1996). School cultures affect how teachers, students, school administrators, and other school actors translate schooling into practical and meaningful practices (Rhodes et al., 2011). In addition, school culture is also largely affected by school social structures as a social construction (Rhodes et al., 2011).

Values are the foundation of school cultures since they exert influence on members. In addition, values are critical for the success of educational cultures because they directly affect how members of school respond to school operations (Schein, 1990; Rhodes et al., 2011).

Positive school culture is associated with civility, respectful language usage, and modes of communication that bind various school stakeholders and encourage open discussion and cooperative decision-making process (Rhodes et al., 2011). It is important to note that strong principal and teacher leadership influence positive school culture. Principals play pivotal roles in creating and maintaining school culture (Rhodes et al., 2011). Teachers also affect school culture with their leadership in curriculum, school and program design, instruction, and professional development (Rhodes et al., 2011). It is important to note that teachers obtain real power to support student achievement (Lieberman & Miller, 2004). Supportive intentional structure is necessary to create and maintain a positive school culture (Kasinitz, 2008; Rhodes et al., 2011). Various activities such as regularly scheduled meetings of principals and teachers, shared decision-making



processes, learning community, collaboration on innovative pedagogies, and working closely with students can be viewed as a supportive intentional structure (Rhodes et al., 2011).

### **Summary**

Organizational culture can be defined as “shared philosophies, ideologies, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, expectations, attitudes, norms, and values” (Lunenburg, 2011, p.2). Every organization has its own unique culture which can have a crucial influence on the attitudes, behaviors, and thoughts of organizational members (Lunenburg, 2011). Organizational culture can be viewed as an actual entity that has personality just like a person. Also, it significantly influences the lives of organization members.

According to Schein (2010), there are three levels of culture: (a) artifacts, (b) values, and (c) basic underlying assumptions. To understand the values of an organization, interviews, questionnaires, or surveys may be conducted with people in the organization. More intense observations, the use of more focused questions, and intensive self-analysis may be needed to investigate basic underlying assumptions (Schein, 2010). Schein (2010) suggested that it is essential to examine all three levels to clearly identify the culture of an organization.

Many researchers used Schein’s (2010) conceptual framework to investigate the cultures of various sport organizations. For example, Bailey et al. (2017) explored the organizational culture of CrossFit using Schein’s (2010) conceptual framework as a theoretical lens. Bailey et al. (2017) found that the artifacts included the rugged and industrial appearance of the gym, espoused beliefs and values included pride in the gym and a strong sense of community among cross-fitters, and a shared underlying

assumption included the common aim of improving participants' health and well-being. Junggren et al. (2018) also examined organizational culture in a Danish high-performance swimming environment. Cole and Martin (2018) identified organizational culture of a professional rugby team in New Zealand utilizing Schein's (2010) theoretical model. Cole and Martin (2018) later illustrated that a combination of informal and formal transformational leadership plays an important role in shaping the healthy and strong organizational culture of sports team.

It is important to note that those previous studies all identified the organizational culture through in-depth interviews with stakeholders of each organization. Specifically, all of them used an interview guide drawing on Schein's (2010) conceptual model of organizational culture which included questions regarding artifacts, values, and underlying assumptions. In other words, organizational culture theory and stakeholder theory are closely related each other and it is essential to examine each stakeholders' thoughts and perspectives to investigate the culture of an organization.

### **Stakeholder Theory**

Stakeholder theory was created and introduced by Freeman in 1984. Stakeholder theory originally emerged from the management/business fields and can be viewed as one of the most eminent theories used to understand managerial decision-making. It has been largely used in various fields over time. Specifically, this literature review summarizes studies that used stakeholder theory in management/business, education, and sport management. This will provide holistic approach of stakeholder theory and its application.

## **Definition of Stakeholders**

Freeman's original definition of a stakeholder is "any group of individuals who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). Kivits (2011) and Laplume et al. (2008) suggested that a wide range of entities such as people, groups, organizations, neighborhoods, institutions, societies, and even natural environments can be considered as stakeholders. It is important to classify various stakeholders based on their characteristics since each different stakeholder would affect and be affected by the organization differently.

## **Classification of Stakeholders**

Mitchell et al. (1997) stated that different classes of stakeholders can be identified based on their possession of one, two, or all three of the following attributes: (1) power, (2) legitimacy, and (3) urgency. Power is defined as "a relationship among social actors in which one social actor, A, can get another social actor, B, to do something that B would not otherwise have done" (Pfeffer, 1981, p.3). Also, stakeholders impose their principles onto the relationship with power. In addition, power will be gained, as well as lost, over time (Kivits, 2011). Legitimacy is defined as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman, 1995, p.574). Urgency is defined as "the immediacy with which the organization feels it has to act to resolve the stakeholder's issue, and operates as a multiplier effect on the influence of the stakeholder's claim" (Hughes & Dann, 2009, p.250). Urgency also determines the level of importance that stakeholders attach to issues and all stakeholders have different levels of perceived importance. It is important to note the features of these three attributes. First, each attribute is not a steady state, meaning that it can be altered. Second, the attributes

are socially constructed realities, and as such, they are not objective. Third, each stakeholder may not be aware that they possess the attribute (Mitchell et al. 1997).

Different stakeholder classes are based on the various combination of one's possession of the attributes: either one, two or all three. According to Mitchell et al. (1997), there is a total of seven types of classes: (1) three classes possessing only one unique attribute, (2) three classes possessing two attributes, and (3) one class possessing all three attributes. Entities with no power, legitimacy, or urgency can be viewed as non-stakeholders. Based on the possession of attributes, stakeholders can be categorized as low to expectant stakeholders. For example, stakeholders who only possess one attribute are referred to as "latent" or "low salience" stakeholders. Stakeholders who possess two attributes are referred to as "expectant" or "moderately salient" stakeholders. Stakeholders who possess all three attributes are categorized as "highly salient" stakeholders (Mitchell et al. 1997).

It is important to note that the classification can change over the time if a stakeholder begins to develop/possess a new attribute. For example, if a latent stakeholder acquires another attribute over time, their classification will change to an expectant stakeholder. If the expectant stakeholder loses an attribute, they will now be referred to as a latent stakeholder. Even though corporations/groups can identify their stakeholders based on their possession of the attributes, it is important to note that managers have an important role in deciding which stakeholders are salient. In other words, managers are vital since they can reconcile differences among stakeholders and provide greater attention to those who are perceived as highly salient (Mitchell et al. 1997). Stakeholder theory can be utilized to identify all stakeholders, stakeholder claims,

motivations and relative importance through assessing each stakeholder's levels of power, legitimacy, and urgency related to the issue (Friedman et al., 2004; Mitchell et al., 1997).

### **Managing Stakeholders**

For successful stakeholder management, managers have to perform two important assessments for stakeholders: (1) stakeholders' potential to threaten the organization, and (2) stakeholders' potential to cooperate with the organization (Savage et al., 1991). In addition, it is important to understand stakeholders and strategically manage them for corporate success.

According to Savage et al. (1991), threat is a crucial factor for organizations to manage since potential threats from stakeholders can be considered as a "worst case" scenario. In terms of power, the more dependent the organization, the more powerful the stakeholders (Savage et al., 1991). Cooperation is another important factor because it can enhance corporations' success through cooperation with other stakeholders. Contrary to threat, assessing the potential for cooperation is considered as a best case (Savage et al., 1991). Generally, the more dependent the stakeholder is on organization, the more possibility of cooperation (Savage et al., 1991).

Alexander et al. (2005) argued that making and maintaining strong relationships between organizations and their stakeholders is crucial for an organization's success. Based on previous research about stakeholder theory, organizations explicitly manage their relationships with various stakeholder groups (Clarkson, 1995; Evans & Freeman, 1988; Freeman, 1984).

Alexander et al. (2005) tried to answer what determines which variables contribute to the importance of organization and stakeholder relationships. They found that organizations should maintain high levels of trust and honesty toward stakeholders even if they already have long-term relationships with their stakeholders. In addition, the availability of alternatives also can be important factor of long-term relationships. If stakeholders have additional options, for example, they might feel that the relationships as less important.

**Trade-offs or value creation.** Freeman (2010) explained that the central insight of the stakeholder theory is the jointness of stakeholder interests and business can be understood in the context of intertwined interests and relationships among those stakeholders. In the context of a business, there are several important stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, employees, financiers, communities, and managers. Freeman (2010) suggested that successful businesses come with the support of “every” stakeholder. If each stakeholder’s group interests are not being satisfied, the stakeholder will most likely leave their current corporation and look for another firm.

However, previous research on stakeholder theory argues that it is impossible to satisfy all stakeholders, suggesting there may be instances where a stakeholder’s interest may be traded off for more important factors, but they may never find the “sweet spot” where all stakeholders are satisfied. Therefore, executives should first try to find the best way/strategy to satisfy all stakeholder interests with limited resources.

In this aspect, an executive or entrepreneur plays an essential role in managing and shaping these relationships. Therefore, Freeman (2010) strongly provided the

following three interconnected key ideas for executives to help manage all stakeholder interests successfully.

1. “No stakeholder stands alone in the process of value creation – stakeholder interests are inherently tied together” (Freeman, 2010, p. 8).
2. “The primary responsibility of the executive is to create as much value as possible for stakeholders” (Freeman, 2010, p. 9).
3. “Stakeholders have names and faces and children” (Freeman, 2010, p. 9).

**Constraints and implication of balancing stakeholder interests.** Reynolds, Reynolds, Schultz, and Hekman (2006) state that the central theme of stakeholder theory is how organizations engender and maintain the support of the many intertwined constituent groups within the organization. This requires considering and balancing the interests of these many constituent groups. Over the years, most research on the stakeholder theory has been conducted at the organizational level of analysis. However, any organizational decision is ultimately made by individuals (Reynolds et al., 2006).

To address this issue, Reynolds et al. (2006) applied stakeholder theory at the individual level to investigate how managers distribute limited resources to each stakeholder, a process known in stakeholder theory as balancing stakeholder interests. They argued that it is important to focus at the individual decision-making level because (a) most organizational decisions are eventually made by individuals (e.g., managers balancing stakeholder interests), and (b) managers can be viewed as a central figure of stakeholder theory, making it possible to understand other fundamental principles of stakeholder management (Reynolds et al., 2006).

Two different approaches explain how managers balance stakeholder interests - within-decision approach and across-decision approach. The within-decision approach can be defined as “a literal interpretation of the stakeholder admonition to balance stakeholder interests” (Reynolds et al., 2006, p. 289). A manager encounters the within-decision approach when he/she faces decisions as a singular and independent unit. The across-decision approach can be defined as “an approach [that] draws from the open-system literature, which assumes that the organization exists in a complicated network of relationships where simple cause and effect predictions cannot explain the myriad influences shaping organizational outcomes” (Reynolds et al., 2006, p. 289). It is important to note that both within and across decision approaches are theoretically sound in terms of balancing interests. Therefore, managers are will need to use both approaches (Reynolds et al., 2006).

**Stakeholder management and corporate culture.** Culture is important because it is a powerful, latent and unconscious force that can affect the behavior of those within a company (Meding et al. 2013; Schein, 1995). Corporate culture can be defined as “a pattern of shared assumptions that a group learns from successfully confronting problems” (Meding et al., 2013, p.27). According to Zabid and Rashid (2003), management and leadership style are important factors in determining corporation culture but leadership and management alone are not enough to establish a strong and positive culture.

Beyond management and leadership, the employee (an internal stakeholder) is an important driver of culture within an organization (Heskett & Kotter, 1992). In addition, employee attitudes and behaviors are crucial in the development and identity of an



organization's culture (Meding et al., 2013; Rashid et al., 2003). It is important to note that companies that include employees (internal stakeholders) who match their corporate vision and values will achieve continuous progress (Tseng & Goo, 1999). Even though the stakeholder theory originated from the management/business field, it has been applied to various field. In the following section, stakeholder theory and two main fields (i.e., education and sport management) that are related to this study will be discussed.

### **Education and Stakeholders**

Education stakeholders are individual or group of people who have vested interest in the education sector. Specifically, education stakeholders can be considered as a group of people who are interested in the success, welfare, and progress of a school and their students (Adebayo, 2013; Ibrahim et al., 2017). Education stakeholders are able to affect the program of activities and/or services provided by a school. Therefore, their role is necessary to the achievement, progress, and success of students' education and a school system's objectives (Schlechty, 2001; Ibrahim et al. 2017). Education stakeholders include teachers, parents, students, community members, principals, and school management committees (Adebayo, 2013; Ibrahim et al., 2017).

Education stakeholders' participation in policy making and implementation can be considered as an effective strategy of ensuring educational quality and development. Therefore, it is important to note that the government should involve/partner with stakeholders for effective development and implementation of the education policies (Ibrahim et al., 2017).

Ibrahim, Arshad, and Salleh (2017) used stakeholder theory to investigate stakeholders' perception toward secondary education quality in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

The government of Nigeria has been making strong efforts to improve the quality of education through national education policies (Ibrahim et al., 2017). In Nigeria, two specific indicators determine the quality of education. The two indicators are students' learning outcomes after their senior school studies and the level of school drop-outs (Olaleye, 2013). Based on these two indicators, Sokoto State has the worst quality of education with the lowest pass rate on the end of the year examination, 7.12% and the highest drop-outs, 68.9% among the whole country (Ibrahim et al., 2017).

Therefore, in their study, Ibrahim et al. (2017) tried to investigate and define what "quality of education" means from the perceptions of key education stakeholders. More specifically, Ibrahim et al. (2017) sought to present dimensions of, and a definition of, secondary education quality, through examining the perceptions of key education stakeholders in Sokoto State. The education stakeholders in this study were a total of 15 people from 4 different groups that included from policy makers to parents (Ibrahim et al., 2017).

A qualitative research approach (i.e., interview) was employed to obtain the participants' subjective viewpoints, beliefs, and knowledge. After the interviews, the data were analyzed by thematic analyses, where the data were coded and categorized into main themes and sub-themes (Denscombe, 2003; Ibrahim, 2017). There was a total of seven sub-themes with the main theme of "Educational Quality". Specifically, education quality, main theme is comprised of seven sub-themes (e.g., provision of adequate instructional materials, provision of supports for teachers' welfare, availability of quality teachers etc). It is important to note that even though all the dimensions are considered important factors in an educational system for ensuring overall educational quality, each

dimension does not have an equal amount of importance but are rather inter-twined. It means that if there's an absence or deficit in one of dimension may negatively affect the overall quality of education (Ibrahim et al. 2017).

Through their study, Ibrahim et al. (2017) contributed to stakeholder theory by extending and collaborating the educational management field. A theoretical connection was made between stakeholder theory and bottom-up theory of implementation (Lipsky, 1980). The involvement of educational stakeholders such as parents, school principals, and implementers can be viewed as the bottom-up approach of policy implementation. Lastly but most importantly, the dimensions of, and a definition of, quality secondary education made by Ibrahim et al. (2017) can provide many useful information to the Nigerian government regarding its educational plans.

Smith et al. (2008) applied stakeholder theory in education to assess stakeholder perceptions of the transition to high school. Academic transitions such as from middle school to high school or from high school to university can be defined as “a process during which institutional and social factors influence which students’ educational careers are positively or negatively affected by this movement between organizations” (Schiller, 1999, p. 216-217). Based on previous research about academic transition, there many negative results take place during the academic transition from middle school to high school (Hertzog & Morgan, 1999; Smith et al. 2008).

Therefore, in their study, Smith et al. (2008) investigated the perceptions of stakeholders about the high school transition using stakeholder theory as a theoretical lens to help middle school students transition to high school. Stakeholders in this study

were comprised of ninth grade high students who recently transitioned, high school teachers, guidance counselors, and the principals.

Mixed method (i.e., questionnaires and interviews) was used to investigate each stakeholder's perceptions. Specifically, The *Perceptions of Transition Survey* (Akos & Galassi, 2004), which can measure students' overall feelings about transition (i.e., academic, social, and organizational aspects of high school) was used for students' perceptions. Interviews were conducted with other stakeholders such as teachers, counselors, and the principals. The questions for interviews included definitions and challenges of transition. Smith et al. (2008) found that middle school students were concerned about organizational issues (e.g., getting lost) and course difficulty. Also, parents' consistent support toward their children such as monitoring and intervening positively with schoolwork and peer network helped their children have a smooth transition. In addition, teachers and guidance counselors play important role in helping students.

### **Stakeholders in High School Athletics**

There are various stakeholders in high school athletics including teachers, parents, students, and as the primary focus of this study – principals and athletic directors. Teachers are one of the most important sets of stakeholders in the education field since they can be viewed as fundamental contributors to student development and achievement (Ricento & Honberger, 1996; Yaro et al., 2016). In addition, teachers can be mentors, supervisors, counselors and community leaders. Specifically, (a) they can be mentors for not only students but also other teachers and the entire community, (b) their supervisory role cuts across many aspects of their daily responsibilities, and (c) they can be

counselors offering advice to students and school advisory committees (Yaro et al., 2016). According to Ricento and Honberger (1996), teachers play an important role in both the policy making and implementation processes. Empowering teachers by providing them with an active and significant role in policy making and implementation can give them an opportunity to serve in a variety of professional roles and facilitates and strengthens student academic activities (Yaro et al., 2016).

