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Top Of The Lineup: College Baseball Players' Perceptions Of The Trait Of Narcissism And Achievement Orientation And Their College Experience

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Top of the Lineup: College Baseball Players' Perceptions of the Trait of Narcissism
and Achievement Orientation and Their College Experience

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William & Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfilment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

By

Amelia Trojanowski Moore

May 2022

Top of the Lineup: College Baseball Players' Perceptions of the Trait of Narcissism
and Achievement Goal Orientation and Their College Experience

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Abstract

The top of the lineup is a baseball term that refers to the first few players at bat. In baseball it is a term to be revered as those players are considered exceptional. Baseball, as are many intercollegiate sports, is highly competitive. Therefore, with the high level of competition for a spot, in perspective, these college players are all the top of the lineup. However, at the college level these players have to make many sacrifices, meet challenges other students do not, and juggle to find a balance between being a student and being an athlete in order to allow for a successful college experience. Achievement goal orientation and individual beliefs and traits play a role in how these student athletes manage this task. It is important to determine however, if a particular goal orientation, such as ego orientation, and certain traits, such as narcissism, may be detrimental or beneficial to the college baseball player and how these traits are perceived by the player in the overall college experience. This study sought participants from a Division I baseball team to explore their perceptions and better understand the influence of traits and achievement goal orientation within the culture of the various divisions. Qualitative methodology was used to allow for the opportunity to explore the participants' perceptions of the phenomena. The participants' reflections created understanding of the relevance of a focus on hard work and task orientation to achieve success through teamwork. Narcissism as a personal trait was present but either set aside or used to the benefit of the team and its shared goals.

TOP OF THE LINEUP: COLLEGE BASEBALL PLAYERS PERCEPTIONS
OF THE TRAIT OF NARCISSIM AND ACHIEVEMENT GOAL ORIENTATION
AND THEIR COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The phrase *top of the lineup* is a baseball term that refers to the first few players at bat. It is widely accepted that these players are considered reliable, solid hitters that have a high on-base percentage; they will, in some manner, get to first base. The unspoken connotations behind the phrase, however, demonstrate that being considered the top of the lineup is a revered and coveted honor as those players are considered exceptional.

Baseball, along with most intercollegiate sports, is highly competitive. Out of 3 million players in Little League Baseball, fewer than 10% ever play on a high school team (Mann, 2017). The probability of continuing beyond high school into the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is even more improbable. The NCAA (2017) reports that out of 488,815 high school baseball players, only 7.1% play baseball in college with 2.1% at Division I, 2.2% at Division II, and 2.8% at Division III. These statistics are similar in other sports with football showing 6.8% of high school players continuing into college and in men's basketball only 3.4% of high school players continue into the NCAA. Considering this high level of competition for a spot on a roster, any college player could be considered the top of the lineup as all of these student athletes have conquered incredible odds and have dedicated years of intense training to reach the collegiate level where the workload and commitment to the sport further intensifies. Yet these athletes are foremost students and must meet the academic demands of the university as a scholar.

Students involved in intercollegiate sports face numerous challenges (Bowen & Levin, 2003; Gaston Gayles, 2009; D. Horton, 2011; Simons et al., 2007). These student athletes must

make continual sacrifices socially and personally, confront a multitude of issues that their academic peers will not encounter, and juggle to find a workable balance between being an athlete and being a college student. Compounding these challenges are stringent rules and oversight by the NCAA, of both athletic participation and academic requirements, determining their ability to play (Gaston Gayles & Hu, 2009). Student athletes must abide by NCAA guidelines concerning numerous athletic and academic matters, including rules stipulating amount of practice time, maintaining a certain Grade Point Average (GPA) travel specifications, money earned, personal conduct, and even types of clothing worn. Abiding by these guidelines and rules may create an additional challenge for the student athlete to achieve at a high level both athletically and academically, which enable them to meet the requirements of their scholarship award, and its financial value, to stay enrolled.

The NCAA (2017) reported that out of 488,815 high school baseball players, only 7.1% play baseball in college with 2.1% at Division I, 2.2% at Division II, and 2.8% at Division III. The NCAA (2017) reported that 9.1% of NCAA baseball players are drafted into Major League Baseball (MLB). The baseball percentage is higher than other NCAA sports as football drafts 1.5% into the National Football League (NFL) and basketball only drafts 1.1% into the National Basketball Association (NBA) from college. For those seeking a professional athletic career, those odds are daunting, however, college might be seen as offering the opportunity for pre-professional training and public exposure that may not happen elsewhere. Attending college with the foremost goal of professional sports aspirations may increase the challenges student athletes encounter in balancing their two roles of student and athlete. It is important for university faculty and administrators to understand the student athlete and their goals in order to be able to provide support academically and athletically to aid in the creation of a balance (Simiyu, 2010).

Many student athletes may originally encounter difficulties in achieving the balance between athlete and college student as well as coping with the pressure to succeed in each realm (Gaston Gayles, 2009; D. Horton, 2011). It is critical to the well-being of the student athlete that assistance is available to them as they encounter these challenges and that strategies are provided that allow them to discover the necessary tools to assist them in achieving a workable balance between their roles. Failure of university staff to intervene with struggling student athletes may lead to consequences such as a growing gap between athletic and academic high-level performance success, a concentration of only high-level academic students or only high-level athletes at particular universities, and the perpetuation of a separate culture and chasm between student athletes and the general college student population (Bowen & Levin, 2003).

To avoid these detriments, it is necessary to foster a unified and collaborative structure within the university, to which all facets of the university community are committed to providing support for student athlete success. Throughout the past decade there has been increased public awareness of college athletics and a growing concern over issues such as underachievement and low graduation rates of student athletes, student athlete behavior, and academic leeway given to student athletes (Gaston Gayles & Hu, 2009; Green et al., 2001; Wong, 2001). The university then faces an increasing public relations battle between public perceptions of the universities' role and its prioritization of athletics or academics versus the amount of funding that athletic endeavors provide the university coffers. For the 2015 fiscal year, out of the 231 NCAA Division I schools that provided data, \$9.15 billion in revenue was generated from athletics. There were 24 schools that made more than \$100 million from their sports programs (Gaines, 2016). Due to the spotlight of concern placed on university athletics, a collaborative structure of support becomes increasingly important to resolve the growing rift between the public and its

perceptions and the university and its finances. This support structure should be sustained proportionately by the student athlete and the university itself which includes the athletic staff, the faculty, and the university administration. There is an obligation of reciprocity between the university and the student athlete because both parties benefit from the relationship and its successful outcome. This is evident as it becomes increasingly important for the university to demonstrate to the public a well-rounded student athlete capable of achieving both academic and athletic success. Similarly, the goal for the student athlete is success as well, although they may prioritize their success in terms of either academics or athletics (Bowen & Levin, 2003). For this success to occur a mutual commitment to foster the creation and implementation of strategies of support and to create and enhance necessary traits that will allow the student athlete to achieve success and discover and manage a workable balance between athletic and academic responsibilities is necessary.

Traits of Student Athletes

Student athletes must possess certain traits that are required by college coaches, regardless of the specific sport. College recruiting professionals in consult with college coaches seek athletes that possess athletic ability, mental and physical toughness, academic ability, coachability, and character (Bastie, 2016). When college coaches seek athletes based on general character traits, unlike in academic students, these traits must be twofold to encompass athletic endeavors as well as academic prowess. These top character traits include work ethic, competitiveness, integrity, self-motivation, passion, mental toughness, and confidence (Iranshad, 2015).

Often these traits are well developed in the student athlete at the college level as highly competitive athletes have been taught certain traits by coaches from the beginning of play

through middle and high school. Most athletes at the college level are in possession of a solid work ethic and a high degree of self-confidence, but with some student athletes the traits may need to be taught or modified. For example, a student athlete whose primary position is a pitcher requires substantial self-confidence and belief in his abilities to be able to stand alone on a hill in the center of the field with all eyes upon him and throw consecutive pitches that move and drop so sharply that a batter cannot make contact at speeds well above 85 miles per hour. McFarland (2003) argued that when the pitcher looks confident, even when things are not going well, his team plays better behind him while the opposing batters become unsure. Pitchers might be seen as key leaders on baseball teams. Conversely, when the pitcher's self-confidence is down, his teammates take on the same trait and do not play well while the opposing batters' self-confidence soars, like "sharks at a feeding frenzy" (McFarland, 2003, p. 124). However, while self-confidence may serve a purpose on the field, a player with too much self-confidence may be off-putting outside of the field to professors and other students thereby creating problems for the student athlete by hampering relationships and hindering a successful college experience.

The goal of every student attending an institution of higher education is to procure a successful college experience. Although the definition of a successful college experience may differ among students, a requisite part is being an accepted member of the culture of the institution (Tym et al., 2004). Yet, student athletes exist between the overall campus culture and the team sub-culture. Here, there is somewhat of a chasm between the ways in which student athletes' behaviors, beliefs, and their presentation are cultivated through the sport versus what may be accepted and expected by the culture and community of the higher educational institution and society outside of the athletic realm (Simons et al., 2007).

Fletcher et al. (2003) found that student athletes tend to link their success in college and emotional well-being with success in their sport as opposed to their academic success. The perceived inability to separate athletic success from other aspects of the college experience may demonstrate the tension for student athletes as they attempt to become a part of the campus culture and at the same time operate within their sport, which requires characteristics and traits such as self-confidence. What remains unknown is how student athletes balance this tension.

Self-Esteem Versus Narcissism

From little league forward a common phrase of encouragement often heard at the baseball field yelled out by coaches, parents, and teammates when a player is up to bat or on the mound is “Nobody better!” This phrase might be intended to instill confidence but may become problematic when it becomes more than a just a tool to help achieve confidence and success, and instead becomes an ingrained grandiose personality trait that is not accepted in society.

A personality trait is an individual characteristic. Personality traits demonstrate the various aspects in which people differ (Matthews et al., 2003). However, although these characteristics are a part of an individual’s personality, the traits often change during the transition to adulthood (Blonigen et al., 2008; Donnellan et al., 2007). This change in personality traits is an integral part of the development process with regards to student identity as students move from depending on others to being personally responsible for their own beliefs and behaviors (Baxter Magolda, 2002).

The debate continues, however, on whether personality is formed due to internal or external factors (McCrae & Costa, 2006; B.W. Roberts et al., 2006). Twenge and Campbell (2009) reported that repeatedly telling someone they are great, phenomenal, or better than the rest is going to make them truly believe that they are indeed great, phenomenal and better than

the rest. The idea of encouraging someone, child or adult, could be closely related to the concept of instilling self-esteem which is intended to create confidence. For many years, the push in child rearing was to instill self-esteem in children due to a multitude of benefits (Gallis, 2009).

Children with self-esteem would have the confidence to work hard and succeed in a variety of situations. Additionally, children with self-esteem would do better socially, academically, and psychologically (Bushman & Baumeister, 1988). Parents followed this plan to create the model child and praised their child and teen for all their accomplishments, minute, majestic and merely attempted. Despite these best intentions, a problem originated. The push to build self-esteem in children produced an unintended outcome when narcissism emerged instead of desired and beneficial self-esteem.

Originally the concept of narcissism came from Greek mythology and the widely known story of Narcissus who fell in love with his own reflection, hence breaking the heart of the nymph Echo who loved him. This tale demonstrates both the excessive sense of self that a narcissist exhibits and the potential consequences to others. The characteristics of the trait include a grandiose sense of self, a sense of entitlement, the excessive need for attention and admiration (exhibitionism) and lack of concern for others (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). Each of these components of narcissism could have potentially damaging effects and repercussions for both the narcissist and those the individual encounters. Excessive belief in oneself and failure to care about the feelings and opinions of others has implications personally and professionally because relationships with friends, significant others, teammates, peers, and co-workers are not collaborative and mutually fulfilling. This type of narcissistic behavior in the workplace, on the athletic field, or in the classroom can be problematic (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Therefore, narcissism is a behavior that is concerning as an intrapersonal and

interpersonal personality construct for student athletes and their potential for a successful college experience. Student athletes with personal traits such as narcissism, can be off-putting to teammates, professors, and other students, therefore causing problems for the student athlete in building and maintaining the healthy relationships needed for the college experience.

It is important to distinguish between clinical narcissism and narcissism as a personality construct. Less than 1% of the population is clinically narcissistic (J. M. Watson, 2012). Everyone, however, has occasional moments of narcissism. Narcissism as a personality trait is much less extreme and can be thought of on a continuum with a low concentration of the associated behavior on one end and higher concentrations on the other end. At individual points on the continuum the concentration of the associated behavior may weaken various social and professional interactions (Ryan et al., 2002) causing isolation, loneliness, and lack of support.

Achievement Goal Orientation

The student athlete has a certain perspective when confronting the goals of athletic and academic success known as achievement goal orientation. Each student athlete's achievement goal orientation is determined by individual beliefs and personality traits (J.M. Watson, 2012). Achievement goal orientation can be either a task orientation, or an ego orientation. These different ways of approaching a task reflect the personality of an individual with the task orientated student athlete prioritizing mastery of skill and acquiring understanding, and the ego orientated student athlete being concerned with appearing superior and proving their ability (Dweck, 1999). Other characteristics of an ego orientation include: the need for recognition of success, avoidance of the appearance of failure, the assumption of superiority, and concern with how they are perceived. These characteristics may become detrimental for the student athlete as the performance or ego goal orientation shares a relationship with the personality trait of

narcissism (J.M. Watson, 2012). There has been little research done on this relationship between ego orientation and narcissism in student athletes and much remains unknown about the long-term repercussions and implications of this relationship. Student athletes identified as having an ego goal orientation and high concentrations of the trait of narcissism might need additional assistance and strategies to help them balance their dual roles as college student and athlete and achieve a successful college experience.

Balancing Act

It becomes then yet another challenge for the student athletes in finding the balance between academics and athletics and creating a successful college experience when the traits that they have learned and embraced as necessary for athletics, might be considered unacceptable or excessive in the social and academic realm of the higher education institution regardless of the NCAA division. The NCAA divisions are characterized differently and emphasize the roles of sports and academics to greater or lesser degrees. For example, Division III stresses the importance of the student athletes' experience (NCAA, 2017). Though there is no athletic-based financial aid, this division offers substantial playing opportunities to its athletes in combination with a high emphasis on academics. Division I, however, is characterized by high budget scholarship money, well-paid coaches, and many players going professional (Yost, 2009). Of the 7.1% of high school players who play intercollegiately, only a small number are drafted when eligible in their junior year of college. The NCAA (2017) reported that 695 of the 7679 eligible baseball players were drafted by MLB. Most of those drafted players were from Division I schools.

In 2017, only 12 Division III baseball players were drafted by the MLB with 7 of those players being pitchers. In 2016, 20 players were drafted from Division III, including 11 pitchers

(“*Bachar is the first of 20 players,*” 2016). For players aspiring to make it to the professional ranks, the steep odds reinforce the need to exhibit confidence as a player and may result in the student athlete referencing time in the sport versus academics regardless of division of play.

However, despite the differences in the divisions, all of the rostered players at each division experience similar pressures and challenges and share many traits common to all student athletes. One of the most important traits in student athletes may be confidence given the role it plays in the mental factor involved in sports (J. Taylor, 2011). This required characteristic of high confidence in athletics, however, may have the potential of becoming excessive and may not be as accepted or desirable off the playing field.

Traits such as excessive self-confidence or narcissism can be destructive and have consequences that appear over time (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). The consequences may include loneliness, failure to take responsibility for actions or accept consequences for decisions, and inability to relate to others personally and professionally. University officials and the NCAA frown upon the public visual created when student athletes exhibit behaviors that are unacceptable, perhaps due to the students’ failure to take responsibility or accept consequences for their actions. For example, behaviors of student athletes such as excessive substance use or sexual assault are often broadcast in the media.