Parents play a crucial role as educational stakeholders. Parents' goals are to assure that their children receive a good quality education that can help them lead a successful life as citizens in a global society (Cotton & Wikelund, 2001). Parents, who are most familiar with their children, can provide a precious educational experience for their children and can thus significantly affect their behaviors. Generally, children learn numerous basic behaviors from their parents (Yaro et al., 2016). In addition, parents can provide additional resources for the school. They help their children through properly monitoring and relaxing at home with a view to enhance a sense of community pride and commitment that would positively affect the overall success of their children's school life (Yaro et al., 2016). Parents' role as education stakeholders could further be achieved if they participate in their children's educational journey by attending their children's school functions such as Parent Teacher's Association's (PTA) meetings and school advisory committee meetings which affect the educational decision-making process (Cotton & Wikelund, 2001).

Students can be considered among the most significant education stakeholders because they not only experience education policy but also participate in the educational process. For example, even though they are directly affected by educational policy,

empowering them with decision making ability enhances their choices and sense of responsibility for their own learning quality (Short & Greer, 2002).

These three groups of people are mentioned to recognize their status as stakeholders in the educational setting. The primary focus of this study, however, is principals and athletic directors as stakeholders in this setting.

Principals are regarded by educational stakeholders such as teachers, parents, students, and the community as ‘the leaders’ of the school (Cranston, 2007). Cobb (2015) indicated that principals play critical roles in secondary schools as they work to foster inclusion as partner, coach, visionary, advocate, conflict resolver, organizer, and interpreter. In addition, principals attempt to build sound relationships with various stakeholders of a school community. For example, they advocate on behalf of students, teachers, staff, and parents (Cobb, 2015). Teachers recognize the principal’s power as their lead teacher and depend on its positive impact, which can make an impact within their classrooms. The power of the principal over teachers can be viewed as purposeful and effective, but it is not necessarily manipulative or negative (Odhiambo & Hii, 2012). In addition, principals have responsibility for hiring and managing staff members. Principals not only ensure that staff members carry out school policies but also facilitate professional development and provide feedback to staff members (Cobb, 2015). In terms of principal and student relationships, a good relationship between principals and students not only heightens student levels of enjoyment for school but also makes students feel they are valued members of the school. Odhiambo and Hii (2012) found that the majority of students recognize principals are busy and have little time to interact and communicate with them. If a principal makes an effort to interact with students such as talking with

them during lunchtimes and attending students' extra-curricular events, students appreciate the time their principal takes to spend with them (Odhiambo & Hii, 2012). In terms of the principal and parents' relationships, parents thought that effective communication and maintaining a positive relationship with them as important factors in the principal's role as a leader of the school community (Odhiambo & Hii, 2012).

Managing and keeping good relationships with various school stakeholders is a vital role for principals (Stronge, 2013). Principals should have good leadership and communication skills in order to establish a successful school environment by working with various school stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and students (English, 2008). With those effective personal skills, principals unleash the energy within various school stakeholders and ultimately achieve a school's maximum performance and goal attainment (Lunenburg, 2011; Stackelhouse, 2014). Because principals oversee a high school's athletic director, they are also primary stakeholder in high school sport.

Athletic directors can be viewed as primary stakeholders in high school athletics due to their position of authority. Specifically, athletic directors have various responsibilities and roles with school sports teams and athletes such as organizing the athletic department, game scheduling, marketing, managing a budget, and staffing (e.g., overseeing the coaches) (Ha et al., 2011; Martin et al., 1999a; Sullivan et al., 2014). In addition, most high school athletic directors coach and teach athlete/non-athlete students while managing their athletic department (Martin et al., 1999a) Among these various roles, staffing can be considered as one of the most important responsibilities since the quality of coaches directly affects the overall quality of athletic departments (Sturges et al., 2020). Thus, many athletic directors spend significant amounts of time on coach

education and development (Sturges et al., 2020). With their various responsibilities and roles, athletic directors sometimes experience burn out from dealing with stressful athletic directing issues such as firing a coach, concerns over athletic performance, and concerns regarding overall quality of their athletic departments (Martin et al., 1999b).

Like principals, good human relations skills are essential for athletic directors to create successful athletic environments. They need to communicate and work with various stakeholders within athletic departments such as parents, coaches, and athletes (Martin et al., 1999b). For example, athletic directors continuously engage coaches and parents in meetings about their behaviors and how those behaviors affect student-athletes (Sturges et al., 2020). With their significant and various roles, athletic directors are essential in shaping the culture of high school athletics (Sturges et al., 2020). Furthermore, as a gatekeeper of high school athletics, athletic directors are responsible for the well-being of their student-athletes and affect overall success of their athletic department (Sturges et al., 2020).

In sum, among those various stakeholders in high school athletics, both of principals and athletics directors can be viewed as two of the most important stakeholders due to their attributes of stakeholder salience (i.e., power, legitimacy, and urgency) relative to high school athletics.

### **Sport Management and Stakeholder Theory**

Many sport management scholars have utilized stakeholder theory in intercollegiate athletics and professional sports studies. In terms of intercollegiate athletics, there are various of stakeholders such as NCAA, the US Federal Government, coaches, student-athletes, non-student athletes, faculties, administrators, alumni, fans,



donors, and the local community (Putler & Wolfe, 1999; Friedman et al., 2004). In their studies, Trail and Chelladurai (2000, 2002) examined the goals and/or priorities of intercollegiate athletics' important stakeholders (i.e., faculty and students) based on stakeholder theory by developing a new instrument. The purpose of their instrument was to assess perceptions of two stakeholder groups in intercollegiate athletics (faculty and students) with regards to intercollegiate athletics' primary goals. Trail and Chelladurai's Scale of Athletic Department Goals (SADG) is multidimensional with 10 subscales and 41 items. The 10 subscales were conceptually distinguished into performance goals (i.e., university visibility and prestige, financial security, winning, entertainment, and national sport development) and developmental goals (i.e., student-athlete academic achievement, student-athlete health and fitness, student-athlete social and moral citizenship, student-athlete careers, and culture of diversity) (Trail & Chelladurai, 2000). SADG has a reasonably good data fit.

This clear distinction between performance and development goals was consistent with other similar studies. Baxter, Margavio, and Lambert (1996) illustrated how intercollegiate athletic departments have two different concepts of legitimate conduct: one focused on winning and profit and the other oriented toward education and amateur athletic competition.

Putler and Wolfe (1999) also examined intercollegiate athletics' priorities and tradeoffs by assessing various stakeholders' (i.e., faculty, student-athletes, potential students, university students, athletic department employees, and alumni) perceptions toward various elements of intercollegiate athletics such as win-loss record, graduation rates, NCAA violations, spectator attendance, gender equity of student-athletes, number

of teams, and finances. Putler and Wolfe (1999) found that finances were the most important priority for the stakeholders, followed by graduation rates, win-loss records, and violations. The least important priorities were attendance, followed by gender equity, and number of teams. Specifically, ethics and winning, and education and revenue can be viewed as competing athletic department priorities.

Babiak and Kihl (2018) examined stakeholders' perceptions toward the role of professional baseball teams' CSR using semi-structured interviews with 42 various stakeholders from a professional baseball team. Babiak and Kihl (2018) revealed what the stakeholders expected of their team's engagement with community, social benefits and value creation. Also, stakeholders believed that their teams' CSR played an important role in their team's business practices and provided valuable social benefits that aligned with community expectations.

Zdroik (2016) investigated the process of stakeholder management of high school athletics from an athletic director's perspective. Utilizing a mixed method, which included interviews and surveys, Zdroik (2016) discovered there was an active stakeholder engagement within the high school athletics' major decision-making processes such as hiring head coaches and changing policies.

Huml et al. (2018) investigated how stakeholders would respond with attributes of stakeholder salience regarding their organization's governing structure change in intercollegiate contexts. Specifically, Huml et al. (2018) revealed that equity can be viewed as one of the most important attributes of stakeholder salience in addition to the three traditional attributes (i.e., power, legitimacy, and urgency).

It is important to note that managers of various professional sports organizations need to have proper knowledge of the organization's current environment in order to be successful. Walters and Tacon (2010) argued that stakeholder theory can help managers understand the current environment/situation in their organizations. For example, using the lens of stakeholder theory, managers may be able to answer some key questions directly related to organizational success such as who are the relevant stakeholders?; what are the interests of those different stakeholders?; what is the relationship between the organization and those stakeholders and between the stakeholders themselves?; what duties does the organization owe to its various stakeholders?; and what strategies would be used by the stakeholders to influence the organization? (Walters & Tacon, 2010).

Junghagen (2018) applied stakeholder theory to identify important stakeholders in the Swedish soccer industry and how to successfully manage the relationship of those stakeholders. Junghagen (2018) stated the various stakeholders of the Swedish soccer industry include fans, media, sponsors, and local community. There is no doubt that fans can be considered one of the most important stakeholders for professional sports teams, specifically, fans with high levels of team identification who watch and attend their favorite team's game, purchase team-licensed products, and have a positive relationship with loyalty with their favorite team (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Most importantly, fans who love their team will support the team regardless of the team's performance. In other words, fans will support their favorite team even though the team shows poor performance (Waan & Branscombe, 1993). In turn, the main revenue streams for Swedish football clubs are media and sponsors. In terms of sponsors, most Swedish professional

football clubs generate as much as 28% of their operating income from their sponsors (Junghagen, 2018).

### **Summary of Literature Review**

High school sports can be viewed as an integral part of secondary students' educational experiences, given their benefits and importance (Boekel et al., 2016). High school sports look different by types of school, grade levels, district resources, and sports (i.e., team or individual) (Wretman, 2017). In addition, the system and environment of high school sports varies widely by countries.

South Korean high school sports began in the 1970s. The main purpose of South Korean high school athletics was fostering national level elite student-athletes who could enhance the nation's image in international sporting events such as the Olympic Games (Lee, 2005). To develop high profile athletes, the government of South Korea supported elite athletes through national level policies which focused primarily on athletic performance and achievement (Heo, 2011; Hong & Ryu, 2007).

US high school sports began in the mid-1800s. At the start, students organized the events and competed amongst themselves (Zdroik, 2016). However, as physical education became a part of the formal educational curriculum, many schools invested resources in high school sports. Today, almost every high school in the United States provides interscholastic programs for both boys and girls to enhance their overall well-being, including behavioral, physical, and psychological benefits (NFHS, 2020).

The South Korea government has tried to remedy the current environment, which requires South Korean high school student-athletes to focus only on their athletic performance, by adapting policies from US high school athletics. Due to the cultural

differences in the overall systems and environments of high school athletics from each country, however, directly applying US high school athletic policies does not always fit in the South Korean context. In order to make comparisons between the systems, organizational culture theory and stakeholder theory will be explored as the frameworks for this proposed study. According to Schein (2010), there are three levels of culture: (a) artifacts, (b) values, and (c) basic underlying assumptions. Schein (2010) suggested that it is essential to examine all three levels of culture to identify the culture of an organization. Especially, understanding a deeper level of the organizational culture (i.e., values, and underlying assumptions) is important because surface level artifacts do not reflect deeper meanings of the organization. Values and underlying assumptions can be identified by examining the organization members' perceptions toward culture of their organization (Bailey et al., 2017; Cole & Martin, 2018; Schein, 2010). This study applied Schein's (2010) organizational culture theory to gain not only artifacts level of a South Korea and US high school athletic department but also deeper level meanings of its culture (i.e., espoused beliefs and underlying assumption) according to the perceptions of two main stakeholders in high school athletic department, principals and athletic directors. By understanding each athletic department's own unique factors at all three levels of organizational culture, this study could identify similarities and differences in organizational culture of two cases so that provide insights for South Korean practitioners that they cannot simply apply a set of different cultural expectations from one country to the next without understanding the system are.

Stakeholders can be defined as “any group of individuals who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives” (Freeman, 1984, p. 46).

Since the initial main aim of stakeholder theory was to offer pragmatic strategies for organizations to manage their stakeholders to achieve superior performance in organization (Freeman, 1984), previous research have utilized stakeholder theory to examine the stakeholder management in organizational decision-making processes. For example, in the context of sport management, Friedman et al. (2004) employed stakeholder theory to describe how to improve strategic decision-making in sport organization. Friedman et al. (2004) suggested that sport managers could achieve their organization's objectives by applying stakeholder management strategies. In the education field, Schlechty (2001) revealed that the participation of various education stakeholders (e.g., teachers, student, and parents) during the educational policy development process could result in better policies, and eventually improve the quality of education for students.

In this aspect, stakeholder theory is applicable for this study since understanding stakeholder management in the decision-making process of each country's high school athletic department will provide a better understanding of how each athletic department operates with various stakeholders (Friedman et al., 2004). In high school athletics, there are various stakeholders such as parents, teachers, student-athletes, alumni association, coaches, and the community (Zdroik, 2016). Among these stakeholders, the principals and athletic directors can be viewed as two of the key stakeholders/decision makers who can affect the achievement of their athletic department's objectives with their possession of the three attributes (Freeman, 1984; Mitchell et al., 1997). Therefore, this study investigates how decision makers (i.e., principals and athletic directors) account for other stakeholders in the athletic department in their departmental decision-making process.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

The purpose of this study was to examine and compare the organizational culture of a high school athletic department in South Korea and in the USA. Utilizing a qualitative comparative case study research perspective, the study incorporated Organizational Culture and Stakeholder theories as the theoretical lenses. This qualitative study aimed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. What is the organizational culture of a South Korean high school athletic department?

RQ2. What is the organizational culture of a US high school athletic department?

RQ3. What are the similarities and differences between the organizational culture of a South Korean and US high school athletic department?

RQ4. As primary stakeholders in high school athletic department, how do a South Korean principal and AD manage other stakeholders in their high school athletic department's decision-making process?

RQ5. As primary stakeholders in high school athletic department, how do a US principal and AD manage other stakeholders in their high school athletic department's decision-making process?

In order to examine and compare the organizational culture of each country's selected high school athletic department, a qualitative study design was employed. This allows the researcher an in-depth empirical look at the current organizational culture of each country's selected high school athletic department. Qualitative research includes understanding "how people make sense out of their lives, delineate the process of meaning-making, and describe how people interpret what they experience" (Merriam, 2009, p. 15). In addition, it allows researchers to examine the meanings of people's cultures, settings, interactions, and experiences (Tweksbury, 2009; Williams, 2018). This study seeks a better understanding of two main stakeholders' (i.e., principals and athletic directors) perceptions toward the organizational culture of a South Korean and US high school athletic department by applying Schein's (2010) organizational culture theory and Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory. Specifically, this study will utilize Schein's (2010) three levels of organizational culture (i.e., artifacts, values, and underlying assumptions) to establish the interpretive lens of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Williams, 2018).

Many previous qualitative methodologies have been utilized in the sport management field (Bailey et al., 2017; Jayakumar & Commeaux, 2016; Norman et al., 2018). It is necessary to ensure the selected qualitative methodology fits into the study's research questions, so different qualitative research designs were considered for the current study (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000). A comparative case study approach was selected for the present study.

### **Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted all aspects of society such as school closures, lost jobs, and health problems. The COVID-19 pandemic also affected the way



researchers conduct research. For example, researchers might need to postpone/suspend data collection, revise research plans to work within updated institutional guidelines, and redesign projects (Jowett, 2020; Santana et al., 2021).

This study was also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The original design of this study (i.e., multiple case study) was revised to a comparative case study design due to effect of COVID-19 on data collection. Specifically, the researcher intended to recruit participants by contacting a public school district located in the country where the researcher was residing. In a typical year, the school district could help facilitate participant recruitment and allow their staff (e.g., teachers) to participated in outside research. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the district requested that their IRB suspend most external research through the 2020-21 school year.

Since the sample of present study were a principal and athletic director from a US high school athletic department, the updated rules from the district caused significant restrictions and constraints in this study regarding data collection process, especially in participant recruitment. Therefore, the researcher revised the number of cases to examine for this study. Specifically, the researcher examined one school from each country. As such, the research design was also revised from multiple case study to comparative case since comparative study design is more appropriate for direct comparison of each case (Takahashi & Araujo, 2020).

### **Comparative Case Study Design**

Even though there has been on-going discussion regarding limitations of case study design, the case study design is consistently used by many qualitative researchers (Gustafsson, 2017). A case study can be defined as exploring “a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed,

in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information... and reports a case description and case themes” (Creswell, 2013, p. 97).

A comparative case study will be needed if a study includes more than one single case (Yin, 2014). Comparative case study design seeks to examine organizational aspects of each case to make contrasts with selected terms (Takahashi & Araujo, 2020). By doing this, each case can be compared to identify similarities and differences that cause either divergent or convergent results (Goodrick, 2014; Yin, 2015). Comparative case study design requires similar phenomena in two different contexts (Takahashi & Araujo, 2019).

Many previous studies utilized comparative case study design in cross-cultural studies. For example, Martinus and Hedgcock (2015) examined philosophical and professional differences in policy research between Japan and Australia. Zhao and Singh (2010) investigated mathematics achievement between Chinese-Australian and Australian students, and Tayeb (2006) examined the applicability of Japanese management practices in UK. Comparative study design is appropriate in this study since this study examined similar phenomena (i.e., organizational culture of high school athletic department) of two different contexts (i.e., a South Korean and US high school athletic department). Also, by examining two cases, this study could identify similarities and differences of the two cases (Yin, 2015). In addition, by utilizing comparative case study design, the researcher could elaborate on direct cross country comparisons between the high school athletic departments.