Of concern, most student athletes do engage in substance use, with the highest use in Division III (Green et al., 2001). Additionally, in comparison with a national sample, athletes are more likely to be arrested and indicted for sexual assault complaints than non-athletes (Benedict & Klein, 1997). What remains unknown is if these unfavorable behaviors come from, even in part, the destructive characteristics of high levels of the trait of narcissism that may be present in student athletes. Thus, it is important to better understand if some traits of the student athlete are

detrimental or beneficial, and how these traits were perceived by the player in understanding their college experience and confronting their goals of athletic and academic success.

Problem Statement

As illustrated in the background information above, student athletes face challenges because they are rewarded for particular traits (e.g., confidence) that may manifest differently on the field and in the classroom. Further, when confidence tips into narcissism, student-athletes encounter problems in interacting with others. It is important to explore particular individual personality traits and goal orientations in student athletes to determine if the traits and orientations are problematic for the student athlete in their overall college experience as well as how these same traits may be rewarded in seeking goals of athletic success. There have been multiple studies exploring the challenges of student athletes (Fletcher et al., 2003; Gaston Gayles, 2004, 2009; D. Horton, 2011; Potuto & O'Hanlon, 2007) and identifying ego or goal orientation in student athletes (Duda, 1989; Lochbaum et al., 2016; Lochbaum & Roberts, 1993). However, the association between narcissism and ego orientation in student athletes, and in baseball players in particular, has not been extensively examined. Baseball provides a unique sport to investigate due to individual component of the game. Although it is a team sport, the roles within the team are both isolated and spotlighted. For example, in the case of both the pitcher and the batter, the action from other players is in response to the performance of the pitcher or the batter, making those roles spotlighted. Exploring how the participants that own these spotlighted roles in baseball perceived the traits of narcissism and ego orientation in relation to their player position and their college experience was the central focus of this research.

Scant research exists on perceived narcissism in athletes (Elman & McKelvie, 2003). It remains unknown how narcissistic behaviors influence the dual roles of student athletes, namely in the classroom and on the field. Achievement goal orientation and individual beliefs and traits such as narcissism play a role in how student athletes manage and address the challenges of the balancing act between athletics and being a student (J.M. Watson, 2012). Student athletes identified as having an ego orientation and high concentrations of the trait of narcissism might need additional assistance and strategies to assist them in their college experience through helping them prioritize their dual roles and develop the necessary tools to manage these traits and orientation effectively. It is important on the one hand to understand if ego orientation and narcissism create difficulties in the student athletes' successful college experience, or if on the other hand, these traits are necessary tools for them to succeed (Elman & McKelvie, 2003).

It is also necessary to understand if the traits and orientations are more prevalent dependent upon the culture of the institution. Division I is big business with lots of money involved in fielding a team and funding for scholarships (Hoover, 2012). Additionally, Division I is perceived by many as the steppingstone to professional sports. Most student athletes who are drafted come from Division I schools (NCAA, 2017). The smaller draft percentage from Division III schools may deter players with professional aspirations from attending a Division III institution. However, there is still the potential to be drafted out of a Division III school, especially for pitchers, as half of all players drafted from Division III are pitchers (d3baseball.com). Indeed, pitchers receive substantial playing time at Division III, therefore they have the opportunity for exposure to scouts and playing time to hone their skills (J. Frostick, personal communication, January 13, 2018).

Because of the confidence levels advocated for team leaders, in particular pitchers, it is important to understand if the prevalence of the trait of narcissism and ego orientation is perceived as less necessary in institutions that are not widely accepted as a professional sports training ground. How does the institutional culture of Division III schools that profess to offer an all-inclusive experience, differ from the culture student athletes experience at Division I schools? What remains unknown in the current literature is if the prevalence of the trait and orientation may be dependent upon the baseball player's position in the game, especially in the Division III schools.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore how student athletes playing baseball perceived that their own narcissism and ego orientation influences their college experience. This study was a phenomenological study conducted in two universities, one with a NCAA baseball Division I program, and one university with a Division III baseball program. To better understand the influence of narcissism and ego orientation of student athletes on their college experience, two instruments were used to identify baseball players and explore how they viewed themselves in terms of narcissism and ego or task orientation. According to Bushman and Baumeister (1988) narcissists believe in their own superiority and when the superiority is challenged the negative consequences can include aggression, cheating, and poor conduct. Ego orientation is also associated with low levels of moral functioning (Kavussanu & Ntoumanis, 2003).

What remained unknown is how student athletes playing baseball perceived that their own narcissism and ego orientation influenced their college experience. The research questions guiding this study included:

1. How do student athletes playing baseball perceive their own narcissism and ego orientation and the influence of these traits on their college experience?
 - a. What challenges or successes do these students attribute to possessing these traits?
2. Do patterns emerge with respect to high levels of the traits of narcissism and ego orientation that connect to the baseball player's field position?
3. What type of connection exist for players that score above the mean score on the NPI-40 and either an ego orientation or a task orientation?

Theoretical Framework

Achievement goal orientation focuses on the relationship between goal orientations and individuals' associated behaviors, and can be applied to both academic and sports contexts (Nicholls, 1984, 1989). How student athletes confront both the goals of athletic and academic success differs based on their orientation. In the achievement area of sports two goal orientations are evident: task orientation and ego orientation. Task-orientated student athletes believe ability equals effort, success is linked to working hard, and satisfaction comes from doing one's best and making personal improvements (Cervello et al., 2007; Duda et al., 1992). Ego-oriented student athletes have a different perspective. These student athletes judge their ability in relation to others, believe success is due to superior ability, and that they must outperform others to feel satisfied (Duda et al., 1992; Lochbaum & Roberts, 1993). Other characteristics of ego orientation include: the need for favorable public recognition of success, avoidance of the appearance of failure, the assumption of superiority, and excessive concern with how they are perceived by others. Ego orientation and its characteristics of exhibitionism, superiority, and self-absorption share a relationship with the personality trait of narcissism (J.M. Watson, 2012).

Methods Overview

Qualitative methodology served as the best choice for this research because qualitative research allowed for the sharing of beliefs, values, feelings, and motivations that underlie behaviors (Berkwits & Inui, 1988). Through the interview process, participants that lived the experience or the phenomena were given the opportunity to reflect on the phenomena and explore their perceptions. Through this reflection previously undiscovered ideas and insights were brought to light.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) emerged in the mid-1990s in medical psychology as “concerned with the detailed, examination of personal lived experience, the meaning of experience and how participants make sense of that experience” (Smith, 2011, p. 9). There are three principles that guide IPA. First it stresses the participants’ perspectives. Secondly it explores each participant individually prior to discovering themes. Finally, IPA is considered interpretive rather than descriptive (Smith et al., 2009). Through its interpretive nature, the experience or phenomena can be viewed in relation to other influences such as culture, gender, and the influence of others. This orientation allows for a deeper understanding of the experience (Matua & Van der Wal, 2015).

This qualitative study explored the perceptions of the trait of narcissism and ego orientation and how these phenomena influenced how student athletes playing baseball perceived the role of these traits on their successful college experience. The study used the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-40) and the Task Ego Orientation in Sports Questionnaire to identify participants from two successful baseball programs, one at the Division I level and the second at the Division III level. All team members took both instruments and were ranked high to low based on their level of narcissism and their orientation of either task or ego were noted. Five

participants from each team were selected from the student athletes that scored on the higher end of the NPI-40 to partake in a face-to-face interview. Individual participants were interviewed to understand the phenomena of narcissism and ego orientation and any influence on a successful college experience.

Significance of the Problem

Student athletes have a certain perspective or way of viewing success, which they apply when confronting the goals of athletic and academic success. This perspective is known as the student's achievement goal orientation (Duda & Nicholls, 1992). Each student athlete's achievement goal orientation is determined by individual beliefs and personality traits (J.M. Watson, 2012). Achievement goal orientation can be either a task orientation, or an ego orientation. These vastly different ways of approaching a task reflect the personality of an individual with task orientation prioritizing mastery of skill and acquiring understanding, and ego orientation being concerned with appearing superior and outwardly proving their ability (Dweck, 1999). Task orientation is often associated with respect, honesty, and cooperation. Conversely, ego orientation shares a relationship with the personality trait of narcissism and therefore may become detrimental for the student athlete (J.M. Watson, 2012). This is significant for university personnel to include administration, faculty, coaches and student affairs staff due to the potential consequences of the trait of narcissism within the university setting. Narcissism has been shown to damage interactions with others and cause isolation and loneliness (Ryan et al., 2002) and potentially lead to improper behaviors such as aggression, cheating, and poor conduct (Bushman & Baumeister, 1988). These behaviors may then lead to the need for counseling, disciplinary intervention, and even dismissal from the university for the student

athlete if not acknowledged and addressed in a timely manner by the university staff and administration.

Definition of Key Terminology

The following terms appear throughout this document and are defined in this section.

- **Achievement Goal Theory.** This theory of motivation was adopted in sports psychology from work in education (Dweck & Elliot, 1983; Maehr, 1984; Nicholls, 1984, 1989). Nicholls promoted the conceptual framework in the mid to late 1980s (Duda, 1989; Duda & Nicholls, 1992; G. C. Roberts, 1992). The theory focusses on an athletes' desire to be successful. The criterion that each athlete chooses to define their success and failure becomes the goal orientation for that individual (Cervello et al., 2007; Duda, 1989). Goal orientations in athletes may be either task or ego orientations.
- **College experience.** The college experience in an undergraduate can be seen through Astin's (1984) theory of involvement which states that students are involved in college in meaningful ways. The investment students make in their involvement include interacting with faculty and peers, participating in groups and organizations, and completing assignments and is related to the learning experience and personal development (Gaston Gayles, 2009). There is mixed evidence to date to suggest the extent student athletes are involved in similar ways to their academic peers. Although the definition of a successful college experience may differ among students, a requisite part is being an accepted member of the culture of the institution (Tym et al., 2004).

- **Ego Orientation.** An ego orientation is the motivation driving an athlete in terms of ego or self. Ego orientation is demonstrated by the athletes' focus on demonstrating superior ability, the need for recognition of success, avoidance of appearance of failure, concern with how they are perceived, winning over another athlete, and outperforming others. Success and failure are judged in comparison to the performance of other competitors (Cervello et al., 2007; Dweck, 1999; Lochbaum et al., 2016)
- **Narcissism.** Narcissism is one of the oldest constructs in the history of psychology and has recently received renewed attention as an outgrowth of self-esteem (Brown, et al., 2009). It is recognized as a personality trait that involves a grandiose sense of self, and demand for admiration (D. R. Ames et al., 2005). A person with the trait of narcissism might be seen as someone who has an inflated view of themselves, may be self-serving and self-centered, and may be unlikely to consider how their decisions impact others (Campbell et al., 2005; Emmons, 1987; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1998).
- **National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).** The NCAA is the governing body of intercollegiate sports and its participants. It is dedicated to the well-being and lifelong success of college athletes. The NCAA is comprised of 1,117 institutions classified into three divisions. Members must comply with regulations in amateur status, recruiting, eligibility, financial aid and other that may differ by division (NCAA, 2017).
- **NCAA Divisions.** The NCAA's three divisions were created in 1973 to "align like-minded campuses in the areas of philosophy, competition and opportunity" (NCAA,

2017). There are 351 schools in Division I or 32%, 308 schools in Division II or 28%, and 443 schools in Division III or 40%.

- **Personality Traits.** Traits in psychology helps identify a person's personality. "Traits can be defined as a stable characteristic that causes a person to depict a response to any situations in certain ways. Trait theories indicate that the traits are always constant regardless of the situations" (Shrestha, 2017, para. 1).
- **Phenomena.** "A phenomenon (plural phenomena) is an occurrence, a circumstance, or a fact that is perceptible by the senses; an unusual, significant, or unaccountable fact or occurrence; something which appears real to the mind, regardless of whether its underlying existence is proved or its nature understood" (Pacific Neuropsychiatric Institute, 1997, para. 1).
- **Self-Esteem.** Self-esteem is a favorable evaluation of oneself (Baumeister et al., 1999). High self-esteem is not synonymous with narcissism. Instead, it is suggested that narcissism may be a mask to hide underlying low self-esteem (Barry et al., 2003).
- **Student Athlete.** Student athletes are "men and women who are enrolled in a college or university and who participate in intercollegiate sports at Division I, II, or III, and are members of the NCAA" (Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001, p. 2).
- **Success.** Student athletes have an individual way of viewing their success through achievement goal theory and the particular orientation. However, generally speaking, success for a student athlete is often defined as "winning and playing at a consistently high level" (Fletcher et al., 2003, p. 35). A student athletes' success in college and their emotional well-being is linked to success in their sport.

- **Task Orientation.** The task orientation operates when the athlete is motivated by mastery of technique, acquiring understanding, improvement, and achievement of higher ability (Dweck, 1999; Lochbaum et al., 2016). There is a belief that sport should teach people to do their best and cooperate with others (Duda, 1989). Athletes with a task orientation determine success when they master something new and progress in learning a skill (Cervello et al., 2007).

Chapter Summary

Student athletes who play at the NCAA level have conquered substantial odds to reach the college level. At the college level they must next meet additional challenges athletically and academically and discover strategies needed to balance their responsibilities and future goals along with the expected social obligations of a college student. These student athletes possess unique traits and particular ways of viewing success and failure that may create a chasm between the ways in which these traits are presented in the athletic realm versus the community of higher education, thus creating additional challenges. It is important for the wellbeing of the student athlete that assistance is available to them as they encounter these challenges in order to aid them in achieving a workable balance between their dual roles and allowing for a successful college experience. Fletcher and colleagues (2003) found that student athletes tend to link their success in college and emotional well-being with success in their sport as opposed to their academic success.

Although substantial research has been done on student athletes, little research has been done on the relationship between the traits of student athletes and their perceived levels of success. Thus, it is important to understand if some traits of the student athlete are more

detrimental or beneficial, and how these traits are perceived by the player in understanding their college experience and confronting their goals of athletic and academic success.

The following chapters will explore the phenomena of the trait of narcissism and achievement goal orientation and the perceptions of baseball players concerning these traits and their impact on the college experience in the following order: Chapter 2 consists of a review of the literature, Chapter 3 provides the methodology for the study, Chapter 4 presents the research findings, and Chapter 5 concludes with a discussion and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Today's college students do not live the carefree existence that many might visualize; they are under intense pressure to succeed in a very competitive environment (Hudd, 2007). College students are expected to excel in academics, in sports, in appearance and in their social lives, which is labeled the Perfect 10 syndrome (Cavanaugh, 1985). These expectations may be placed on students by parents, educators, peers, and society as a whole. Many students feel that they are under extreme pressure from adults to meet often unrealistic expectations in multiple areas, especially academically and athletically (L. Taylor et al., 2002). All college students face challenges and pressures in balancing and navigating a range of often conflicting priorities; students that are athletes within their colleges, however, have these challenges multiplied. Student athletes encounter many of the same challenges as their academic peers, but their challenges are compounded by factors related to additional pressures of playing a sport at a highly competitive level.

Much of the previous research related to student athletes has focused on problems facing student athletes such as identity development (Adler & Adler, 1987; R. S. Horton & Mack, 2000); abuse habits (Anderson & McKeag, 1985; Green et al., 2001); misbehavior (Benedict & Klein, 1997; Wong, 2001); degree attainment (D. Horton, 2011; Purdy et al., 1982); and general challenges (Bowen & Levin, 2003; Fletcher et al., 2003; Simons et al., 2007). A gap remains in the literature, however, in reference to the traits a student athlete may possess that could influence the way these problems and challenges are met.

This study explored how student athletes playing collegiate baseball perceived the college experience and how their levels of narcissism and ego orientation influenced that college experience both academically and athletically. The study looked at individual personality traits and goal orientations in student athletes to determine if the traits and orientations were problematic for the student athlete in their overall college experience and how these same traits were rewarded in seeking goals of athletic success.