### **Case Context**

The high schools in this study were located in urban areas. There is a substantial difference between urban high schools and rural high schools. For example, compared with athletes at rural schools, athletes from urban schools are more likely to be highly

specialized in their sports, participate in more competitions, and play in leagues outside of school (Bell et al., 2018). In other words, urban high school athletics could be viewed as more professional and organized than rural high school athletics. Therefore, high schools with/without sport teams or located in rural areas were excluded for this study to ensure a proper understanding of the organizational culture of each country's high school athletics. In this study, urban areas were defined as a continuously built-up areas with a population 50,000 or more (Census, 2020).

A total of 2 high schools, 1 from each country, were selected as the sites for the current study. There were two primary inclusion criteria for the sites of this study: (1) high schools that have their own athletic departments, and (2) high schools had to be located in urban areas. After receiving approval from the university's institutional review board (IRB), the researcher contacted the participants who were available and interested in engaging in this study.

Crescent High School is located in a large province in South Korea with a population of approximately 300,000 people. This public high school was founded in 1997. The school has an average enrollment of about 700 students. There are a total of 38 teachers and staff members. The student to teacher ratio is 10:1, and the graduation rate was 99% in 2019. Of which, 69% of the students enrolled in college in the 2019 fiscal year. Crescent High School athletics operates a total of four sports - track and field, boxing, golf, and taekwondo. The track and field team previously won the national championship. The athletic department utilizes three athletic facilities including a soccer field, indoor arena, and weight room. The current athletic director of Crescent High School is also a physical education (PE) teacher.

Longwood High School is a public high school located in the southeastern United States with a population of approximately 610,000 people. The school opened in 1957 and currently has an average enrollment of approximately 1,200 students. The school is one of 15 academies of the county public schools. There are a total of 110 teachers and staffs. The student to teacher ratio is 13:1, and the graduation rate was 84% in 2019. Longwood High School athletics offers a total of 17 sports - archery, baseball, basketball, bowling, cheerleading, cross country, dance, field hockey, football, golf, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track and field, volleyball, and wrestling. There are 24 athletics administrators including a principal, an athletic director, an athletic trainer, and the respective coaches. The school has a rich history of athletic success. For example, the basketball team won the state championships two times, and the football team previously won the state championship.

### **Data Collection Protocol**

The official websites and documents (i.e., handbook of provincial Office of Education and state high school athletic association) were analyzed to investigate the artifacts of each organization. Audio-recorded semi-structured interviews were conducted as well for the data collection method for this study. Specifically, the researcher interviewed the participants via Zoom. Telephone and online virtual interviews were utilized as in-person access to the population of participants was very limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent studies suggested there were no significant differences or advantages between telephone interviews and face-to-face interview methods (Sturges et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2017). Therefore, the use of telephone and virtual online interviews did not suggest perceptible differences in the quality of the data collected (Williams, 2018).

According to Schein (2010), there are three levels of organizational culture: (1) artifacts, (2) espoused beliefs and values, and (3) basic underlying assumptions. Schein (2010) also suggested that it is essential to examine all three levels to identify the culture of an organization. Therefore, a semi-structured interview guide drawing on Schein's (2010) conceptual model of organizational culture that used previous sport studies (Bailey et al., 2017; Junggren et al., 2018) were modified in high school athletics setting for this study. Specifically, the interview questionnaire included questions regarding artifacts, values, and underlying assumptions. Since it is essential to examine perceptions of participants to assess the deeper meaning of the organizational culture (Schein, 2010), values (e.g., How do you measure success of your athletic program?) and underlying assumptions (e.g., To what extent do you feel the rules of the athletic program correspond to the core values of the athletic program? Why or why not?) questions were worded in a way to gain a deeper understanding of the perspective of each participant.

Since having a good relationship with various stakeholders can be viewed as a vital role for both principals and athletic directors (English, 2008; Martin et al., 1999; Stronge, 2013; Zdroik, 2016), questions regarding their roles in managing the relationship with other stakeholders were included. (e.g., What are some of the major decisions you make in your role as principal/athletic director? Which stakeholders did you work with when making that decision?, What tactics did you use with each stakeholder?). Examples of specific interview questions include:

- Describe the daily routine of your school's athletic department (e.g., practice times, competition/tournament schedules, etc)
- What are the core values of high school athletics?

- What are some of the major decisions you make in your role as principal/athletic director?
  - a. Choose one major decision that you want to talk more for following questions
  - b. What led you to make this decision?
  - c. Reflecting on the decision (use example given), what were your goals at the time?
  - d. Which stakeholders did you work with when making that decision? (Internal/External)
  - e. What were the key pressures (internal/external)?

For audio recording the interviews, the researcher utilized a digital recorder. The researcher ensured that the subjects are made fully aware audio recording was conducted, including issuing the statement, “This study involves the use of audio recordings to hear your experiences and perspectives as a main stakeholder of a South Korean or US high school athletic department. Only the researcher will have access your recorded data. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the audio recording or the transcript.” It took around 45 minutes to an hour to complete each interview.

**Participants.** Based on previous research in education and sport management using stakeholder theory, principals and athletic directors can be viewed as two of the most important stakeholders who can affect the culture of high school athletics for following reasons. First, principals are regarded by other educational stakeholders such as teachers, parents, students, and community as ‘the leaders’ of the school (Cranston, 2007). Second, principals play critical roles in creating and maintaining the culture of secondary schools through their authority and responsibilities (Cobb, 2015; Rhodes et al., 2011). Finally, athletic directors have various responsibilities and roles with high school

sport programs such as planning and overseeing coaches and student-athletes (Ha et al., 2011; Zdroik, 2016). In sum, among various stakeholders of high school athletics, principals and athletic directors can be viewed as two of the most important stakeholders who can affect the culture of high school athletics. Therefore, specific inclusion criteria for the sample of this study are:

- Current principals of South Korean and US high schools
- Current athletic directors of South Korean and US high schools

The researcher contacted principals and athletic directors of a South Korean US high school who were available and interested in engaging in this study. A total of 4 individual interviewees ( $N = 4$ ) includes principals ( $N = 2$ , 1 of each country) and athletic directors ( $N = 2$ , 1 of each country) from a South Korean and US high school.

**Access and entry.** Approval to conduct a study with human subjects was obtained from the University of Louisville Institutional Review Board (IRB) before contacting and interviewing participants. The researcher and the participants followed Institutional Review Board (IRB) research requirements. There were no known risks for participation in this study. Interview participation was entirely voluntary. Participants had the opportunity to withdraw from the interview at any time. No questions identifying participants' personal information, besides demographic questions of gender identity, age, and years working in high school athletics were asked. All information was stored on a password-protected computer, and only the researchers of this study and IRB personnel will have authority to monitor the collected data. The aforementioned provisions ensured confidentiality of participants.

**Pilot study.** A pilot study was utilized two weeks before the official interviews to ensure effectiveness and appropriateness of interview questions and selection process. The pilot interview was conducted with a current principal of a US public high school located in an urban area. The pilot interview lasted around 45 minutes. Through the pilot study, the researcher tested the use of certain interview questions and decided if appropriate data could be collected from the interview questions for the study. Like official interviews, the participant of pilot interview was presented with an agreement and was informed of the purpose of the study and interview questions prior to the interview.

### **Data Analysis**

After the data collection processes, the researcher specified the data analysis approach for developing case descriptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since the COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected participant recruitment of this study, a total of two high school athletic departments, one from each country was selected as the sites for the current study. Therefore, the researcher used holistic analysis approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018), to understand cross cultural differences and similarities as well as apply stakeholder analysis across both schools.

In terms of transcripts analysis, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. In order to ensure confidentiality through the analysis, pseudonyms were applied to each participant. Braun and Clarke's (2012) thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview data. According to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012), there is a total of six steps to analyze data. Step one is *familiarizing with the data through reading and re-reading process*. This includes engaging in the data with reading and re-reading transcripts of interviews as well as listening to audio recordings (Braun &



Clarke, 2012). The second step is *generating initial codes*: codes can be viewed as the building blocks of analysis. In other words, codes identify and provide labels for a feature of the data, which is relevant to the research question. This step could be done when the data are completely coded and the data related to each code have been collected (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Step three is *searching for themes*. In this step, the data begins to take shape in shifting from codes to themes. A theme “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Searching for themes can be viewed as an active process, by generating or constructing themes, rather than discovering. Step four includes *reviewing potential themes*. This step includes a process where developing themes are reviewed relative to the coded data and entire data set. The researcher needs to find “themes that capture the most important and relevant elements of the data, and the overall tone of the data in relation to the study research question” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 66). The fifth step is *defining and naming themes*. For this step, the researcher could clearly identify unique and specific characteristics about each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Finally, in step six the researcher produces the report. The purpose of this step is “to provide a compelling story about the study data based on the researcher’s analysis. The story should be convincing and clear” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 69).

**Translation strategy.** Since all interviews and manuscripts with the South Korean participants were in the Korean language, systematic translation strategies were used to minimize errors that may have arisen during the translation process (Sousa & Rojjanasrirat, 2011; Weeks et al, 2014). First, two bilingual translators translated the

manuscripts from Korean to English. Second, for back translation, two bilingual translators who had not been exposed to the instrument were asked to translate the English transcripts to Korean. Lastly, final fine tuning of instrument included extensive discussions with all translators to ensure if potential discrepancies or problems were identified and addressed during the back translation.

### **Researcher Positionality**

The author has previous experience as a student-athlete in South Korea and has many former athlete friends. Most of the author's former athlete friends live challenging lives after their retirement since they could not integrate into society due to their lack of formal education and social skills. Specifically, they are struggling to get a job upon retirement and an extreme case includes death by suicide. This background served as the primary motivation for the author to conduct the research. Also, the researcher majored in a sport related field at a South Korean undergraduate university and holds a master's degree from a US University. As a doctoral student and new researcher in the subject of South Korean high school student-athletes' well-being, the researcher has come to realize that there is a greater need to better understand the development of sport policies in South Korea, and due to the lack of research and action in this area, is dedicated to pursue this line of research. This prior participation/experience will help the researcher communicate with each of the participants in order to develop rapport going into the interview. Including this information will provide the participants with context on the researcher, with the hope that they would be more open with their responses if they view the interviewer as a sport insider.

Based on the South Korean high school sport system, the primary purpose of high school athletics was solely the athletic achievement of student-athletes, especially gold medals from sporting events. South Korean high school student-athletes are required to devote all their time and attention to training for their sports (Heo, 2011). Beyond that, these athletes are not allowed to pursue a proper education during their time in high school since it would take them away from training (Heo, 2010). In other words, South Korean high school athletics can be viewed as a farm system for elite level athletes (Ham, 2003). This imbalanced culture created many negative effects for South Korean high school student-athletes including lack of academic skills, numerous injuries, and psychological pressure (Ham, 2003).

In terms of US high school sport system, on the other hand, the main purpose of high school athletics is to enhance high school student-athletes' overall well-being, including behavioral, physical, and psychological benefits (NFHS,2020). For example, previous research illustrated a significant positive relationship between high school students' academic achievement and their level of athletic participation. In addition, high school sport participation has been shown to enhance physical and emotional health as well as the quality of life for students (Zdroik, 2016).

Therefore, the researcher expected to see significant differences between the organizational culture of a South Korean and US high school athletic department. Specifically, the researcher assumed that a South Korean high school athletic department would emphasize on athletic achievement of student-athletes, whereas the US high school athletic department focus on balancing their student-athletes' academics and athletics.

However, it is essential for the researcher to not let this background influence the guiding assumptions of the study's methodology. In order to address these methodological beliefs, the researcher ensured that the study's interview guide was open ended and not designed to lead participants into giving a desired response. The researcher's history was also important when considering epistemological beliefs, which involve the interviewer and interviewee co-constructing a reality through individual experiences (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). To do so, the researcher incorporated his own background, and worked with the participants to engage and share their lived experiences.

### **Summary of Method**

The purpose of this study was to examine and compare the organizational culture of a high school athletic department in South Korea and in the USA. Utilizing a qualitative comparative case study research perspective, the study incorporated Organizational Culture and Stakeholder theories as the theoretical lenses. A qualitative research design allows the researcher an in-depth empirical look at the current organizational culture of a South Korea and US high school athletic department. By utilizing a comparative case study, the researcher was able to analyze data both within each case and across cases (Yin, 2015). In addition, a comparative case study design is directly related to this study's research question that seeks to explore the similarities and differences between organizational culture of a South Korean and US high school athletic department. Telephone and on-line virtual interviews were conducted, as access to the population of participants was very limited due to current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study used purposeful sampling to examine two primary stakeholders' (i.e., principal and athletic director) perceptions toward organizational culture of their athletic department. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), purposeful sampling could allow the researcher to identify and select groups of individuals who have knowledge and experience with a phenomenon of interest. It is important to note, in qualitative research, that composition of the sample is more important than the size of sample since a large sample size alone does not always lead to reach data saturation. In this aspect, both the principal and athletic director can be viewed as most appropriate sample for this study with their knowledge and experience with their athletic department. Specifically, principals have various responsibilities for and authority over their athletic departments including administering the budget, hiring and evaluating staff, overseeing facilities and managing school board meetings (Dowd, 2018). Also, principals play critical roles in creating and maintaining the culture of secondary schools through their authority and responsibilities (Cobb, 2015; Rhodes et al., 2011).

Athletic directors also have numerous responsibilities and roles within athletic departments such as managing/organizing the athletic department, game scheduling, marketing, managing a budget, and staffing (e.g., overseeing the coaches) (Ha et al., 2011; Martin et al., 1999; Sullivan et al., 2014). Like principals, with their significant and various roles, athletic directors are essential in shaping the culture of high school athletics (Kochanek & Erickson, 2021; Sturges, 2020).

After establishing the appropriate sample, the researcher conducted extensive data collection drawing on multiple data sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Specifically, for this study, the researcher collected data from official documents (i.e., handbooks), direct

observation (i.e., official websites), and in-depth interviews (i.e., principals and athletic directors) for extensive data collection (Yin, 2015). In terms of in-depth interviews, the researcher developed a modified semi-structured interview guide, which was used in a previous organizational culture study in a sport setting (Bailey et al., 2017) and asked the same questions to all four interviewees. By doing this, this study could achieve analytical saturation.

Braun and Clarke's (2012) thematic analysis was applied to analyze the data from the interviews. In addition, since manuscripts from South Korean participants were initially written from Korean, systematic translation strategies were used to minimize errors that may arise during the translation process (Sousa & Rojjanasrirat, 2011; Weeks et al, 2014)

Researcher positionality was integral to this study, as the researcher is a former student-athlete in South Korea and current doctoral student interested in the subject of South Korean high school student-athletes' well-being. Therefore, the researcher left behind his beliefs and assumptions to explore an unbiased perspective of the phenomenon.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine and compare the organizational culture of a high school athletic department in South Korea and in the USA. Utilizing a qualitative comparative case study research perspective, the study incorporated Organizational Culture and Stakeholder theories as the theoretical lenses. By applying Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory and Schein's (2010) three levels of organizational culture, this study aimed to provide a holistic understanding of the organizational culture of a South Korean and US high school athletic department by examining the perceptions of two of the main stakeholders in high school athletic department - principals and athletic directors. The findings and results of this study can give practical insights to administrators and practitioners in both South Korean and US high school athletic departments.

Specifically, this study utilized a total of five research questions to provide a holistic understanding in comparing organizational culture between a South Korean and a US high school athletic department as follows:

RQ1. What is the organizational culture of a South Korean high school athletic department?

RQ2. What is the organizational culture of a US high school athletic department?

RQ3. What are the similarities and differences between the organizational culture of a South Korean and US high school athletic department?

RQ4. As primary stakeholders in high school athletic department, how do a South Korean principal and AD manage other stakeholders in their high school athletic department's decision-making process?

RQ5. As primary stakeholders in high school athletic department, how do a US principal and AD manage other stakeholders in their high school athletic department's decision-making process?

To answer the research questions, a qualitative comparative case study was utilized. A comparative case study allows a researcher to identify differences and similarities between cases (Goodrick, 2014). Also, with a comparative case study design, the researcher will be able to analyze the data both within each case and across different cases (Goodrick, 2014; Yin, 2014). The researcher in this study collected various data by utilizing interviews and analyzing documents. Specifically, the data for this study included one-on-one, on-line interviews with principals and athletic directors from each country's selected high school athletic department. In addition, official websites of both schools and archival records such as handbook of both schools' athletic departments were analyzed for this study. These various forms of data provided a deeper understanding of the culture of both cases as well as addressing the research questions.



## **Cases: Crescent High School Athletic Department (South Korea) and Longwood High School Athletic Department (United States)**

A high school principal and athletic director, one each from South Korea and the US, agreed to take part in this study. Pseudonyms were given in order to protect privacy and anonymity of the sites (i.e., Crescent High School and Longwood High School athletic departments). Basic institutional demographic information was provided to guide this study as follows.

Crescent High School is a public high school in South Korea, established in 1997. This public high school is currently located in a large province of South Korea with a population of approximately 300,000 people. The school has a total of 38 teachers and staff members as well as an average enrolment of 700 students. The ratio of students to teachers is 10:1. Also, the graduation rate of the school was 99% in 2019 and 69% of those students went to college in the 2019 fiscal year. Crescent High School athletics provides a total of four sports – track and field, boxing, golf, and taekwondo. The school's track and field team won the national championship in the past. Crescent High School's athletics have three athletic facilities including a soccer field, indoor arena, and weight room. The athletic director of the school is also serves as a physical education (PE) teacher. Longwood High School is a public high school in the United States, founded in 1957. This public high school is located in southeastern city in the US with a population of approximately 300,000 people. The school is one of 15 county public schools. The school has a total of 110 teachers and staff members as well as approximately 1,200 students. The ratio of students to teachers is 13:1. In 2019, the graduation rate of the school was 84%. Longwood High School athletics provide a total

of 17 sports - archery, baseball, basketball, bowling, cheerleading, cross country, dance, field hockey, football, golf, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track and field, volleyball, and wrestling. The school has a total of 24 athletic administrators, including the principal, an athletic director, an athletic trainer, and the respective team coaches. The basketball team won the state championships two times in the past, and the football team previously won the state championship.

A total of four participants (i.e., two principals and two athletics directors -one each from Crescent and Longwood High Schools) participated in this study. One-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interviews via on-line platforms (i.e., Zoom) were the main source of data collection employed for this study. Each interview consisted of questions regarding (a) artifacts, (b) espoused beliefs and values, and (c) underlying assumptions based on Schein's (2010) conceptual framework to investigate the culture of high school athletic department. The following table illustrates the overall comparison of two cases based on Schein's (2010) conceptual framework.

Table 4.1  
Organizational culture comparison between two cases

	<b>Crescent High School Athletic Department</b>	<b>Longwood High School Athletic Department</b>
<b>Artifacts</b>	<p>Schedule of sport team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> Practice – 6:30am to 08:00am</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> Practice – 4:50pm to 07:00pm</li> <li>• Competition – both weekdays and weekend</li> </ul> <p>Handbook of province’s Office of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on student-athletes’ academics, future career, and human rights</li> </ul> <p>Official website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall information about the school</li> <li>• Information about college admission</li> <li>• Space for parents</li> <li>• Information about the rules from provincial Office of Education</li> </ul>	<p>Schedule of sport team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice – 2:20pm to until finish</li> <li>• Competition – most likely on weekdays</li> </ul> <p>Handbook of state high school athletic association</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on student-athlete’ eligibility</li> </ul> <p>Official website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall information about the school</li> <li>• Space for parent</li> <li>• Social media pages</li> <li>• Space for alumni association</li> </ul>
<b>Espoused Beliefs and Values</b>	<p>Theme 1: Student-athletes’ athletic achievement</p> <p>Theme 2: Balancing student-athletes’ academics and athletics</p>	<p>Theme 1: Student-athletes competing at college level with scholarship</p>
<b>Basic Underlying Assumptions</b>	<p>Theme 1: Following the rules of handbook</p>	<p>Theme 1: Making student-athletes better people</p>

Each interview was composed of questions regarding (a) artifacts, (b) espoused beliefs and values, and (c) underlying assumptions based on Schein’s (2010) conceptual framework to investigate the culture of high school athletic department. The following

sections will discuss the sites of the study (i.e., Crescent and Longwood High School athletic departments) and the emergent themes according to the research questions.

**RQ1. What is the organizational culture of a South Korean high school athletic department?**

The following section describes the perceptions of the principal and AD of the organizational culture of Crescent High School athletic department. During the interviews with the principal and AD, they provided details on the culture of their high school athletic department including artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions.

**Artifacts**

According to Schein (2010, p. 17), artifacts can be defined as:

the visible products of the group such as the architecture of its physical environment; its language; its technology and products; its artistic creations; its style; as embodied in clothing, manners of address, and emotional displays; its myths and stories told about the organization; its published lists of values; and its observable rituals and ceremonies.

Real-life examples of artifacts include observed behavior routines, formal descriptions of how the organization works, and organizational charts (Schein, 2010). Based on the interviews, two themes were found under the category of artifacts.

***Theme 1: Schedule of Sport Teams***

Crescent High School athletic department offers a total of four sports - boxing, golf, taekwondo, and track & field. All sports are provided all year round. Detailed information about the sports (e.g., the history, win/loss, rosters, expenses of department

and so on) is provided on their school website. The schedule of Crescent High School athletic department, which can be viewed as an observed routine (Schein, 2010), was described during the interviews with the principal and AD. The principal described how “The student-athletes practice two times per day and participate in tournaments based on the rules. The student-athletes also have off-season training during their vacation.” In terms of vacation time in Crescent High School, Summer vacation begins in the middle of July and finishes in the middle of August. Also, Winter vacation begins at the end of December and finishes in the first week of next February. More detailed information about the daily schedule of Crescent High School athletic department was provided by the AD who stated:

Our student-athletes practice from 6:30 to 8:00 in the morning before they go to class. They also practice from 4:50pm to 7:00pm after they finish class... we also try to make sure that our student-athletes do not skip their classes and attend them all before they practice.

This statement illustrated that the rules implemented by the provincial Office of Education affect the daily schedule of the Crescent High School athletic department. The principal and AD, as administrators of the athletic department, take care of their student-athletes’ academic achievements by limiting the practices during class times. In addition, Crescent High School participated in various tournaments and competitions during both weekdays and weekends.

The daily practice schedule of Crescent High School athletic department changed due to COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the AD said:

We are currently struggling to set up and manage the practice schedules due to the COVID-19 pandemic...there are many rules we have to follow such as social distancing and limiting the number of student-athletes in the same indoor facility. This really affects our student-athletes' athletic performance negatively since we can't have group practices like we did before the pandemic, so some student-athletes are forced to have individual practices by themselves.

This statement shows how the COVID-19 pandemic affects the daily routine of the Crescent High School athletic department.

***Theme 2: Handbook of Province's Office of Education***

In South Korean sport culture, tremendous emphasis is placed on student-athletes' athletic achievement. Due to this culture, South Korean high school student-athletes are required to spend all their time practicing their sport and they often skipped their classes (Heo, 2010). After South Korean high school students' lack of education became a societal problem, however, the government of South Korea made an effort to balance student-athletes' academics and athletics (Kim, 2011; Kim & Park, 2009). For example, the South Korean Ministry of Education and Office of Education from each province wrote and implemented various rules regarding student-athletes (Kim, 2011; Kim & Park, 2009).

The province where Crescent High School is located also has its own handbook for student-athletes. There are a total of 24 different rules regarding how to manage a high school athletic department. Specifically, in the bylaws, the rules include student-athletes' academic improvement, limitation of tournament participation during the

semester, off-season training, prohibition of training camp, management of coaches, transparency on expenses and so on.

### ***Theme 3: Official Website***

The official website of Crescent High School was investigated to assess the artifacts level of its organizational culture. The website includes overall information of the school such as its mission and vision statements, staff directory, policies from the provincial Office of Education, and the general school schedule. The website also includes various information regarding its athletic department such as the history, win-loss records, rosters, and expenses of the department. In addition, the website includes information about college admissions (e.g., websites of various universities, information/update about college entrance exam). An observation of these artifacts suggests that students' college admission is important to the administrators at Crescent High School. Lastly, there is a bulletin board for parents. This bulletin board serves as a place where parents can communicate with the school. Specifically, parents can upload questions for the school to answer, and the school can also upload notices for parents. This opportunity for two-way communication between parents and the school indicates that Crescent High School considers parents as important stakeholders and acknowledges importance of communicating with them (Yaro et al., 2016). The next section will discuss the espoused beliefs and values of Crescent High School athletic department.

### **Espoused Beliefs and Values**

Espoused beliefs and values can be defined as “Ideals, goals, values, aspirations, and rationalizations of the organization” (Schein, 2010, p. 17). Espoused beliefs and values may or may not be identified with behaviors of organization members and other

artifacts (Schein, 2010). Two themes emerged under espoused beliefs and values based on the interview data from the principal and AD of Crescent High School.

### ***Theme 1: Student-athletes' Athletic Performance***

The interview data from the principal and AD described the espoused beliefs and values of Crescent High School pertaining to student-athletes' athletic performance. The AD explained the importance of the student-athletes' athletic performance and stated, "One of the main goals of our athletic department is helping student-athletes to enhance their athletic performance, since this will directly affect their college admission." This statement sheds light on the current admission system of South Korean colleges, which considers only student-athletes' athletic achievement as their admission criteria. The principal also added: "We are trying our best to help our student-athletes' performance during their time in high school since it will influence college admission and going to the professional level."

Student-athletes' athletic performance still existed as a main value in the athletic department during the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, the principal and AD tried to maintain that value for their student-athletes. For example, the AD stated:

Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, and with the many restrictions and limitations, we are still helping our student-athletes enhance their athletic performance...so some of the coaches even visited student-athletes' houses to train them individually. We also allowed our senior student-athletes to compete in the tournaments since this year is critical to their college admission chances.

Specifically, Crescent High School allowed their senior student-athletes to participate in tournaments for their athletic achievement even though most other schools prohibited



their student-athletes' from tournament participation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the main values of other stakeholders in the athletic department aligned with the athletic department values. For example, the principal said: "Parents also want to see their kids participate in tournaments, even with the COVID-19 pandemic." The following section discusses another value of the athletic department, which includes balancing student-athletes' athletics and academics.

***Theme 2: Balancing Student-Athletes' Athletics and Academics.***

Traditionally, South Korean student-athletes had been required to spend much their time training for their sport since South Korean sport culture only focuses on student-athletes' athletic achievement (Heo, 2010). This causes many problems such as excessive time commitments (e.g., student-athletes skip their classes to practice their sport) and questionable coaching practices (e.g., coaches have tremendous power over student-athletes' career). Specifically, these practices include coaches' disservice to their student-athletes in the name of better athletic achievement (Kang, 2007; Sun et al., 2010). In addition, since these disservices are considered as common practices to achieve better athletic achievement and competition results, coaches' physical and verbal abuse toward their student-athletes are prevalent in South Korean sport (Associated Press, 2019). In addition, due to this imbalanced culture, many South Korean retired athletes struggle to integrate into society since they have only sports skills. Therefore, the organizing bodies of South Korean high school sports such as Office of Education from each province developed and implemented new rules to help with the current situation South Korean student-athletes are facing. Those rules help the administrators of South Korean high school athletics, including principals and ADs, to recognize the importance of

student-athletes' academics. The principal and AD of Crescent High School also described balancing their student-athletes' athletics and academics as a main value of their athletic department. For example, the AD stated:

Helping our student-athletes focus on their academics is equally as important as their athletics...there are many rules regarding student-athletes' academics, such as mandatory class loads, limiting tournament participation during the semester, and minimum required GPAs. As an AD, I need to be knowledgeable about the rules to help our student-athletes.

### **Basic Underlying Assumptions**

Basic underlying assumptions are “unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values” (Schein 2010, p. 18). Basic underlying assumptions significantly affect the behaviors, thoughts, and perceptions of organization members (Schein, 2010). Basic underlying assumptions are considered as the deepest level of the culture of an organization and more important to the members when compared to espoused beliefs and values. The following section will discuss the underlying assumptions of Crescent High School athletic department based on the interviews from the principal and AD.

### ***Theme 1: Following the Rules***

As stated above, the province's Office of Education established rules regarding high school athletics. As administrators at the Crescent High School athletic department, both the principal and athletic director described that following those rules as the most important value for their athletic department and themselves as well. For example, the athletic director stated:

As a supervisor, I have to manage our athletic department based on the rules from the office of education. For myself, following the rules and managing the athletic department without any issue is honestly more important than our student-athletes' athletic performance.

This statement shows the AD's perspective toward the importance of following the rules. This statement was similarly repeated by the principal as well. The principal added: "Following the rules from the handbook is the most important factor that I am currently paying attention to..." The AD discussed why both the AD and principal consider following the rules as the most important factor in their athletic department. The AD stated: "If our athletic department does not follow the rules and something goes wrong, I will get penalized from the Office of Education. No one wants to get a penalty." If the principal and AD do not manage their athletic department based on the rules, they will get a penalty from the Office of Education and that penalty will negatively affect their career (ex – getting a promotion). Therefore, both the principal and AD try their best to follow the rules to avoid any penalty and disadvantages from breaking those rules.

Although the main aim of the rules is support student-athletes, however, there is a discrepancy between the rules and the espoused values of the athletic department. For example, the AD stated:

There are too many mandatory rules regarding student-athletes' athletic participation, such as limits on tournament participation during the semester. It's kind of ironic that student-athletes need athletic achievements for their college admission, but there's a limitation about the tournament participation.

This statement indicated that student-athletes have difficulties enhancing their athletic achievements due to the restricted number of tournaments they can participate in during an academic semester.

In addition, even though the AD understood the necessity and purpose of the rules, those rules sometimes negatively affected the administrators in terms of management of the athletic department. For example, the AD said:

I totally understand the purpose of the rules are helping student-athletes, but as I said, there are too many mandatory rules that we need to follow in managing our athletic department and it undermines the autonomy of our athletic department...so sometimes I feel like this is too much.

The AD referred to the numerous mandatory rules such as limitations on participation in practices and tournaments, limitations of camp training, management and transparency of expenses, management of student-athletes' dormitories, and management of coaches. It is important to note that there is a discrepancy between the espoused values and basic underlying assumption of Crescent High School athletic department. Also, this discrepancy negatively affects the members of the organization with regards to how the AD or principal manage the organization.

Based on Schein's (2010) three-level theoretical model of organizational culture, the organizational culture of Crescent High School was identified from the principal and AD interviews. The artifacts of Crescent High School athletic department included the (a) handbook of the province's Office of Education and the (b) daily routine and schedule of the athletic department. Espoused beliefs included (a) student-athletes' athletic

performance and (b) balancing student-athletes academics and athletics. An underlying assumption was following all mandatory rules to avoid any penalties. It is important to note that the organizational culture of a South Korean high school athletic department is changing to improve the previous culture, which only focuses on student-athletes' athletic achievement. The organizational culture of the US case will be discussed in the following section.

## **RQ2. What is the organizational culture of a US high school athletic department?**

### **Artifacts**

The real-life examples of artifacts include observed behavior routines, formal descriptions of how the organization works, and organizational charts (Schein, 2010). Based on the interviews, two themes were found under the category of artifacts.

#### ***Theme 1: Schedule of Sports Teams***

Longwood High School athletics provided various sports based on different seasons. According to their official website, for example, Longwood High School offers eight different sports (i.e., Football, Boys' and Girls' soccer, Field Hockey, Volleyball, Boys' and Girls' golf, Cheerleading, and Dance Team) in Fall, five sports (Boys' and Girls' Basketball, Wrestling, Swimming, Bowling, and Archery) in Winter, and four sports (Baseball, Softball, Boys' and Girls' Track, and Boys' Girls' Tennis) in Spring season. In addition, the official website of Longwood High School provides various information of each sport's competition schedule such as dates, opponents, sites, and times. Longwood High School athletic department's detailed daily schedule, which can be viewed as an observed routine (Schein, 2010), was identified according to the interview from a principal and AD. The principal stated:

So basically, for the routine of the athletic department, for practice times, majority of the teams practice daily after school, usually directly after school. But if you have a coach who's not working the building is usually like a study hall time. In between that period, when assistant coach comes in and usually watches the team and they either do a workout or they catch up on their studies. As far as competition or tournaments or games, most of the games are always held during the weekdays. There might be a few, as far as tournaments, that are held on the weekends as well.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected the daily routine of Longwood High School athletic department. This is shown by the following statement by the principal:

During the pandemic, its a little different. So during the pandemic, of course, a lot of them did not work out every day. They had to go through different when it comes to practices, they had to go through different protocols as indicated by CDC. So that took the majority of the time until we got into the season, a very little time to practice because again, social distancing. And they have specific contact tracing measures in the way of the screener. They took temps and put names down. In preparing for games through that and a lot a whole lot of things have been put into place. We had to make capacity was reduced for volleyball, soccer, and football. The general was 25%, we went ahead limit to 15%.

***Theme 2: Handbook of the State High School Athletic Association.***

In the USA, high school athletics are organized and managed by each state's high school athletic association. Currently, over 19,500 high schools belong to their state high

school athletic associations. The high school athletic associations, in turn, are members of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) (NFHS, 2021). State high school athletic associations have the authority to regulate the high schools as a state actor (Hums & McLean, 2017). In other words, US high schools follow the rules implemented by their state high school athletic association. Longwood High School therefore also followed the rules of their state high school athletic association. Longwood High School's state athletic association was organized in 1917 and is a voluntary nonprofit organization made up of 280 public and private high schools. The handbook of Longwood High School's state athletic association is comprised of the bylaws, constitution, due process procedures, and board of control policies. The handbook is legally in force and approved by a regulatory review process. Specifically, the bylaws contain a total of 27 different topics regarding high school athletics such as eligibility, minimum academic requirement, transfer rule, financial aid, recruitment, limitation of seasons, and imposition of penalties.

### ***Theme 3: Official Website***

The official website of Longwood High School was examined as an artifact level of its organizational culture. The website includes general information about the school such as their vision and mission statements, class schedule, the school's history, and staff directory. The website also provides various information about its athletic department such as competition schedule (e.g., dates, opponents, sites, time), contacts of administrators such as the principal, athletic director, and the respective coaches. In addition, it includes information for parents such as school fees, weekly updates, and the school district's website information for parents. Longwood High School also has its own

social media account (i.e., Facebook and Twitter). On its Twitter page, there are tweets regarding school events, updates about student, and photos from various students' activities. The members of Longwood High School communicate with each other via their own Twitter accounts by uploading posts, leaving comments, and sharing posts. Specifically, there is a page by their alumni association, where alumni of the school can follow the news of the school and communicate with each other even after their graduation. By using their social media pages, Longwood High School communicates with its various stakeholders via not only its website but also its social media accounts as well.

### **Espoused Beliefs and Values**

Espoused beliefs and values can be defined as “Ideals, goals, values, aspirations, and rationalizations of the organization” (Schein, 2010, p. 17). Espoused beliefs and values may or may not be identified with behaviors of organization members and other artifacts (Schein, 2010). One theme emerged under espoused beliefs and values based on the interviews.