The literature review examined areas of significance in student athletes and personality traits. In the first section, information on student athletes related to challenges faced throughout their college experience is provided. The second section is an overview of achievement goal theory and task and ego orientation. This overview will help the reader better understand the motivation of the student athletes' and the way they may perceive success. The third section describes the personality trait of narcissism. To date, no study has combined achievement goal orientation and narcissism in college baseball players therefore, this chapter will conclude with a conceptual model that demonstrates the connections and associations between student athletes, achievement goal theory and narcissism.

Student Athletes

America is driven by achievement and measures success in terms of marked results (Hudd, 2007). Even in education and sports, the goals of the experiences are no longer seen as focusing on learning and personal development, instead value is placed on the end result of having a degree or winning a game. Student athletes are living by this philosophy as well; they must produce visible results of their success (Hudd, 2007) through high academic grades and athletic statistics. Success may be defined by a student athlete in numerous ways but encompasses the combination of athletics and academics within the realm of college life.

D. Horton (2011) found that student athletes defined success as finding personal happiness, passing their courses, maintaining athletic eligibility, and having a successful sports season. Such accomplishments within the university setting that has its own accompanying challenges, may cause student athletes to feel incredible pressure to achieve at any cost. A survey conducted by Junior Achievement and Deloitte (2006) showed that 44% of young adults admit to pressure to achieve at any cost, including academically, athletically, and socially. Coping with this pressure may become overwhelming and find the student athlete struggling to maintain their academic and athletic responsibilities and meet their personal goals within the college setting.

Athletic Responsibilities

All college students struggle to maintain a schedule that allows for a healthy mix of a social and an academic life. Students work diligently to balance friends, extracurricular clubs, and a full course load, often while working a part time job or holding an internship. Non-athlete students have the freedom to choose how to prioritize their interests and to achieve their preferred balance. Student athletes, however, often have a rigid schedule with little flexibility and scant free time. Joe Frostick, a former University of Richmond Baseball Coach and longtime owner of the nationally renowned training and showcase facility, Improve Your Game, has worked with young high school and college athletes for decades. Frostick believes that student athletes are closely managed and monitored by the baseball staff in all aspects of their college experience (J. Frostick, personal communication, January 15, 2019). This high level of supervision of student athletes infiltrates not only their sport but their academic and social experience as well. Many athletes' schedules are designed through the athletic department and are tightly regimented to include mandatory tutoring, a full course load, 4-hour afternoon practices year round, and evening study halls (Jolly, 2008). It is important that the student

athletes carry a full course load of 15 credits and maintain the required GPA to be eligible to play per the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules because falling below 12 credits causes a loss of eligibility (Meyer, 2005).

In addition to the rigorous academic schedule, during the competition season, student athletes often travel extensively. This time away from the classroom can create additional challenges due to missed classes and rescheduling of assignments and exam due dates (Jolly, 2008). As a result of this type of rescheduling student athletes may perceive that professors and their non-athlete peers feel that they place academics lower on their priority list than athletics, which might not be the case. Instead, Potuto and O'Hanlon (2007) discovered that 53% of student athletes felt that they did not spend as much time on their academics as they would like to due to their athletic schedule and commitments. However, the often-erroneous belief that academics is not a priority perpetuates the stereotype of the non-academic athlete and contributes to the student athletes' challenges to succeed and their overall perception of their college experience.

Student athletes have year-round training schedules and there is no off-season. Instead, the year can be seen as a combination of training and competition. In baseball, a team may compete heavily in the spring and into the summer, and in the fall, a typical player has conditioning 3-4 mornings each week which consists of a run followed by weight training—thus creating a rigorous set schedule for the entire year (Woodrey, 2017). The student athlete also maintains a five class per semester load in addition to their athletic schedule. After a quick lunch, often brought to the locker room, there may be arm exercises for pitchers or specialty workouts per playing position with the training staff. Team stretch begins midafternoon followed by official practice. Evenings consists of study hall for 8 hours a week followed by dinner at 8 p.m.

(Woodrey, 2017). Additionally, many teams have a scrimmage schedule as well that consists of games on most weekends into the late fall. It is also understood by the team that in order to continue to improve and gain strength, speed, and velocity, and to earn a spot on the starting roster, a player should be working and training individually or seeking additional one-on-one help from the staff on a consistent basis (J. Frostick, personal communication, May 3, 2018).

During the spring, the schedules of baseball players intensify with Monday universally being the one day off each week for college baseball. There are 31 conferences in Division I baseball consisting of 297 universities (NCAA, 2019) and all follow a fairly similar type of weekly schedule. Wednesday is game day with an early evening start prefaced by mid-afternoon stretches, batting practice, and fielding, and concluding with final cool-down stretches just before midnight (Woodrey, 2017). Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays consist of a three-game series with a combination of afternoon and evening game times. If the team is on the road, Thursdays are a full travel day, with a morning departure and late afternoon arrival, followed by a field practice and team dinner. This spring routine begins in February and continues through May and beyond if the team qualifies for play-offs. According to Woodrey (2017), during the spring 8 hours a day are spent by the players at baseball facilities 6 days a week; these hours add up to more than the equivalent of a full time job. Of course, players are always encouraged to do additional work and training on their own in order to improve. The tremendous amount of hours student athletes spend on their sport leaves little time available for other activities including academics, and this intense commitment to sport opens the door for anxiety, pressure, and the potential for problems academically, socially and athletically. The extreme demands on the student athlete may predispose them to potential failure in achieving success in their dual roles as student and athlete (Simiyu, 2010). What remains unknown in the research on student athletes is

what traits may be necessary for success in their sport or conversely might hinder their ability to be successful in their sport and in their overall college experience.

Challenges and Pressures

Athletes face pressure and challenge beginning at an early age. For baseball players the competition and high-level play begins as early as 11 years old when tryouts for travel teams begin. Travel teams seek players that are at the highest level of play for their age in bat speed and throwing speed, and many teams also require the young athlete to maintain honor roll status in school. The pressure to excel increases as the young athlete progresses from middle school to high school as less than 10% of the three million U.S. Little League players ever have the opportunity to play for a high school team (Mann, 2017). The challenges in high school athletics, an area that was once intended to create an outlet for the pressures of school, have become tremendous (Emmert, 2011). Now, high school sports are instead designed to be a ticket to college, similar to the advantage that Advanced Placement courses might give to students applying to highly competitive universities (Murphy, 2005). Athletics showcase talent and provide an arena in which to achieve success. This spotlight on athletic prowess is evident with the practice of early recruitment of student athletes, often as high school freshmen and sophomores, by Division I college coaches (Gaston Gayles & Baker, 2015). Not every ballplayer is destined for a college athletic career and many athletes face their junior year in high school with the realization that their playing days are coming to an end. This lack of college playing opportunities is exacerbated by large Division I programs that have their rosters completed several years in advance of high school graduation dates (J. Frostick, personal communication, May 3, 2018). Some of the smaller Division I schools as well as Division III, may be a bit later

in the process and will be making offers to high school seniors through showcase events and camps and clinics specifically designed for recruitment purposes.

This do-or-die athletic pressure on players who are only teenagers changes the aspect of playing sports for relaxation or from being an outlet for tension to now being another area in which the pressure to excel exists. Athletics are no longer purely focused on enjoyment of the game, good sportsmanship and friendship. Instead, athletics have been transformed by the all-encompassing quest for success and the pressure to win. Hudd (2007) stated that this type of emphasis damages the self-confidence and development of the student athlete as the opportunity for learning and growing, and the independence to make individual mistakes, has been removed. Sports are now about high-level achievement and therefore create a tremendous source of pressure on the student athlete (Henson, 2012). As these challenges of balancing an athletic commitment and student responsibilities continue to multiply, it becomes increasingly important to the well-being of student athletes for coaches, faculty, and administrators to be able to recognize and address the problem and be knowledgeable and willing to offering support and strategies to aid the student athlete. This study provided insight into the perception of the student athlete which will better enable higher education professionals to further their understanding of student athletes and their challenges.

Social Challenges

A significant part of the college experience for all students is the social aspect involved in university life. College is an opportunity to meet diverse people and explore new ideas through groups of friends, clubs, and social events on and off campus. Astin's (1984) student involvement theory highlights that each individual's effort, involvement, and commitment to the learning and growing process contributes to the success of the overall college experience (Kuh,

2003; Simiyu, 2010). Involvement includes not only attending classes and study groups, but also participation in student activities including co-curricular and social events. However, due to the many time constraints of the athletic schedule, student athletes find little time to pursue involvement in social activities within the campus environment outside of their sport.

Club meetings and campus events such as concerts, performances, and parties are often held in the evenings making it difficult for the student athlete to participate due to late games or rigorous practices followed by required study halls. This inability to engage outside of their sport may cause student athletes to become increasingly removed from students that are not athletes, which promotes a separate culture of athletes that is its own entity within the campus population (Bowen & Levin, 2003). This type of isolation from non-student athletes reduces interactions with others also diminishes personal growth (Aries et al., 2004) and harms academic pursuits (Bowen & Levin, 2003). What remains unclear is how the student athlete perceives this lack of other involvement and the extent to which the omission of a social experience in college determines the student athletes' perception of their college experience as successful.

Pre-College Expectations

Researchers, academic professionals, athletic experts, and the general public differ in their beliefs about the benefits and outcomes of college athletics in general, and for college student athletes in particular. Many professors and administrators believe that the time demands of athletics cause coursework and grades to take a secondary role for student athletes (Simons et al., 1999). There is also a belief that many of these athletes may simply use college as a means to get into professional sports (Marx et al., 2008). Some college students do have professional aspirations but realizing that out of the draft eligible college student athletes only 1.5% in football, 1.1%, in basketball, and 9.1% in baseball are ever drafted (NCAA, 2017), this goal is

not met for the vast majority (Simiyu, 2010). Therefore, it is important that student athletes can find a workable balance between academics and athletics in order to ensure that their academic future and career goals are strong.

Even though as many as 93% of student athletes state that they consider it very important to graduate (Potuto & O'Hanlon, 2007), it is difficult for them to entirely discount the hope of playing professional ball. Many student athletes have been told since adolescence that they have an athletic future. College coaches recruited these athletes early in their high school careers but far earlier were often treated as a top prospect by coaches and parents through bringing early recognition to the young player (Gaston Gayles & Baker, 2015). Athletes as young as 9 or 10 play on expensive, elite baseball travel teams that compete on a national level. Long before middle school years, these travel teams have placed young athletes in divisions such as AA, AAA, and Majors (United States Specialty Sports, 2017). The strongest, fastest athletes play in the Majors division thereby instilling early on in the players, the far-reaching assumption that they are moving forward into the top ranks of not only travel ball but might be destined for high school and college sports. By the first year of high school, the elite travel ball players move into Showcase Baseball, often with a high-priced national organization, where they travel each weekend throughout the summer and fall to various colleges to compete and be seen by college coaches. College coaches have been able to approach and make verbal offers to athletes as young as freshmen in high school. This early recruitment causes the player to verbally commit to playing at a specific college early in high school, often without having explored other options or considered what they would like from their college experience. Due to the prestige that comes with an early offer, these young players quickly make that verbal commit, which may lead to disappointment or disillusion down the road (Marx et al., 2008).

It is important to note that a verbal offer is simply an offer and not a promise from a college. The college coach may like what he sees in the early high school years and hopes the player will continue to develop as he expects. The NCAA (2017) states that a verbal commitment is not binding on the part of the school or the athlete. If the player grows in strength and ability each year, a Letter of Intent may be signed senior year which is binding. However, often the verbal offer is withdrawn on behalf of the university due to failure of the player to continue to produce high level statistics or improve. Tommy Mayers, owner of the premier baseball showcase organization in Virginia, the Richmond Braves National Baseball Organization, warns players and parents that it is far better for a player to be developing and improving throughout high school than to peek early (T. Mayers, personal communication February 18, 2018). College coaches look to see improvement in speed, strength and ability from freshmen year to junior year in high school with the potential for more growth still ahead. Players who peek as freshmen, no matter how stellar their statistics at that time, will likely have their verbal offers withdrawn (T. Mayers, personal communication, February 18, 2018).

As of April 2018, the NCAA rules changed regarding recruiting contact and offers. Prior to April 2018, athletes could be given a verbal offer from a college coach as early as eighth grade or freshmen year of high school. The new rule states that Division 1 college coaches cannot have recruiting conversations or in-person contact with an athlete prior to September 1 of the athlete's junior year of high school. This change was made to allow student athletes to continue to develop athletically, have the opportunity to consider multiple college options, and have less pressure with the recruiting process (Bastie, 2016). All Division 1 sports except for football, men's and women's basketball, and lacrosse are affected. During junior year, high school athletes can officially tour the campus of the recruiting college team and discuss recruitment with

coaches. At any point after September 1, a verbal offer can be made and the possibility of a Letter of Intent looms for the following fall along with new challenges ahead.

Challenges of Stereotypes

For those high school athletes that do follow the forecasted path into college sports, they are met again with a plethora of expectations and preconceived notions from students, faculty, administration, and the community. College athletes have long been labeled as entitled, privileged, disinterested students who are enrolled purely to participate in athletics (D. Horton, 2011; Simons et al., 2007; J. C. Watson, 2003). These negative perceptions combined with some institutions' often low level of academic expectations could have a significant impact on the student athlete as they are often viewed in a stereotypical manner. Steele (1997) defined stereotype threat as meaning an individual eventually accepts what is voiced or inferred about their abilities and believes the negatives stereotypes by which he or she has been labeled. Thus, athletes may believe that they are not as academically capable as students that are not athletes.

Student athletes facing stereotype threat increasingly then may find less motivation toward academics or college life outside of the athletic arena as they are defined in the eyes of others solely as athletes. In turn, if student athletes are not engaged in presumed ideal academic behavior, the stereotype is reinforced that they are not interested in academics, further perpetuating the cycle of the student athlete that is athlete not student (D. Horton, 2011). College life becomes more challenging if the student athletes' ability to be academically successful decreases, creating significant impact on the overall collegiate experience and wellbeing of the student athlete (Harrison, 2008).

One obstacle in achieving academic success is the challenge to be seen as a serious scholar by professors (Aries et al., 2004). Many professors and administrators struggle with the

role athletics plays in the university setting and may unintentionally demonstrate this conflict to the students. This perceived discrimination by professors has multiple implications for student athletes. Academically, student athletes may be hesitant to approach the professors for athletic scheduling conflicts, to arrange make up times for missed assignments and work due to athletic travel, or to seek extra help and explanations on class material. Secondly, academic stress may have athletic implications as perceived discrimination by professors contributes to athletic performance anxiety and lower athletic performance (Steele & Aronson, 1998). It is therefore important for student athlete success that professors, coaches, parents, and others that play important roles in the student athlete's life, consider the multiple challenges the student athlete encounters and work to develop best practices and strategies that aid and not hinder the success of each individual. Understanding ego / task orientation and the role the orientation plays in the student athletes' motivation and decision-making process, will allow for deeper understanding of the student athlete.

Both coaches and faculty focus on influencing and modifying the student athletes so they can yield positive results on the field of play and in the classroom (Umbach et al., 2006). However, these best intentions may create conflicts for the student athlete as the desires of the coaches may not coincide with what faculty might feel is pertinent, thus creating yet more pressure in trying to please these counterparts. It is up to the college administrators to work with faculty and coaches to create a multi-dimensional environment that embraces strategies to include student athletes into the academic and social atmosphere while accommodating the time and stress of athletic demands (Simiyu, 2010). Employing these necessary strategies will create a foundation of support that will allow the student athlete to successfully achieve their goals as they learn to both manage the challenges and experience personal growth.

The student athlete goes through a series of changes socially and developmentally as they struggle to meet their challenges and balance their dual roles. Pescosolido (1986) reported that social identity changes in predictable ways through three stages. Originally students enter college in a state of expectancy, followed by a stage of disillusionment, and ending with reconciliation. In the case of the student athlete, this developmental structure is useful for understanding the way they may process the challenges that they encounter as they face the perceptions and preconceived notions of others in the collegiate environment.