#### ***Theme 1: Student-Athletes Competing at the College Level with a Scholarship.***

Based on the interviews with the principal and AD of Longwood High School, helping and enabling their student-athletes to compete at the college level with scholarships can be viewed as an important goal/value of Longwood High School athletic department. For example, the principal stated, “helping our kids play at a higher level [college] with scholarship is one of our goals.” The AD added: “We are helping our graduates to get a secondary spot in school [college].” The perceptions of the principal’s and the AD’s espoused beliefs and values toward Longwood High School athletic



department align with other stakeholders. The principal described other stakeholders' perspectives regarding the values, noting:

So that's how we look at that as far as the values. As far as how it is aligned with other stakeholders, our stakeholders are our kids, of course, the ones who are participating. And then for parents, of course they want to see their kids play. A lot of parents also have dreams of their kids getting a scholarship because again, that's the only way that those kids might be able to get any type of verification.

The importance of student-athletes competing in college affected resource management of the athletic department as well. In terms of the Longwood High School athletic department, their alumni association can be viewed as both a main donor and supporter. The alumni association also wants to see student-athletes compete and practice well with their support. For example, the principal said:

We have a strong Alumni Association here who supports our kids and our coaches' athletic departments along with their school. So they are involved as well. So it's basically coming together with funding and the right support, pushing you and helping out where they think we need help, or asking and making sure that our kids are getting the practice or the equipment they need, and they're being able to compete. And also, you know, opportunities for those scholarships, and money to go play at a higher level.

In addition, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Longwood High School athletic department still maintained its values and affected the thoughts and behaviors of its

stakeholders. The principal described his recent experience with COVID-19 and the athletic department, noting:

So this happened to us yesterday. As you know, we're in a pandemic. And part of the protocol here is that if we play anybody who's tested positive, we have to shut down our program for 15 days. So we're experiencing that right now with our boys basketball team. We had a situation, one of our kids on the basketball team tested positive. So the CDC says we have to shut it down for safety purposes. But that takes away two weeks of games for our kids in an already shortened season. So we have a tournament coming up for the girls and boys basketball teams that's a pretty big deal. We have to pull our teams from that. Myself and the coaches all agreed that, you know, it's not a wise decision to take the chance when we're seeing all these teams shut down for 15 days. Parents also want what's best for their kid, if you have a star football player, or star basketball player, and their season's already been shortened, everybody had one season taken away already, so they're very vocal. So they're very touchy when it comes to us removing opportunities. So as long as you know, we minimize that pressure for the parents and talk through the reasons why we're doing that. And our protocols and guidelines are passed down to us from the, CDC, so we're all pretty much close to agreement.

This statement described how the values of Longwood High School athletic department were maintained through agreement among various stakeholders. In this case, most stakeholders agreed to give an opportunity to their student-athletes to compete for the district level. They believed the decision they made was more beneficial to student-

athletes than to shut down the program. The next section will discuss the basic underlying assumptions of the Longwood High School athletic department.

### **Basic Underlying Assumptions**

Basic underlying assumptions are “unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values” (Schein 2010, p. 18). Basic underlying assumptions significantly affect the behavior, thoughts, and perceptions of organization members (Schein, 2010). Basic underlying assumptions are considered as the deepest level of the culture of an organization and are the most important concepts to the members compared to espoused beliefs and values. The following section will discuss the underlying assumption of Longwood High School athletic department based on the interviews from the principal and AD.

#### ***Theme 1: Making Student-athletes Better People***

Helping the student-athletes become better people, beyond just being athletes, was indicated as a most important value of the Longwood High School athletic department by both the principal and AD throughout the interview process. For example, the principal stated:

For me, it's always about being honest, having integrity and building character first. We're trying to make responsible men and women here. So I guess that is a big part of life for me and has taught me a lot of life lessons. We expect our kids to have a high social grounding and standards as well, because when they put that name on their jersey, or across their chest, they're held to a higher standard or higher expectations. So we expect them to live up to that as well.

Like the principal, the Longwood High School AD also indicated that helping their student-athletes become better people was the most important component in their department culture. The AD exclaimed that making their student-athletes better people is more valuable than athletic achievement of the student-athletes. The AD stated:

We're trying to grow these young men and women into better people for society, because as you know, your playing days come to an end, and then you have the majority of your life left. We are making sure that we're doing everything that we can to help these kids become better people... That's more important than whatever else, obviously wins and losses matter, but we're not going to prioritize winning at the cost of the kids, if that makes any sense.

The principal also agreed with the AD's statement adding, "I think a lot of people would say winning [is most important] but that's not true at all." It is important to note that the basic underlying assumption of Longwood High School athletic department can also be found in the vision statement of Longwood High School's state high school athletic association. The following is the mission statement of the state high school athletic association (KHSAA, 2021):

To provide diverse and equitable opportunities for all students to enjoy the privilege of participation in school and education-based sports or sport-activities as part of the educational experience to teach and hone life skills, learn perspective, have fun and develop character.

The organizational culture of the Longwood High School athletic department was identified based on the interview data from the principal and AD. The artifacts of

Longwood High School athletic department included the (a) daily routine and schedule of the athletic department, and (b) handbook of state high school athletic association.

Espoused beliefs included: (a) student-athletes competing at college level with scholarship. An underlying assumption was making student-athletes better people. The following content of this chapter will examine the similarities and differences between the organizational cultures of the two cases.

**RQ3. What are the similarities and differences between the organizational culture of a South Korean and US high school athletic department?**

**Artifacts**

In this study, the bylaws and the daily routines of Crescent and Longwood High School athletic departments were examined as artifacts. Specifically, the following Table 4.2 details a review of the bylaws and the daily schedule of each case.

*Table 4.2 Contents of ByLaws in Each Case’s Handbooks*

Contents of Bylaws in Handbook	
Crescent High School	Longwood High School (KHSAA, 2021)
Management of Athletic Department	Bylaw 1 – Responsibility of Eligibility
Management of Student-athletes’ Academics	Bylaw 2 – Age
Management of Athletics’ Board Members	Bylaw 3 – Maximum Number of Years
Transfer Rule	Bylaw 4 – Enrollment Requirements
Support Student-athletes Academic Achievement	Bylaw 5 – Minimum Academic Requirement
Mandatory Class Taking	Bylaw 6 – Transfer Rule – Citizen of The US or US Territories
Participation of Practices and Tournaments	Bylaw 7 – Transfer Rule – Foreign Exchange Students

Limitation of Seasons	Bylaw 8 – Transfer Rule – Non-Exchange Foreign Students
Off-Season Training	Bylaw 9 – Basketball/Football Contestant on Other Teams, Postseason and All-Star Games
Abroad Off-Season Training	Bylaw 10 – Amateur/Awards
Practice of Student-athletes’ Human Rights	Bylaw 11 – Financial Aid
Support of Student-athletes’ Human Rights	Bylaw 12 – Physical Examination, Parental Consent and Insurance
Support Student-athletes and Coaches’ Rights to Rest	Bylaw 13 – Agreement Regarding Professional Baseball Contracts
Support Student-athletes’ future career	Bylaw 14 – Other Eligibility Requirements and Regulations
Management of Student-athletes’ Dormitory	Bylaw 15 – Practice of Sportsmanship
Limitation of camp training	Bylaw 16 – Recruitment/Undue Influence
Management of Transportation	Bylaw 17 – Certification of Eligibility
Management of Coaches	Bylaw 18 – Supplying Information and Reports
Management and Transparency of Expenses	Bylaw 19 – Comparable Opportunities
	Bylaw 20 – Officials Division of The Association
	Bylaw 21 – Protests
	Bylaw 22 – Contests, Sanctions, Rules, Forfeitures, Faculty to Accompany
	Bylaw 23 – Limitation of Seasons
	Bylaw 24 – Summer Sports and Sports/Activities
	Bylaw 25 – Requirement for Coaches and Others Working with High School Teams
	Bylaw 26 – Ruling, Reporting of Violations
	Bylaw 27 – Imposition of Penalties

As described in Table 4.2, there were some similarities between the bylaws in each country. For example, there are rules regarding student-athletes’ well-being at both schools. Specifically, Crescent High School had a total of 10 bylaws related to student-

athletes' well-being and human rights such as support of student-athletes' human rights, limitation of camp training, and supporting student-athletes' right to rest. In terms of Longwood High School, there were also many bylaws regarding student-athletes' well-being including financial aid and limitation of seasons (KHSAA, 2021).

Even though there are some similarities between two schools, there are many differences between two schools' bylaws as well. For example, most of Crescent High School's bylaws focused on student-athletes' academics, future career, and human rights. The academics bylaws include information on minimum required GPA, supporting student-athletes' academic achievement (e.g., study hall), and making sure student-athletes do not skip classes for practice. Future career bylaws include various career seminars for student-athletes, and human rights bylaws include information for both student-athletes and coaches regarding physical and sexual abuse and how to report it. This may be affected by recent issues related to South Korean student-athletes. As discussed earlier, since South Korean high school athletics only focused on student-athletes athletic achievement (Heo, 2010), the imbalanced culture caused many negative effects for South Korean high school student-athletes such as lack of academic skills and psychological pressure (Kim, 2021; Kim et al., 2014). Also, this culture negatively affected South Korean student-athletes' future career upon retirement as well since they only have sport skills (Heo, 2010). In addition, since becoming a successful athlete is the only opportunity given to student-athletes in South Korea, coaches usually hold immense sway over athletes' careers and lives (Kwak, 2019). This system negatively affected South Korean student-athletes' human rights with questionable coaching practices. Specifically, these practices include coaches' disservice to their student-athletes in the

name of better athletic achievement (Kang, 2007; Sun et al., 2010). In addition, since these disservices are considered as common practices to achieve better athletic achievement and competition results, coaches' physical and verbal abuse toward their student-athletes are prevalent in South Korean sport (Associated Press, 2019a). To remedy the situation, which South Korean student-athletes are facing, the governing body of South Korean high school athletics (i.e., provincial Office of Education) made and implemented various rules that resolve those negative issues.

In terms of Longwood High School's bylaws, there were many rules about student-athletes' eligibility such as age, maximum number of years, and enrollment requirements. This indicated that Longwood High School athletic department focused on eligibility of student-athletes. Also, one particular rule (i.e., Bylaw 15 "Practice of Sportsmanship") from the handbook of Longwood High School athletic department is closely related to its underlying assumption (i.e., making student-athletes better people). For example, the rule indicates that there is an obligation of all official administrators (e.g., principals, athletic directors, and coaches) of member schools to practice the high principle of sportsmanship as well as the ethics of competition in every interscholastic relationships (e.g., officials, players, coaches, and fans) to make the student-athletes better persons by their examples. Specifically, the Bylaw 15 includes various rules that related to sportsmanship and ethics of competition (e.g., What is the obligation of school officials with regard to sportsmanship? What is the member school obligation in the case of an unreported disqualification?). This section discussed the similarities and differences between Crescent High School and Longwood High School in their bylaws as well as how those bylaws were established and implemented in the context of each case. The



following section will discuss the similarities and differences in daily routine of each case.

*Table 4.3. Daily Routine of Each School's Athletic Department*

Daily Routine of Crescent and Longwood High School athletics	
Crescent High School	Longwood High School
Practice – 6:30am to 08:00am	Practice – 2:20pm to until finish
Practice – 4:50pm to 07:00pm	Competition – most likely on weekdays
Competition – both weekdays and weekend	

As it indicated in Table 4.3, both schools had practices after all classes finished. However, Crescent High School had a morning practice before the school day started. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected the daily routine and schedule of both high schools' athletic departments. Specifically, most team practices were prohibited due to social distancing and limitation of capacity of indoor facilities.

There were differences in tournament participation between the two cases. In terms of Longwood High School, for example, there were no limits on the number of tournament participations during the semester and the AD encouraged student-athletes to participate in as many tournaments and competitions as possible. However, due to the handbook rules, there were limits on Crescent High School student-athletes' tournament participation. In addition, in terms of weekend schedule, Crescent High School athletic department participated in various tournaments during both weekdays and weekends. However, Longwood High School athletic department participated in most competitions on weekdays. Differences in the daily schedules of two cases indicated that even though there is a growing interest and effort in balancing student-athletes' academics and

athletics in South Korea, a significant emphasis remained on student-athletes’ athletic performance. The following section will discuss the similarities and differences between each high school’s espoused beliefs and values.

**Espoused Beliefs and Values**

The espoused beliefs and values of each school was investigated based on the interviews with the principals and ADs. Table 4.4 provides the espoused beliefs and values of Crescent and Longwood High Schools.

*Table 4.4. Espoused Beliefs and Values of Crescent and Longwood High School Athletics*

Espoused beliefs and values of Crescent and Longwood High School athletics	
Crescent High School	Longwood High School
1. Student-athletes’ athletic performance	1. Student-athletes competing in college level with scholarship
2. Balancing athletics and academics	

As described in Table 4.4, the two main espoused beliefs and values in Crescent High School athletics include (a) student-athletes’ athletic performance, and (b) balancing athletics and academics, whereas Longwood High School emphasized student-athletes competing at the college level with a scholarship. Both schools were concerned about student-athletes’ athletic performance and achievement since those will directly affect their future college or professional careers. The Longwood High School athletic department stakeholders (parents and alumni association) agreed and supported the school in helping their student-athletes’ compete at the college level with a scholarship. In addition, both schools made an effort to help their student-athletes practice and compete well even during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Crescent High School allowed their seniors to participate in tournaments and competitions and some of the

coaches even visited student-athletes' homes to train them privately. Longwood High School also helped their student-athletes participate in upcoming tournaments through discussions with other stakeholders such as parents and alumni association.

Crescent High School athletics had one more main value besides student-athletes' athletic performance, which was balancing student-athletes' athletics and academics. This was affected by recent efforts of the South Korean government to remedy the situation South Korean athletes are facing. Both the principal and AD of Crescent High School recognized the importance of academics for student-athletes' futures and they tried to help the student-athletes' balance their athletics and academics.

**Underlying Assumptions**

*Table 4.5 Underlying Assumptions of Crescent and Longwood High School Athletics*

Underlying assumptions of Crescent and Longwood High School athletics	
Crescent High School	Longwood High School
1. Following the rules	1. Making student-athletes better people

The underlying assumptions of each school were identified in Table 4.5 based on interview data from the principals and ADs as well.

Even though there were some similarities in artifacts and espoused beliefs and values between two schools, both schools had a unique underlying assumption. For example, the underlying assumption of Crescent High School was following the rules contained in the province handbook. Both the principal and AD at Crescent High School believed following the rules was the most important factor in their athletics. The current system of South Korean high school athletics might affect their beliefs since in South Korea, the administrator of high school athletics will get penalized if he/she does not

follow the provincial handbook rules in managing the athletic department. Specifically, penalties caused by not following the rules will negatively affect the future career of both the principal and athletic director. This fear of penalty can be viewed as one of the main reasons why the principal and AD of Crescent High School perceived following the rules is most important factor in managing their athletic department.

It is important to note that there is a contradiction between the espoused beliefs and values and basic underlying assumption of Crescent High School athletics. For example, student-athletes need to participate in tournaments and competitions as much as possible. However, student-athletes could not compete in many tournaments during the semester due to the limits contained in the rules.

In terms of Longwood High School, the underlying assumption was making their student-athletes better people. Both the principal and AD of Longwood High School indicated that helping their student-athletes become better people was the most important factor of their athletic department. In addition, the underlying assumption of Longwood High School was aligned with the vision statement of their state high school athletic association.

As indicated above, there are various stakeholders (e.g., principal, AD, parents, student-athletes, alumni and so on) in the Longwood High School athletic department and each stakeholder plays an important role in shaping the department culture. Therefore, it is important to investigate the relationship among various stakeholders to understand the culture of the Longwood High School athletic department. This will be discussed in the following section because Research Question 4 and 5 are understanding stakeholder

management in the department decision-making process of each country's high school athletic department.

**RQ4. As primary stakeholders in high school athletic department, how do South Korean principal and AD manage other stakeholders in their high school athletic department's decision-making process?**

The following section includes the data collected for the principal and athletic director of Crescent High School on their stakeholder management in the departmental decision-making process.

***Theme 1: Stakeholder Engagement***

The athletic director of Crescent High school described his recent experience with COVID-19 and the departmental decision-making process regarding student-athletes' practices, noting:

Our sport teams used to practice with other school teams before to enhance both school's sport performance... and it was really helpful. However, after COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, group practices with other school were banned according to CDC rules that includes social distancing and capacity limits. Thus, I had to make a decision on how I adjust way of our sports teams' practice in COVID-19 pandemic. The first thing I did was communicating with parents to ask their opinion. After I communicated with them, and I realized that they still want their kids practice for athletic performance. Thus, I tried to make a best decision for the kids without breaking the rules from CDC. What I did was I've discussed with our coaches as well and we've decided to have individual practices for our

student-athletes so some of the coaches even visited student-athletes' houses to train them individually.

This statement described how athletic directors managed their stakeholders during departmental decision-making processes. The athletic director of Crescent High School received input from other stakeholders, including parents and coaches. By incorporating other stakeholders' opinions, the athletic director of Crescent High School was able to arrive at a decision that satisfied the other stakeholders. In this case, specifically, in the situation where student-athletes are not able to have group practices due to COVID-19, the athletic director asked for parents' opinions on the issue. The parents wanted student-athletes to practice even in the COVID-19 pandemic as students' athletic successes may have a direct impact on their college admission. Thus, the athletic director, as a decision-maker, discussed this with other stakeholders, such as the coaches, and they provided private/individual practices for their student-athletes.

It is important to note that the principal of Crescent High School also communicates with other stakeholders and considers their opinions when it comes to making departmental decisions. For example, the Crescent High School principal said: "Among those responsibilities, communicating with parents can be viewed as my most important task...so I always discuss with parents if I need to make a departmental level decision." This statement describes how the principal recognized the importance of communicating with other stakeholders and engaging them in athletic department decisions. The next section will discuss how Longwood High School's principal and athletic director managed their various stakeholders in the departmental decision-making process.

**RQ5. As primary stakeholders in high school athletic department, how do US principal and AD manage other stakeholders in their high school athletic department's decision-making process?**

The following section includes the data collected from the principal and athletic director of Longwood High School on their experiences how they work with other stakeholders in their departmental decision-making process.

***Theme 1: Stakeholder Engagement***

The athletic director of Longwood High School described his recent experience with the departmental decision-making process regarding the construction of their new softball field, noting:

We're trying to upgrade our softball complex. Honestly, the softball field was the first thing that you drove by when you came into the school building. So, we were trying to upgrade the softball facility in the front of the entrance, it's an eyesore. I wanted to dump a bunch of resources into this facility. And that's the big thing... we want to make sure that we can get this complex, so we can actually post events and stuff like that to make sure that like it's something that our alumni want to see... It's been a six-month process... like I told you it's an eyesore, I don't want to look at... we put a lot of money into it, and everything else, and I'm hoping in two or three years that you look at and you're like oh man that looks really good, because that's the goal.

As described above, there is an ongoing departmental decision-making process when constructing a new softball field. As a leader of the athletics department, the athletic director of Longwood High School wants to upgrade their softball complex since

it is old. However, since constructing a new complex is a long and huge project, the athletic director wanted other stakeholders engaged with this process. For example, the AD shared:

What I need to make sure that we did here was we need to make sure that what the stakeholders involved that everybody was on the same page, so I had a lot of district people meet out here as high up as the assistant superintendents, our principals involved. Obviously, the softball parents are involved; my alumni is involved. It's a big project here. With my alumni, I just tried to keep them updated and kind of give them a heads up of what's going on. I wanted them to know what was going on and that kind of stuff. Expectations of all of us were the same, which was good with that we got to clean up this eyesore. You have to make sure that this is, you know, it doesn't look like this. And obviously it takes time and money. And like I said, that's the biggest thing there and I'm trying to do is to make sure that our expectations are met.

This statement shows how the athletic director of Longwood High School accounts for the insights provided by other stakeholders during their departmental decision-making process. In this case, the alumni association, parents, principal, and people from upper organization were identified as the stakeholders of Longwood High School. In terms of their attributes related to the athletic department, the alumni association has power with their role regarding financial support for the school (Bennett, 2011; Trahan, 2021). Parents also have power since they can significantly affect student-athletes' behaviors because they are the people most familiar with their children and their educational needs (Yaro et al., 2016). Parents would not have the same level of



legitimacy as the principal or athletic director in the sense that they do not have formal standing in the school's administration. In terms of the principal, as discussed earlier, the principal has all three attributes related to the athletic department with their authority and responsibilities such as staffing, managing a school budget, and arranging school meetings (Cobb, 2015; Rhodes et al., 2011). People from the upper organization (i.e., state high school athletic association) also have power as a formal organizing body of Longwood High School athletic department (Hums & MacLean, 2017). In terms of legitimacy and urgency, their attributes can be illustrated by following statement:

“Authority to govern interscholastic athletics within in state is granted to the state association by the state legislature or by judicial decision. Each state's high school athletic association is responsible for implementing and enforcing regulations governing interscholastic athletics participation of the member high schools” (Shapr et al., 2010, p. 324). The athletic director continuously updated them the process of construction to ensure that they were on the same page. The athletic director continuously updated them the process of construction to ensure that they were on the same page.

The principal of Longwood High School also communicates with other stakeholders (i.e., parents) in their departmental decision-making process regarding tournament participation during the COVID-19. For example, the principal determined their student-athletes could participate in competitions during the COVID-19 pandemic and then the principal communicated that to parents: “So as long as you know, we minimize that pressure for the parents and talk through the reasons why we're doing things.” It is important to note that even though the principal of Longwood High School was considered the final decision maker given their authority and responsibilities, the

principal tried to communicate with other stakeholders (particularly parents) to gather their thoughts and opinions on department level decisions.

### **Summary of Results**

In summation, data was collected from one high school athletic department from South Korea (Crescent High School) and one in the US (Longwood High School). Specifically, a total of four participants included two principals (1 from each country) and two athletic directors (1 from each country). The results of this study generated multiple themes in answering the five different research questions that guiding this study.

First, based on Schein's (2010) three-level theoretical model of organizational culture, the organizational culture of Crescent High School athletic department was identified. The artifacts of Crescent High School athletic department included: (a) the handbook of the province's Office of Education, and (b) the daily routine and schedule of the athletic department. Espoused beliefs included: (a) student-athletes' athletic performance, and (b) balancing student-athletes academics and athletics. An underlying assumption was following all mandatory rules to avoid any issues.

Second, in terms of Longwood High School athletic department, the artifacts of included (a) daily routine and schedule of the athletic department, and (b) the handbook of the state high school athletic association. An espoused belief was student-athletes being able to compete at the college level with a scholarship. One underlying assumption emerged which was making student-athletes better people.

Third, there was similarity in stakeholder management in departmental decision-making processes in two cases. For example, even though the principals and athletic directors of both Crescent and Longwood High Schools were considered final decision

makers given their authority and responsibilities, they tried to communicate with other stakeholders (i.e., parents, alumni association, coaches, and people from upper organization) to gather their thoughts and opinions on department level decisions.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

Traditionally, the culture of sports in South Korea places a heavy emphasis on student-athletes' athletic achievement. This emphasis creates issues such as excessive time commitments to practice and training, questionable coaching practices, and retired athletes struggling to integrate back into society with only their sports skills. The South Korean high school athletics practitioners have tried to remedy the current situation by adapting academic policies from US high school athletics. However, due to the cultural differences in the overall systems and environments of high school athletics in each country, directly applying US high school athletic policies does not always fit in South Korea. Therefore, it is important to examine samples of each country's high school athletic departments and understand the differences in contexts before adapting the US policies.

Examining the culture of one's organization is important since organizational culture plays a significant role, affecting members' thought and lives. Schein (2010) posits that there are three levels of organizational culture (e.g., artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions), and examining all three levels is essential for a holistic understanding of one's organization. In addition, organizational culture can be best understood through interviews or conversations with organizational stakeholders. In high school athletics, principals and athletic directors can be perceived as two of the most

important stakeholders due to their roles in their respective athletic departments and the underlying attributes accompanying those roles (e.g., power, urgency, legitimacy).

The purpose of this study was to examine and compare the organizational culture of a high school athletic department in South Korea and in the USA. Also, this study investigated the effect of organizational culture of each high school athletic department on their members' lives and thoughts. Utilizing a qualitative comparative case study research perspective, the study incorporated Organizational Culture and Stakeholder theories as the theoretical lenses. This study employed in-depth interviews to gain the perspectives of two of the main stakeholders in high school athletic departments – principals and athletic directors.

This study utilized a total of five research questions to provide a holistic understanding of the differences in culture between a South Korean and a US high school athletic department as follows:

RQ1. What is the organizational culture of a South Korean high school athletic department?

RQ2. What is the organizational culture of a US high school athletic department?

RQ3. What are the similarities and differences between the organizational culture of a South Korean and US high school athletic department?

RQ4. As primary stakeholders in high school athletic department, how do a South Korean principal and AD manage other stakeholders in their high school athletic department's decision-making process?

RQ5. As primary stakeholders in high school athletic department, how do an US principal and AD manage other stakeholders in their high school athletic department's decision-making process?

RQ1 and RQ2 identified the organizational culture of a South Korean and US high school athletic department according to the perceptions of two main stakeholders in high school athletic department, principals and athletic directors. With RQ3, the researcher examined the similarities and differences between the organizational culture of each country's selected high school athletic departments based on the perceptions of both principals and athletic directors. Answering RQ4 and RQ5 identified how primary stakeholders (i.e., principals and athletic directors) of high school athletic department managed other stakeholders in their respective athletic department's decision-making process. The principals and athletic directors from two schools (one of each country) interviewed in this study elaborated on their experiences and perceptions towards the organizational culture within their athletic departments. After interviewing the study participants and analyzing the official website and documents of two athletic departments the researcher examined the organizational culture of the South Korean and US high school athletic departments and also identified the similarities and differences in the organizational cultures between two cases. In addition, the researcher analyzed each athletic department's stakeholder management in their departmental decision-making processes.

This chapter includes a discussion of these major findings related to each research question as well as overall purpose of the study (i.e., to examine and compare the organizational culture of a high school athletic department in South Korea and in the

USA). Also, the researcher discusses the connections to this study with Organizational Culture and Stakeholder theories. Practical implications of this study for South Korean high school athletics practitioners trying to adapt US high school policies regarding athletics will be presented followed by how the study's findings can assist US high school athletics practitioners as well. Lastly, future research directions and a summary of the entire study will conclude the chapter.

**RQ1. What is the organizational culture of a South Korean high school athletic department?**

The analysis of official documents and the website, and conversations with the principal and athletic director of Crescent High School athletic department revealed the organizational culture of a South Korean high school athletic department, as well as the principal's and AD's perceptions toward the organizational culture of their athletic department.

The principal and AD of Crescent High School discussed how the espoused beliefs and values of the athletic department were created. Espoused beliefs and values can be defined as "Ideals, goals, values, aspirations, and rationalizations of the organization" (Schein, 2010, p. 17). Espoused beliefs and values may or may not be identified with behaviors of organization members and other artifacts (Schein, 2010).

Two main values in the Crescent High School athletic department pertained to student-athletes' athletic performance and balancing student-athletes' athletics and academics. The first main value, student-athletes' athletic performance, is a result of the current admission system for student athletes at South Korean colleges, which only considers student-athletes' athletic achievement as their admission criteria. The second

main value, balancing student-athletes' academic and athletic achievements, was affected by the efforts of organizing bodies of South Korean high school sports (e.g., Ministry of Education and Office of Education from each province). These governing bodies sought to help improve South Korean student-athletes' well-being since South Korean traditional sport culture resulted in many negative effects on high school student-athletes' well-being (e.g., coaches' physical abuse, de-emphasis on education, and injuries due to too many practices) (KBS News, 2021; Song, 2021)

Previous sport management research that employed Schein's (2010) organizational culture theory illustrated that each of three factors related to each other. For example, Bailey et al. (2017) found that the Crossfit gym's artifacts (e.g., distinctive gym outfits and a friendly atmosphere) were an expression of the organization's espoused beliefs and values (e.g., commitment to promoting inclusivity). In a study by Junggren et al., 2018, the Danish high-performance swimming team's artifacts (e.g., flexible training groups and schedules) were affected by the team's espoused beliefs and values (e.g., individualized focused training). The current study's novel finding extends previous sport management research that utilized organizational culture theory to high school athletics setting. Like those studies, each of three cultural factors from Crescent High School athletic department are intertwined and affect each other. Specifically, the two main values of Crescent High School athletic department are closely related to the artifacts of the athletic department. For example, enhancing student-athletes' performance affects the daily schedule of the athletic department (e.g., amount of practice time per day). In addition, many academic rules from the handbook go hand in hand with balancing student-athletes' athletics and academics such as management of student-athletes'



academics and minimum required GPA. Lastly, the underlying assumption of following the rules was seen in its artifact level as was uploaded on their official websites.

Even though the artifacts, espoused values, underlying assumption of Crescent High School athletic department are interwoven, there is also a discrepancy between espoused values and basic underlying assumptions. Basic underlying assumptions can be defined as “unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values” (Schein 2010, p. 18). Basic underlying assumptions are considered to be the deepest level of the culture of an organization. Basic underlying assumptions also significantly affect the behavior, thoughts, and perceptions of organization members (Schein, 2010).

The principal and AD of Crescent High School described that following the rules from the province’s Office of Education (e.g., Management of student-athletes’ academics, Management of athletics’ board members, and Limitation of seasons) was an underlying assumption of their athletic department. This might be affected by the current environment of South Korea. Recently, in South Korean culture, following the rules has been become more important because the government of South Korea and the organizing body of public schools (i.e., provincial Office of Education) set higher norms for their civil servants and public workers, including teachers at public secondary schools. If someone does not follow the rules that have been set by the government or/provincial Office of Education, he/she will get penalized by their organization and it might negatively affect their career (e.g., promotion) (Nah, 2020; Shin, 2018).

However, mandatory rules for high school athletic departments that do not consider reality raise concerns as in the long run, which will negatively impact the organizational culture of Crescent High School’s athletic department. As stated above, for

example, there is a discrepancy between the espoused values (i.e., importance of student-athlete athletic achievement) and the underlying assumption (i.e., following the rules) within Crescent High School athletic department. Specifically, it is essential for student athletes to participate in many athletic competitions and events to enhance their athletic achievement. However, due to the rules limiting the number of tournaments one can participate in during the semester, Crescent High School student-athletes are unable to participate in many tournament opportunities, thus directly affecting their athletic achievement. An additional consequence of this is that student-athletes' admission to college in South Korea may be negatively affected as the South Korean college admission system for student-athletes emphasizes athletic, and not academic, achievement.

In addition, even though there were various rules for supporting student-athletes such as management of student-athletes' academics, limitation of camp training, and practice of student-athletes' human rights, it is important to note that the main reason the principal and AD of Crescent High School athletic department identified for following the rules as an underlying assumption. The reason is because they would be penalized by the Office of Education if they did not do so and that penalty would negatively affect their personal and professional careers.

Previous literature is in line with the results of this study on the importance of the external environment in shaping the culture of one's organization as well as affecting the members of its organization. For example, Girginov (2006) revealed the effect of the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) vision and policy implementation regarding anti-doping on the organizational culture of its lower-level organization (i.e., Bulgarian Weightlifting Federation). Also, Norman et al. (2018) identified that UK soccer industry's

male dominant organizational culture affected women in UK soccer coaching and tutoring that their recruitment, retention, and progression are lower and slower than male counterparts. The results of current study could contribute to organizational culture literature since most of previous work in the sport field examined organizational culture within the organization and did not consider the effect of external entities' roles in shaping organizational culture. However, the results of this study found that the external environment, especially an upper-level organization's policies in this case, significantly affect the culture of lower levels in the organization. For example, the Office of Education's (upper organization) mandatory rules not only made the principals and athletic directors feel overwhelmed but also undermined the autonomy of the athletic department (lower organization) since the high school administrators felt weighed down by too many mandatory outside rules which they knew they needed to follow or they could jeopardize their careers.

The following section will next discuss the perceptions of a US principal and AD of the organizational culture of their high school athletic department

**RQ2. What is the organizational culture of a US high school athletic department?**

In terms of Longwood High School athletic department, one main value was identified based on the interview data from the principal and athletic director. That main value was student-athletes competing at the college level with a scholarship. In other words, there was an emphasis on student-athletes' athletic performance in Longwood High School athletic department since student-athletes' athletic achievement will directly affect their future college or professional careers. The findings of present study extend stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), which investigated the main value of one's

organization by examining perceptions of their main stakeholders. In sport management education literature that employed stakeholder theory, for example, Trail and Chlledurai (2002) examined the perceptions of two main stakeholders of intercollegiate athletics (i.e., faculty and students) to assess primary goals of their athletic department. Trail and Chelladurai (2002) found that there are two difference goals existed in intercollegiate athletics: performance goals (e.g., financial security, winning, entertainment) and development goals (e.g., student-athletes' academic achievement, student-athletes' careers, culture of diversity). Also, Putler and Wolfe (1999) investigated intercollegiate athletics' priorities by examining main stakeholders (e.g., faculty, student-athletes, athletic department employee, and alumni) toward various elements of intercollegiate athletics such as win-loss record, graduation rates, and NCAA violations. Putler and Wolfe (1999) found that finances were the most important factor of the athletic department, whereas the least important priorities were attendance. However, previous research has been mainly carried out in the context of college athletics. Despite the importance and size of high school sport, empirical research with regards to examine its organizational culture and values remains somewhat limited. In this aspect, this finding could contribute stakeholder literature in high school athletic setting by investigating the main value by perceptions of the main stakeholders (i.e., principal and athletic director).

In addition, making student-athletes better persons can be viewed as a basic underlying assumption of Longwood High School athletic department. Like Crescent High School, each of three organizational cultural factors from Longwood High School athletic department are intertwined and affect each other (Bailey et al., 2017; Cole & Martin, 2018). For example, the basic underlying assumption of Longwood High School

is closely related to their department's sport governing body (i.e., state's high school association). Specifically, the underlying assumptions of Longwood High School aligned with the vision statement of their state high school athletic association which includes "to teach and hone life skills, learn perspective, have fun and develop character" (KHSAA, 2021). Even though the main value and underlying assumption of Longwood High School athletic department were different, it does not mean that there is a discrepancy between two factors. For example, making better persons (i.e., underlying assumption) does not affect their student-athletes' athletic performance (i.e., espoused beliefs). Actually, the underlying assumption (i.e., making student-athletes better persons) bolsters their main value (i.e., student-athletes competing in college with a scholarship) since student-athletes' character and personality also considered as factors in their college admission (Stoeckel & Andersen, 2021)

In addition, unlike Crescent High School athletic department, the principal and AD of Longwood High School athletic department identified their basic underlying assumption by themselves, and this basic underlying assumption was not affected by another entity. (The Crescent High School's basic underlying assumption was significantly affected by provincial Office of Education, for example). In addition, more importantly, the principal and AD from Longwood High School athletic department indicated that their basic underlying assumption was based in wanting to support their student-athletes. In terms of Crescent High School athletic department, on the other hand, the main reason the principal and AD identified their basic underlying assumption of following the rules was threat of penalty, which could jeopardize their personal future

career. Eventually, focusing only on their own personal gain potentially will negatively affect student-athletes welfare and the autonomy of athletic department itself.