Student athletes enter college with an idealist hope of being both a student and an athlete and believe that success in both realms is attainable (Marx et al., 2008). The disillusionment stage occurs when it becomes apparent that there are multiple conflicting demands, endless multi-role responsibilities, and a struggle to successfully negotiate a workable balance between being a college student and a successful athlete. The original optimism about succeeding in the dual roles of athlete and student begins to waver to the athletic demands, the lack of social life, and the expectations of the university (Crom et al., 2009). Under these pressures many players may abandon the ideal they once held and view themselves primarily as an athlete in order to reconcile their identity and better manage the pressures they may face through being forced to prioritize their roles (Marx et al., 2008). What remains unknown is if the seemingly preordained scenario is perceived to be influenced by the personal traits and achievement goal orientation of the athlete. Through understanding the perceptions of the student athlete in the role that task/ego orientation plays in their decisions and motivations, it is possible to create a more comprehensive and cohesive strategy of aid to offer student athletes necessary support.

Balancing Academics and Athletics

Student athletes in all sports are very familiar with facing challenges. In baseball, from Little League onward, players have faced challenges to prove themselves on the field. As they advanced through the league, into school ball, and showcase teams, academic performance and grades become tied to sports in terms of playing time or being rostered as coaches' look for not only baseball prowess but high academic standing as well. Due to the small number of college baseball spots open each year, the focus is on a player that is not only college baseball ready but has the grades to show that he would be successful in college level courses (J. Frostick, personal communication, January 15, 2019). However, even for players that have previously demonstrated success on the field and in the classroom, the college arena poses multiple challenges to creating a successful balance between academics and athletics. Even academically capable athletes may struggle with keeping up with academics while also trying to be successful in their sport (Fletcher et al., 2003). The inability to balance academics and athletics may quickly create a negative cycle that could cause significant impact on the overall collegiate experience and wellbeing of the student athlete (Harrison, 2008).

At the college level academics and athletics are deeply intertwined as student athletes link success in college with success in their sport (Fletcher et al., 2003). This link therefore necessitates that student athletes must achieve athletic success, defined as winning and playing at a high level, along with academic success. However, the challenge of how to balance these dual roles remains a barrier to success for many and an unsolved problem facing administration (Gaston Gayles & Hu, 2009).

Little research has been done concerning student athletes' personal traits and their perceptions of how those traits may affect their ability to find this necessary balance of dual

roles. To increase understanding of the student athlete and to create strategies to assist them with their challenges, it is important to understand a student athletes' perception of success and achievement. As mentioned in the problem statement in Chapter 1, determining a student athlete's perception of their achievement goal orientation as task or ego and determining which personality traits may be helpful and which traits, when developed excessively, may become detrimental, is necessary to help coaches, administration, and student services to better create a beneficial system of support.

Achievement Goal Orientation

Social cognitive models have dominated the literature on achievement for several decades. Achievement goal theory (C. Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck & Elliot, 1983; Nicholls, 1984, 1989) was a dominant model adopted both by educators and sports psychologists. The premise of achievement goal framework is to determine the lens through which an individual perceives ability and success. How the individual defines these constructs will guide their actions and the way ability and success are sought as the individual's perspective guides their motivation and pursuit of their goals. In the realm of sports literature, Nicholls's (1989) conceptual framework of achievement has become widely used. His framework is built on two assumptions: first, individuals operate in a rational manner; second, the adopted achievement goal orientation or perspective will guide decisions and behaviors Nicholls (1989) defined two distinct and differing perspectives of ability as task orientation and ego orientation. These two orientations determine achievement beliefs and behaviors in an individual and reflect how each may define success and failure for the individual (Lochbaum et al., 2016).

Achievement goal orientation shapes a student athlete's perspective when confronting the goals of athletic and academic success (Duda, 1989). The criteria used to judge exactly what

constitutes success takes the form of the goal orientation the athlete adopts (Cervello et al., 2007). Two vastly different ways of defining and determining success emerge depending upon the athlete's particular achievement goal orientation of either task or ego, which is also determined by other personal factors such as an individual's beliefs and personality traits (J.M. Watson, 2012). A task-oriented definition of success prioritizes learning and personal growth, whereas an ego-oriented definition of success focuses on being superior and the public perception of ability.

Task Orientation

Task orientation is related to learning and prioritizes the understanding and the learning itself as the utmost importance (Nicholls, 1989). This type of orientation operates when the individual is motivated by personal improvement, personal mastery, and achievement in what is perceived as ability. Task orientation can be seen in both academics and in athletics. In the context of academics, task orientated students believe success comes from learning and understanding and putting forth effort (Nicholls et al., 1990). The personal growth and mastery of the skill is prioritized and valued.

Within the athletic realm task orientation has similar characteristics. The athlete will prioritize mastery of skill in the sport and acquiring understanding about the various concepts and techniques in the sport. Task-oriented athletes believe that sports exemplify teaching moral concepts such as the value of working to capacity, cooperation with others, adhering to rules, respect for humanity, and honesty (Duda, 1989). Additionally, task orientation creates greater acceptance by teammates (Standage et al., 2005). The athlete with this orientation also believes that effort will lead to their personal definition of success, which may vary among individuals. In relation to athletes who were task oriented, Duda (1989) found that the athletes' perception of

sports and their personal success was defined by the idea of doing ones best. Task orientation is also correlated with achievement motivated outcomes such as positive emotion, motives of skill development, and team membership (Lochbaum et al., 2016). What has yet to be determined is how the student athletes' perception of task orientation may be related to personal traits such as narcissism and how it may impact a student athlete's overall college experience.

Ego Orientation

As the second construct of Nicholls (1984, 1989) achievement goal theory, ego orientation can also be seen both academically and athletically. Students with an ego orientation tend to base their performance on a social comparison; therefore, demonstrating more knowledge than others creates personal satisfaction (Duda, 2001; Nicholls, 1984, 1989). Additionally, these students focus less on effort than students who are task oriented. The focus in ego orientation is on personal superiority and public recognition for superior skills.

In athletics, ego orientation is characterized by an athlete whose actions are motivated to display superior ability or winning over an opponent. Ego-oriented athletes are concerned with appearing superior and proving their ability (Dweck, 1999). Other characteristics of this group include: the need for recognition of success, avoidance of the appearance of failure, the assumption of superiority, and concern with how they are perceived. Duda (1989) showed that ego orientation was associated with the idea that sports should enhance status. The ego-oriented athlete believes that sports would increase status socially along with teaching how to get ahead in life, helping get into college and being an asset towards earning money. Kavussanu and Ntoumanis (2003) posited that ego orientation may predict low levels of moral functioning. Thus, athletes coming from an ego orientation might need strategies and assistance that will

allow them to better understand their motivations and that will create pathways to their goals that are more introspective and productive as a team player.

As success and failure are defined by the athletes' perceptions of their performance, in the case of the ego-oriented athlete, this perception is guided by the athletes' ego (Lochbaum & Roberts, 1993; Lochbaum et al., 2016). In baseball, for example, it may be seen that athletes' achievement goal orientation may be determined in part by ego, as baseball, although it is a team sport, does have a highly spotlighted individual focus. Baseball is a team sport that is played by separate players focused on their own performance (J. Frostick, personal communication, January 2018). At all levels, Division I and Division III included, players' futures are not necessarily determined wholly by the success of the team, but by individual statistics. A pitcher, for example, might have an Earned Run Average (ERA; runs scored by the opposing team that were not the fault of errors) below 3.0, which is what a professional scout will look for, yet the team might have a losing record. However, the team that is successful in terms of wins, offers additional higher level chances to be seen by scouts and improve personal statistics through regional competition and season championships such as the College World Series. Ego orientation may be even more pronounced in higher levels of competitive sports (White & Duda, 1994). Therefore, identifying the student athletes' individual goal orientation and creating awareness within the individual of that orientation becomes a helpful tool for the student athlete as they continue into either professional sports or into another career field.