The next section will examine the similarities and differences between South Korean and US principals' and ADs' perceptions of the organizational culture of their respective high school athletic departments.

**RQ3. What are the similarities and differences between the organizational culture of a South Korean and US high school athletic department?**

The analyses and conversations with participants from the two high schools allowed the author to not only examine the organizational culture of each case but also to identify similarities and differences between them.

There were some similarities and differences in the main values between the athletic departments at Crescent and Longwood High School. Both athletic departments placed an emphasis on student-athletes' athletic achievement as it directly affected the student-athletes' future college or professional careers. The differences between the two schools in espoused beliefs and values level was present in that the Crescent High School's athletic department had an additional core value besides student-athletes' athletic performance – balancing student-athletes' athletics and academics performance.

In South Korea, there is a belief that US high school athletics prioritizes academic performance in addition to athletic performance. However, as described in the results section of this study, the espoused value of Longwood High School's athletic department was student-athletes' athletic achievement, not academic achievement, since their athletic achievement directly affects college admission. In this context, there was a common

theme between Crescent and Longwood High Schools. For example, both schools placed an emphasis on their student-athletes' athletic performance because of its effect on student-athletes' future college admission. However, it is important to note that the systems of college admission for student-athletes in South Korea and the US are vastly different. For example, in South Korea, student-athletes' athletic achievement is the only consideration for their college admission, whereas in the US, high school student-athletes must meet some minimum academic criteria (e.g., GPA, SAT, etc.) set by the university and also by college athletic associations such as the NCAA. While South Korea does have a rudimentary form of college athletic governance in the Korea University Sport Federation (KUSF), their academic requirement rules for incoming student athletes are not as strict or complicated as they are for the NCAA in the US.

Also, the results of this study found that both schools place limits on student-athletes' tournament and competition participation according to the rules from their organizing body (i.e., provincial Office of Education and State's high school athletic association). However, the stakeholders' perceptions of the rules and competition limits are different. Specifically, Crescent High School stakeholders have a negative perspective on the rules of competition limits since most of South Korean colleges only consider high school student-athletes' athletic achievement for their admission criteria. In this aspect, South Korean high school student-athletes need to participate in as many competitions as possible but they are restricted due to the competition limits rule.

This means one cannot simply apply a set of different cultural expectations from one country to the next without understanding how different the systems are. Therefore, the practitioners in South Korean high school athletics will need to have a more holistic

understanding of policies from a foreign country such as the US before adapting or developing similar policies in the South Korean setting.

In terms of perceptions of the principals and ADs from each school toward basic underlying assumptions of their athletic departments, Crescent High School's principal and athletic director (AD) prioritized following the rules in order to avoid punishment from the provincial's Office of Education (e.g., negative effect on promotion) in managing their athletic department. Also, the underlying assumption of Crescent High School affected the life and thoughts of its members (i.e., the AD felt overwhelmed by too many mandatory rules and student-athletes cannot participate in as many tournaments as possible, which negatively affected their college admission). The findings support previous organizational culture literature that outlined the effect of organizational culture on lives and thoughts of its members. In a study, for example, Lunenburg (2011) argued that every organization has a culture, which can have a significant influence on behaviors of its members. Also, Zabid and Rashid (2003) identified that the organizational culture of financial company has an impact on its employees' behaviors. In addition, Valencia et al., (2019) found that organizational culture affects the lives and thoughts of the members. However, there is a lack of studies on the relation between organizational culture of a high school athletic department and its members. The finding of current study fills this gap by adding the effect of organizational culture of the high school athletic department on its athletic director's life and thought.

For Longwood High School, the underlying assumption was the focus on bettering their student-athletes as individuals. The principal and AD of Longwood High School described that helping their student-athletes become better people was the most



important focus of their athletic department. In the US, high school sport is seen as a providing an array of benefits for student athletes such as character building, learning teamwork, or developing leadership skills (Amaro, 2020; Chen, 2020). All these are attributes valued in American culture and which are used to justify high school sports.

These findings can provide insights for the organizing body of South Korean high school athletics (i.e., province's Office of Education). The results regarding the underlying assumption of Crescent High School athletic department illustrated that South Korean principals and athletic directors may experience difficulty managing their athletic department due to the discrepancy between the current South Korean high school and college systems (e.g., South Korean colleges only consider student-athletes' athletic achievement as their admission criteria) and following the rules from their province's Office of Education (e.g., limiting student-athletes' tournament participation during the semester). Also, South Korean athletic administrators explained how the autonomy of their athletic department is undermined due to too many mandatory rules that directly affect their future careers. Therefore, as a governing body for South Korean high school athletic departments, a province's Office of Education will need to change/improve current rules by considering the needs of various stakeholders such as principals and athletic directors. The following section of this chapter will review and discuss the roles of South Korean and US principals in their respective high school athletic departments.

**RQ4. As primary stakeholders in high school athletic department, how do South Korean principal and AD manage other stakeholders in their high school athletic department's decision-making process?**

Stakeholders can be defined as “any group of individuals who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). In addition, a stakeholder is any actor (group or individual) who is influenced by a decision, and/or who can influence a decision. According to Mitchell et al. (1997), different classes of stakeholders can be identified based on their possession of following attributes: (1) power, (2) legitimacy, and (3) urgency.

The main aim of stakeholder theory was to offer practical strategies for organizations to manage their stakeholders to achieve superior performance in organization (Freeman, 1984). Thus, many previous studies have utilized stakeholder theory to examine stakeholder management in the decision-making process of various organizations (Friedman et al., 2004; Schlechty, 2001). However, only limited research has been done to examine the influence of stakeholder management in decision-making processes of high school athletic departments.

In high school athletics, there are various stakeholders such as parents, teachers, student-athletes, alumni association, coaches, and the community (Zdroik, 2016). Among these stakeholders, the principals and athletic directors can be viewed as two of the key stakeholders/decision makers who can affect the achievement of their athletic department’s objectives with their possession of the three attributes (Freeman, 1984; Mitchell et al., 1997).

This study discovered information about the decision-making processes of high school athletic department stakeholders. For example, Crescent High School athletic department recently made departmental decisions regarding their student-athletes' practice and tournament participation during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study found that the decision was made in consultation with main internal stakeholders of the athletic department (principal and athletic director) as well external stakeholders (parents).

Results from the present study corroborate findings of earlier studies that examined stakeholder engagement. For example, Kivits (2011) argued that stakeholder engagement can be viewed as an important strategy for improving external stakeholder relations in both public and private organization. In addition, Laplume et al. (2008) and Yaro et al., (2016) suggested that incorporating various stakeholders' opinions is essential for improving organization's decision-making process.

In terms of theoretical implications, this study contributed in a unique to the educational literature by applying stakeholder theory in the high school athletics setting (Harford, 2010; Ricento & Honberger, 1996; Yaro et al., 2016). Although there has been much research that employed stakeholder theory in the education field, such as investigating stakeholder perceptions of secondary education quality (Ibrahim et al., 2017), assessing perspective of various stakeholders on the transition to high school (Smith et al., 2008), examining the perceptions of various stakeholders on a school's new policy (Pettigrew et al., 2012), and investigating key stakeholders' perceptions of effective school leadership (Odhiambo & Hii, 2012), only limited research has been done applying stakeholder theory in high school athletics setting. In this aspect, the results of this study contribute to education stakeholder literature by examining the decision-

making process high school athletic department. Specifically, the findings of this study illustrated how in a high school athletics setting, various stakeholders are directly engaged and involved in decision-making process. In this aspect, the result of this study aligned with previous educational research regarding the importance of parent as a main stakeholder in school. For example, Yaro et al. (2016) identified parents as a key educational stakeholder by examined their roles and objectives (e.g., children receive a better education from school). This study reiterated that parents can be viewed as one of the main educational stakeholders in high school athletics as well with their roles on departmental decision-making process.

**RQ5. As primary stakeholders in high school athletic department, how do US principal and AD manage other stakeholders in their high school athletic department's decision-making process?**

Longwood High School athletic department also utilized stakeholder engagement strategy in their departmental decision-making process. For example, the athletic director of Longwood High School accounts for the insights provided by other stakeholders (i.e., the alumni association, parents, principal, and people from upper organization) during their departmental decision-making process (i.e., constructing new softball complex). Specifically, in this case, the athletic director always updated them on the process of construction to ensure that all stakeholders were on the same page.

There were some similarities in the stakeholder management in departmental decision-making processes in both of Crescent and Longwood High school athletic departments. For example, the decision makers (i.e., principals and athletic directors) of both cases incorporated other stakeholders' opinions on their departmental decision-

making processes. This shows that stakeholders in an educational setting are different from stakeholders in traditional (i.e., corporate, management, business) setting. For example, in traditional settings, most organizational decisions are eventually made by individuals who have more attributes (i.e., power, legitimacy, and urgency) relative to their organization (Mitchell et al., 1997).

Based on this traditional business perspective, only internal managerial figures such as manager, executive, and entrepreneur play a significant role in the decision-making process of their organization (Freeman, 2010). Even though principals and athletic directors can be viewed as internal managerial figures for their athletic departments with their attributes (i.e., power, legitimacy, and urgency), various other external stakeholders with lower attributes could affect the decision-making process in the athletic department. In this study, external stakeholders such as the parents and the alumni association affected both Crescent and Longwood High Schools' athletic departmental level decision-making process. Principals and athletic directors need to be aware of this and become more adept at including these stakeholders in appropriate ways in athletic department decision making.

One main difference between two cases in identification of stakeholder was that Longwood High School athletic department indicated the alumni association as one of main stakeholders they are taking care of whereas Crescent High School did not consider the alumni association as a main stakeholder of their athletic department. The difference in stakeholder identification might come from the differences in resource management of two cases. In terms of US high school, for example, high schools usually engage with other stakeholders to increase funding of their athletic department. Since high school

sport teams bring a sense of pride to school communities (Childs, 2020; NFHS, 2021), schools have been bridging and building good relationships with other stakeholders such as parents, alumni associations, or local businesses to get financial support (e.g., donations, booster club money, and fundraising) (Bennett, 2011; Trahan, 2021). By doing this, US high schools could manage their athletic department more self-sufficiently with regards to equipment purchase, travel money, facility maintenance, and staff salaries (Hoffman, 2016). Among those stakeholders, the alumni association can be viewed as one of the most important stakeholders that provide financial support for schools (Trahan, 2021). Therefore, in this example of a US high school athletics, it is important to have a good relationship with the alumni association since they can act to help find financial resource for athletic departments.

Unlike US high schools, South Korean high school athletics do not represent the areas/communities where they are located. Instead of high school sports, professional sports teams serve as a symbol of their communities and people feel pride/attachment with their professional sports teams in South Korea (Park, 2021). This different environment might also affect the difference in main stakeholder identification of their high school athletic department. In other words, unlike the US, the alumni association of South Korean High school does not possess attributes toward their school's athletic department so cannot be considered as a main stakeholder in the decision-making process of their school's athletic department.

This section discussed how the findings of current study were connected to each research question and the purpose of the study, as well as contributed to the

organizational culture theory and stakeholder theory. The following section will discuss the practical implications of the findings in this study

### **Practical Implications**

South Korean high school athletic administrators will be able to utilize the results of this study to better understand the operation and culture of a US high school athletic department. Specifically, the findings of this study not only provide information about the artifacts level of US high school athletic department but also deeper level meanings of its culture (i.e., espoused beliefs and underlying assumption) through the perception of two main stakeholders (i.e., principal and AD). This section will provide insights for South Korean high school athletic administrators who are interested in improving the existing high school sport culture in South Korea by looking to policies used in foreign countries in an attempt to adapt and implement those policies within the South Korean sport context.

First, the data provided by the principals and athletic directors from a South Korean and a US high school athletic department illustrated that each athletic department has its own unique factors at all three levels of organizational culture (i.e., artifacts, espoused values and beliefs, and underlying assumptions). For example, there were differences in artifacts (e.g., daily schedule of athletic department, handbook of organizing body) of the athletic departments between Crescent and Longwood High Schools. The US high school provided much more detailed information and so the South Korean high school ADs could enhance their athletic programs website by adding more detailed information such as player profiles, features on student athletes who excel academically, or video highlights in addition to just static information like mission

statements or schedules. The video highlights would reflect the espoused value of student athlete athletic achievement while the academic highlights would reflect balancing athletics and academics, another espoused value. This type of information would enhance the program's reputation and requires minimal resources to do so (PrestoSports, 2019). In addition, the espoused beliefs and values of Crescent High School athletic department included: (1) student-athletes' athletic performance and (2) balancing athletics and academics, whereas Longwood High School athletic have student-athletes competing in college level with scholarship as their main value. In South Korea, lastly, the organizational culture of the high school athletic department focused on following the rules from the provincial Office of the Education, whereas the US high school athletic department focused on making their student-athletes better persons.

Second, although there are some similarities between the Crescent and Longwood High School departments in their organizational culture, South Korean high school athletics practitioners will need to understand the importance of examining the deeper level of organizational culture of US high school athletic department. In South Korea, there have been some efforts and research done to understand the US high school athletics system (Han et al., 2019; Jang, 2018; Lee & Lee, 2017; Lee et al., 2019). However, those studies are limited to understanding the artifacts level of US high school athletics such as translating/analyzing the handbooks of US high school athletic departments and the NFHS. Understanding only the artifacts level of US high school athletics and adapting those policies in South Korean high school athletics is not only insufficient but also does not always fit in South Korean culture. Therefore, South Korean high school athletics practitioners who are interested in US high school athletics policies



should have discussions with the stakeholders in US high school athletics to investigate and understand the deeper levels of their organization culture.

By taking the above actions, practitioners of South Korean high school athletics will be better able to examine/understand perceptions of stakeholders toward their athletic departments' values and underlying assumptions. Understanding a deeper level of the organizational culture is important because surface level artifacts do not reflect deeper meanings of the organization. In addition, investigating the main values and underlying assumptions of stakeholders of US high school athletic department allows South Korean high school athletics practitioners to understand the cultural differences in the overall systems and environments of high school athletics in the US and South Korea. By gaining a deeper/holistic understanding of each country's high school athletic department's culture and overall system as well as stakeholders' perceptions who are affected by those cultures and systems, South Korean high school athletics practitioners will be able to eventually develop and implement appropriate South Korean versions of US-inspired policies.

Specifically, for example, since South Korean traditional sport culture resulted in many negative effects on high school student-athletes' well-being (e.g., coaches' physical abuse, de-emphasis on education, and injuries due to too many practices), there is a growing interest in policies about high school student-athletes' well-being in South Korea (KBS News, 2021; Song, 2021). The US has seen increasing efforts and numbers of policies to support high school student-athletes' well-being. These policies include mental skills training, emotional health, and academic success (Wood & Bryant, 2019). The main aim of those efforts and policies is helping US student-athletes' become strong and

resilient people. In this aspect, South Korean high school athletics practitioners could learn and get insights on how to develop new policies with regards to student-athletes' well-being. It is important to note, however, that South Korean high school athletics practitioners must get input from various stakeholders of US high school athletics regarding the well-being policies. The input will need to include very specific questions that help South Korean high school athletics practitioners understand/examine holistic approaches of those policies. Specific questions could include the following: What are the main aims of the policies? How do the policies operate? What is the historical context regarding the policies (e.g., why were they developed)? Who supports/opposes these policies and what are their interests and values? Gathering this specific information would help in constructing policies appropriate to the South Korean context.

Third, the results of this study also illustrate that the culture in each school significantly affects the lives and thoughts of the members of each athletic department (Schein, 2004; Valencia et al., 2019). For example, the organizational culture of Crescent High School which emphasized student-athletes' athletic performance affects their student-athletes' daily lives in that they practice two-times a day and participate in tournaments on weekdays and weekends. This indicates that although there is a growing interest in student-athletes' academic achievement in South Korea, a significant emphasis remains on student-athletes' athletic performance. Thus, the principal and athletic director of Crescent High School will need to put in a conscious effort to remind their student-athletes about the importance of academic performance. This might include mandating academic related seminars, providing study halls, etc.

In addition, practitioners working in the provincial Office of Education will need to improve/change the mandatory rules for managing athletic departments (e.g., tournament limit, support for student-athletes' academic achievement, managing dormitories and so on) or/and begin to consider the mental health of the athletic directors by providing mental health care resources and services to help them deal with feeling overwhelmed. It would be useful if provincial Offices of Education could develop seminars and workshops for athletic directors in South Korea to help them learn to develop culturally appropriate work-life balance skills.

Fourth, furthermore, the findings of this study revealed a discrepancy between the policies (e.g., limits on tournament participation during the semester) and what really happened in reality (e.g., importance of student-athletes' athletic achievement due to college admission system, which only considers student-athletes' athletic achievement) in a South Korean high school athletic department. Also, too many mandatory rules from the upper organization (i.e., provincial Office of Education) undermined the autonomy of their athletic department, as well as negatively affected the lives and thoughts of its members (i.e., making an AD feel overwhelmed). To narrow the discrepancy and improve the current situation, the practitioners of provincial Office of Education must change current policies based on considering various stakeholders' opinions. By engaging/involving them in creating new policies, various stakeholders might feel they are valued members of the athletic department which will result in a better organizational culture of the athletic department. For example, there is a discrepancy between the espoused values and basic underlying assumption of Crescent High School athletic department. This discrepancy arose from difference between what was really needed in

the field (i.e., student-athletes' athletic achievement for college admission) and the mandatory rules from province's Office of Education (i.e., limiting tournament participation). Therefore, to improve this situation, South Korean high school athletics practitioners will need to consider adjusting current rules limiting tournament participation to create a balance between having enough opportunities to showcase the athletes' athletic ability and still recognizing the value of academic achievements. In addition, involving various stakeholders' opinions and thoughts in policy development may narrow this discrepancy. Specifically, in policy development, people working in the provincial Office of Education in South Korea could learn about the importance of including stakeholders in their policy making process based on US model. In the US, for example, state high school athletic associations hold annual general meetings attended by principals and ADs when setting new policies and procedures (Hums & MacLean, 2017). The purpose of these general meetings is to understand the thoughts and opinions of various stakeholders of high school athletic departments since they are directly affected by the new policies. Like the US model, the provincial Office of Education in South Korea needs to have ADs and principals present to provide their input during the policy making process.

Fifth, the results of this study regarding South Korean high school athletics' establishment of rules about student-athletes' human rights is also beneficial for practitioners of US high school athletics. Specifically, the governing body of South Korean high school athletics, the provincial Office of Education, has established rules to support student-athletes' human rights because of the increase in incidents of unacceptable treatment of students-athletes by their coaches. For example, there has been

an increase in the prevalence of South Korean coaches' physical and verbal abuse toward their high school student-athletes under the guise of achieving better athletic performance (Associated Press, 2019).

Similarly, U.S. high school sport has seen a number of reported cases of both physical and sexual abuse of athletes by coaches (see North, 2021; Torchinsky, 2021). Since physical abuse by coaches can have significant and lifelong negative effects on student-athletes, including their athletic performance, self-esteem, and early retirement from their sport (Fasting et al., 2013) in addition to negative psychological effects beyond sport, it is important to protect student-athletes' human rights by implementing appropriate rules and policies. In this aspect, South Korean high school athletics does a good job by having established these relevant rules. For example, the rules include information for both student-athletes and coaches regarding physical abuse, and how to report it to the relevant authorities. In terms of US high school athletics, in this case, Longwood High School, the governing body (i.e., state high school athletic association) does not have any bylaws protecting student-athletes' human rights from their coaches' abuse. Therefore, there is an opportunity for US high school athletics' leaders and directors to adapt similar rules and policies from Crescent High School so that they can more effectively protect their student-athletes' human rights. In doing so, US high school athletics can cultivate safer environments for their student-athletes.

Lastly, the finding of this study regarding stakeholder management in departmental decision-processes of each athletic department can help practitioners of both South Korean and US high school athletics. As decision makers of high school athletics, principals and athletic directors will need to acknowledge the importance of

stakeholder engagement in their decision-making process. Specific questions might help them regarding stakeholder management such as: who are the most relevant stakeholders in your athletic department?; what are the interests of those different stakeholders?; what is the relationship between your athletic department and those stakeholders and between the stakeholders themselves?; what duties does your athletic department owe to its various stakeholders?; how should your athletic department's important decision making be oriented to balance the interests of department's various stakeholders?; and what strategies would be used by the stakeholders to influence your athletic department? (Walters & Tacon, 2010).

Both schools also will need to foster and maintain good relationships with the various school stakeholders (e.g., parents, student-athletes, teachers, and alumni association) since maintaining strong relationship between organizations and their stakeholders is crucial for an organization's success (Alexander et al., 2005). This might include regularly scheduled meetings with parents and informal activities such as outdoor camps for their students (Rhodes et al., 2011; Yaro et al., 2016).

### **Future Research**

The specific focus of this study was examining the organizational culture of South Korea and US high school athletic departments. The comparative case study approach allowed the author to not only investigate the organizational culture of both country's high school athletic departments but also to identify the similarities and differences between the two cases. The findings here promote several ideas for future research.

First, future research should involve more cases from various provinces/states of both countries. Also, since this study examined the organizational culture of high school

athletic departments from only urban areas, high schools from rural areas should be examined for more holistic understanding of the organizational culture of both country's high school athletic departments. Urban high schools and rural high schools differ in terms of resources and environments for their athletic departments. For example, compared with athletes at rural schools, athletes from urban schools are more likely to be highly specialized in their sports, participate in more competitions, and play in leagues outside of school (Bell et al., 2018). In addition, the quality of athletic program such as facilities, health care services, and level of coaches may vary systemically between urban and rural high schools (Ransom & Ransom, 2017; Schneider et al., 2017)

Second, this study revealed the organizational culture of South Korea and US high school athletic department through interviews with principals and athletic directors. Even though principals and athletic directors can be viewed as two of the key stakeholders (internal) for high school athletic department, it would be fruitful to investigate the perspectives and influence of other stakeholders such as parents, alumni (external) on the organizational culture of their athletic department. Each stakeholder has different attributes (i.e., power, urgency, and legitimacy) in their high school athletic departments (Cotton & Wikelund, 2001; Ricento & Honberger 1996; Yaro et al., 2016). Therefore, examining various stakeholders' perspectives and influence on the organizational culture of their high school athletic department will provide a more holistic understanding of the organizational culture of high school athletic departments.

Third, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher had access to limited resources regarding the artifacts of each case (i.e., website, handbook of province's Office of Education and handbook of state's high school athletic association). It would be

worthwhile for future research to analyze various artifacts of both country's high school athletic departments such as observation of facilities, the language principals and ADs are using at the site, manners of address, and observable rituals and ceremonies (Schein, 2010). In addition, so far with COVID in this study the principals and ADs perceived that only the artifacts, the most surface level of organizational culture, appeared to be impacted. At what point does an external crisis begin to impact the deeper levels of organizational culture? For example, did the major hurricanes in New Orleans which caused cancelations of high school sport impact more than artifacts such as game and practice schedules? Questions like this could extend the study of organizational culture into the realm of crisis management.

Lastly, this study only focused on the cases of South Korea and US high school athletic department. Since the systems and environments of high school sports vary widely by countries (Forbes, 2012; Wretman, 2017), future research could include cases from various countries to examine and compare the organizational culture of high school athletic departments among those various countries.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

Limitations in qualitative research are associated with validity and reliability of the research (Simon & Goes, 2013). "Because qualitative research occurs in the natural setting it is extremely difficult to replicate studies" (Wiersma, 2000, p. 211). In addition, a comparative case study design presents certain limitations. First, since this study examined two cases, it might be hard to generalize the results of this study to a wider population. The sample population here is limited to specific regions from both South Korea and the US. Second, the researcher's own beliefs could affect the data collection



process and analysis. The researcher is a South Korean graduate student interested in South Korean student-athletes' well-being, and so must consciously try to collect and interpret the data with a fresh and unbiased perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, the researcher's previous experiences could influence the results of the study.

Several delimitations were present in this study as well. The current study could not identify every aspect associated with the organizational culture of South Korean and US high school athletic departments. Although various stakeholders in high school athletic department exist, this study examined only principals' and athletic directors' perspectives. Principals and athletic directors can be viewed as two of the most important stakeholders in high school athletic departments given their authority and responsibilities (e.g., budgeting, hiring, scheduling, etc.) Investigating perspectives of other stakeholders such as parents, teachers, student-athletes, and coaches should be examined in another study, however, in order to better understand the various aspects of the culture of high school athletics. The researcher plans that this current study will become part of an ongoing line of research. The researcher will later examine those various stakeholders' perspectives on the culture of high school athletics to obtain a holistic understanding of high school athletics.

### **Summary**

This study examined and compared the organizational culture of South Korean and US high school athletic departments by utilizing Organizational Culture Theory and Stakeholder Theory. This study was able to identify three levels of organizational culture (Schein, 2010) of two cases through the analyses of official website and documents of

Crescent and Longwood high school as well as in depth discussions and interviews with the principals and athletic administrators.

Both athletic departments had their own official website providing various information about their athletic department. Each school followed the rules made and implemented by their upper organization (i.e., province's Office of Education and state's high school athletic association). The differences between two cases were that student-athletes from Crescent High School practiced two times a day, whereas Longwood High School student-athletes practiced one time a day.

In terms of espoused beliefs and values, Crescent High School athletic department's included (a) student-athletes' athletic performance, and (b) balancing athletics and academics, whereas Longwood High School emphasized student-athletes competing at the college level with a scholarship. Both schools were concerned about student-athletes' athletic performance and achievement since those will directly affect their future college or professional careers.

Both schools identified unique underlying assumption. The underlying assumption of Crescent High School was following the rules implemented by provincial office of education because of fear of penalties, whereas Longwood High School's underlying assumption was making their student-athletes better person.

Lastly, there are various other internal and external stakeholders in both high school athletic departments such as parents, alumni association, and the organizing body of high school athletic department (i.e., state high school athletic association and provincial office of education). It is important to note that even though those other

stakeholders have lower attributes compared to the principal and athletic directors, they could affect the decision-making process of athletic department that the principals recognized the importance of communicating with other stakeholders and engaging them in athletic department decisions.

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## APPENDICIES

### **Appendix A**

#### Interview questionnaire

- 1) Describe the daily routine of your school's athletic department (e.g., practice times, competition/tournament schedules)
- 2) What are the core values of your school's athletic department?
  - a. How aligned are other stakeholders (please define list) with the main values of your school's athletic department?
- 3) How do you measure success of your athletic department?
- 4) Describe the responsibilities you have in your school's athletic department? (ex – scheduling, budgets, hiring/firing personnel)
- 5) What are some of the major decisions you make in your role as principal/athletic director?
  - a. Choose one major decision that you want to talk about more for the following questions
  - b. What led you to make this decision?
  - c. Reflecting on the decision (use example given), what were your goals at the time?
  - d. Which stakeholders did you work with when making that decision? (Internal/External)
  - e. What were the key pressures (internal/external)?

- 6) How did you decide which stakeholders to include when making above decision?
- a. What tactics did you use with each stakeholder?
  - b. How do these factors change with different decisions?
  - c. What types of expectations did \_\_\_\_\_ (each of your stakeholders) have?
  - d. How did you address those expectations?
- 7) What are the formal rules of your athletic department? (Note – not rules of sports but departmental rules)
- a. Which rules if any should be changed/removed/added?
  - b. Please describe any informal rules that are not written down but are followed.
- 8) To what extent do you feel the rules of the athletic department correspond to the core values of the athletic department? Why or why not?
- 9) Describe your first experience working with high school athletics - Thoughts/emotions - How has that experience changed/not changed when you compare it to today?

## Appendix B

### Research Questions Chart

	IQ1	IQ2	IQ3	IQ4	IQ5	IQ6	IQ7	IQ8	IQ9
RQ1	X	X					X	X	X
RQ2	X	X					X	X	X
RQ3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
RQ4				X	X	X			
RQ5				X	X	X			

RQ1. What is the organizational culture of a South Korean high school athletic department?

RQ2. What is the organizational culture of a US high school athletic department?

RQ3. What are the similarities and differences between the organizational culture of a South Korean and US high school athletic department?

RQ4. As primary stakeholders in high school athletic department, how do a South Korean principal and AD manage other stakeholders in their high school athletic department's decision-making process?

RQ5. As primary stakeholders in high school athletic department, how do a US principal and AD manage other stakeholders in their high school athletic department's decision-making process?

## CURRICULUM VITA

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### EDUCATION

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**Ph.D. | University of Louisville | Louisville, KY, USA** **August 2021**

- Major: Educational Leadership and Organizational Development
- Concentration: Sport Administration
- Advisor: Dr. Mary. A. Hums

**M.A. | Washington State University | Pullman, WA, USA** **2017**

- Major: Sport Management

**B.S. | Kookmin University | Seoul, South Korea** **2014**

- Major: Sport Management

### WORK EXPERIENCE

---

**University of Louisville Health and Sport Sciences Department** **Fall 2019 ~ Present**  
**Instructor**

<b>Semester/Year</b>	<b>Course Prefix, Number, and Title</b>
Fall 2019	HSS 150-50, Physical Fitness
Fall 2019	HSS 150-51, Cardio Fitness
Spring 2020	SPAD 490-50, Senior Seminar
Spring 2020	HSS 150-50, Physical Fitness
Spring 2020	HSS 150-52, Cardio Fitness
Summer 2020	HSS 150-51, Cardio Fitness
Fall 2020	SPAD 382-50, Sport Management
Fall 2020	HSS 150-50, Physical Fitness
Fall 2020	HSS 150-51, Cardio Fitness
Spring 2021	SPAD 382-02, Sport Management

Spring 2021            HSS 150-50, Physical Fitness

Spring 2021            HSS 150-52, Cardio Fitness

**Teaching Assistant**

- SPAD 281 Principles of Sport Administration

**Guest Lectures**

- Issues, Challenges, and Solutions in Translating Study Instruments            Feb 2020  
University of Louisville, ECPY 740: Instrument Development (Graduate)
- Sport in Asia            Feb 2020  
University of Louisville, SPAD 509: International Sport (Undergraduate/Graduate)
- Sport Fan Behavior            Dec 2019  
University of Louisville, SPAD 281: Principles of Sport Administration (Undergraduate)
- Sport in South Korea            Nov 2018  
Central High School, Louisville, KY

**University of Louisville Women's Tennis**

**Fall 2018 ~ Fall 2020**

**Team Manager**

- Provide feedback and help players with racquet and string selection
- Maintained and inventoried tennis equipment
- Assist coaches with new player recruitment

**Washington State University Recreation Center (UREC)**

**Aug 2015 ~ Aug 2017**

**Graduate Assistant**

- Served as Research and Assessment Graduate Assistant
- Developed and administered various program evaluation tools (program participation and employment)
- Developed and administered research tools including surveys (email, web based or paper), and interviews
- Conducted demographic data analysis of +20,000 users

**Washington State University Cougars Women's Tennis**

**Mar 2015 ~ Aug 2017**

**Team Manager and Community Tennis Instructor**

- Taught tennis to community members at annual WSU Cougar Summer Tennis Camp
- Provided feedback and helped players with their string selection
- Maintained and inventoried tennis equipment
- Assisted coaches with new player recruitment

**2014 Korean Open International Wheelchair Tennis Tournament, Incheon, Korea    May 2014**

**Interpreter**

- Assisted international players with interpretation and translation

**Republic of Korean Navy, First Command Fleet  
Petty Officer Second Class**

**Feb 2008 ~ Mar 2010**

## **RESEARCH INTERESTS**

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- Sport Policy and Governance
- Student Athlete Well-Being and Academic Achievement

## **RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY**

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### **Manuscripts in Progress**

- **Lee, Y.**, Pond, A., Hums, M., & George, C. (Responding to reviewers). The KUSF and the NCAA: A comparative study of collegiate sport organizations' academic policies.
- **Lee, Y.**, Pond, A., Alagaraja., M., & Hums, M. (In Literature Review: IRB approved). Stress in youth sport: A qualitative investigation of baseball families in the US.
- **Lee, Y.**, Pond, A., Kulkarni., A., & Frederick, E. (Responding to reviewers). Exploring social media commentary pertaining to the culture of South Korean ice-skating.

## **CONFERENCE PRESENTATION**

---

- **Lee, Y.**, Pond, A., Kulkarni, A., & Frederick, F. (2021) Exploring Social Media Commentary Pertaining to the Culture of Korean Ice-Skating. 2021 International Association for Communication and Sport (IACS) Conference. Online.
- Swim, N., **Lee, Y.**, & Hums, M. (2021) "Sorry, I'm not from here!": Female International Student-Athletes Transitions to and from College Athletics. 2021 College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) Conference. Online.
- Pond, A., Allen-Queens, J., Greenwell, T., & **Lee, Y.** (2021) Athletic Success and Donation Intentions: Does Sense of Community Mediate?. 2021 Applied Sport Management Association (ASMA) Conference. Online.

## **HONORS & AWARDS**

---

**2019 United States Tennis Association (USTA) League**

**June 2019**

- Kentucky State Champion, Men's 4.0 Level

**2010 Goyang City Swim Meet, Goyang City, South Korea**

**April 2010**

- Gold, 50m Freestyle
- Silver, 4x50m Freestyle Relay, Kookmin Univ Swimming Team

## **CERTIFICATES AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

---

**Certificate for Secondary School Teacher (Physical Education)** **Aug 2014 - Present**

- Ministry of Education, Sejong City, South Korea

**Certificate for National Swimming Instructor (Level 3)** **Aug 2012 - Present**

- Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, Sejong City, South Korea

**Master Racquet Technician (MRT)** **May 2021 – Present**

- United States Racquet Stringers Association (USRSA), Suwanee GA, USA

**Certificate for Professional Ski Instructor (Level 1)** **Jan 2011 – Present**

- Korea Ski Instructor Association (KSIA), Seoul, South Korea

**Kookmin University Swimming Team** **Mar 2010 – Feb 2012**

- Member (2010-2012), Captain (2011)

**Kookmin University Tennis Team** **Mar 2012 – Feb 2014**

- Member (2012-2014), Captain (2013)

## **MEMBERSHIPS**

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North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM)

Korea Society for Sport Policy (KSSP)

United States Racquet Stringer Association (USRSA)