The Role of Individual Beliefs and Personality Traits

It is known that an individual's goal orientation will determine specific beliefs, traits, and behaviors in an individual (Lochbaum et al., 2016; J.M. Watson, 2012). Yet, there is little research that examines the student athlete baseball player's personal beliefs and personality traits

in association with their achievement goal orientation and how these constructs may determine a successful college experience. As stated in Chapter 1, it can be seen that high levels of confidence, for example, are necessary for baseball players, especially pitchers (McFarland, 2003). However, the consequences to the baseball player of this high level of confidence, which may be seen as narcissism, have not been explored. As previously mentioned, narcissistic behavior on the athletic field or in the classroom may be a detriment to success (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). What has not been determined is how the student athlete's perception of the trait of narcissism and ego or task orientation may play a role in their success both on and off the baseball field.

It is believed that ego orientation is a less productive construct as opposed to task orientation which focuses more on overall understanding and personal growth. Therefore, possession of some of the personality traits that are associated with ego orientation may become detrimental for the student athlete as ego goal orientation shares a relationship with the personality trait of narcissism (J.M. Watson, 2012). However, this relationship has not been extensively explored in research to date and is the focus of this current research.

Narcissism

Narcissism is a long-studied construct present throughout the history of the field of psychology. The story of Narcissus in Greek mythology calls attention to self-focus at the cost of other relationships. This tale demonstrates both the excessive sense of self that a narcissist exhibits and the consequences to those involved with the narcissist. Over the past decade, narcissism has received increased attention as an individual personality construct (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). The concept of narcissism as a personality trait is a separate construct from Narcissistic Personality Disorder, which is a medical condition (APA, 2013). The disorder is

rare, with less than 1% of the population being clinically diagnosed with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (J.M. Watson, 2012). Instead, narcissism as a personality trait may be observed on a continuum; some individuals demonstrate occasional moments of narcissism, which may be beneficial or healthy, while others exhibit repeated displays of the components of narcissism (Weikel et al., 2010).

There are four main components of narcissism as identified by the APA (2000). Each of these components of narcissism can be seen to produce potentially damaging effects and dangerous repercussions. It is important to understand the implications of the trait of narcissism and its components as the long-term effects of narcissism continue to negatively impact both the individual and society (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). What remains unknown is if narcissism in any degree might be perceived by student athletes and coaches as a necessary trait to succeed in athletics.

Grandiose Sense of Self

The idea of an excessive or grandiose sense of self-importance is noted by the APA (2000) as the primary element of narcissism. This illusion of superiority or inflated sense of self is also the most commonly recognized component of narcissism. Narcissists tend to believe they are more beautiful, more intelligent, and more talented than others, when there is actually no evidence to prove that they are better than average (Campbell et al., 2002; Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Another common term for this description is *vain*. The lyrics to Carly Simon's (1972) "You're So Vain" famously broadcasted, "You walked into the party like you were walking onto a yacht. You had one eye in the mirror as you watched yourself." These popular lines demonstrate the narcissistic component of grandiose sense of self with the idea of self-importance visualized in the perceived attitude and attention to self. People who are vain, or

possess a grandiose sense of self, also truly believe that they are special. For baseball players, this trait might manifest as poor sportsmanship towards other players and lack of support for teammates.

One of the items on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-40; Raskin & Terry, 1988) offers two choices: “I think I am a special person” versus “I am no better and no worse than most people.” The idea that someone is special implies that they are better or superior to others. Feeling special is one of the central traits of narcissism and should not be confused with self-confidence (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). It is possible to instill self confidence in a child for academics or athletics without telling them that they are special through encouraging them to work hard and succeed to the best of their ability. Telling a child that they are special, although the idea of being special does offer a sense of comfort, inevitably leads to frustration in a world that is designed to be collaborative and does not cater to exceptions. People who feel that they are special often want to be the exception to the rule (Twenge & Campbell, 2009).

Nor should the idea of feeling special be confused with the concept of being unique. “Being unique emphasizes differences but not superiority, whereas being special means being a star and getting special treatment—not just different, but better than what everyone else gets” (Twenge & Campbell, 2009, p. 190). The idea of being unique is positive, and scientifically accurate based on genetics, whereas the idea of being special is narcissism as narcissists truly believe that they are exceptional. The consequences of this mindset are that when this claimed superiority is challenged, improper behaviors can occur (Bushman & Baumeister, 1988). These unsavory behaviors can include aggression, cheating, and poor conduct both personally and academically. In the realm of baseball this may be seen in a player’s inability to admit to an error and the tendency to blame others for their mistakes. For example, a pitcher walks, throws four

balls to the first two batters of the inning, then when the third batter hits and runs score, he blames the defensive players instead of accepting the responsibility for having put the first batter in scoring position through his pitching to the walk.

Entitlement

Narcissists believe they are special or superior to others, therefore they are entitled to have more than others (Brunell et al., 2011). This component of narcissism can be seen as healthy in that people are entitled to fairness and certain rights, but it may also be seen as problematic in a narcissist. Entitlement is the belief that one is deserving of or entitled to privileges, treatment, or rewards (Fridley, 2009). These privileges or rewards are perceived by the narcissist as just due and not as earned due to time or experience invested. This type of entitlement becomes problematic when it is based on the individual's belief of superiority and not on realistic or genuine accomplishments. The good fortune is perceived as due them simply because of who they are (Fridley, 2009).

Exaggerated entitlement has been noted across many avenues from academics to athletics to employment. College professors have expressed concern with the problem of academic entitlement that is increasingly present throughout the campus community (Greenberger et al., 2008). Students are demonstrating the expectation of high grades for modest effort along with demanding attitudes towards teachers. Students are showing that they are entitled to certain grades, as opposed to being prepared to earn grades with diligence and hard work. The attitude that the students are paying tuition and therefore are entitled to an A is becoming increasingly widespread (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). In athletics, coaches are also noting that an increasing number of players and their parents express entitlement in terms of the idea that the athlete should play a certain position or "start as opposed to sit" (J. Frostick, personal communication,

January 15, 2019). There is far less expression of working and training to be allowed to play and more of an attitude of deserving to play without earning or deserving the privilege.

The sense of entitlement may be created at an early age in an athlete. Once a child displays a certain type of ability, they become vulnerable to a pervasive focus on their athletic worth as opposed to their overall well-being causing the birth of entitlement (Ro, n.d.). These are the young athletes in any sport that are first given then expect the best position or the starting role on the Little League, Pop Warner, or Junior Varsity team. The entitled attitude continues if the athlete is recruited at an early age by college scouts. Desmond Howard (2013), former NFL player and current ESPN analyst, blames this attitude in part on the coaches: “When you recruit them that hard, then you gas them up on who they are. You give that guy a sense of entitlement” (as cited in Ro, 2013, para. 10). Many coaches will diligently pursue a young athlete through repeated invitations to campus and training events, staying in constant contact, and following their high school and showcase games. This type of recruiting happens most often in the high revenue sports such as football and basketball, but can be seen in baseball as well, especially by the universities that are known to repeatedly attend Regionals and the College World Series.

This type of belief that success, special treatment, and material things are deserved is one of the key components of narcissism that is most damaging to others (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Through the belief the narcissist holds that they are entitled to certain treatment or things, others’ needs become less important with this type of self-focus. The higher the sense of entitlement, the greater the tendency for antisocial behavior (Brown et al., 2009). For example, on a sports team, it becomes irrelevant to the narcissist that another player may work harder, train harder and be just as capable or even more able to play a certain role. The entitled athlete focuses only on personal rewards. This attitude damages team relationships, team cohesiveness,

and ultimately team success (J. Frostick, personal communication, January 15, 2019).

Additionally, this entitlement, or unreasonable expectation of highly favorable treatment, may cause the narcissist to become inappropriately angered if the expected treatment is not forthcoming which is also very problematic (APA, 2000). On the baseball field, an athlete that expects to play a certain defensive position or bat in a certain place in the lineup and then refuses to play or shows his displeasure when that assignment is not forthcoming, either verbally or in overall demeanor, creates an unhealthy and uncomfortable atmosphere within the team.

Exhibitionism

The need to perform for the admiration of others, is also an aspect of narcissism. Narcissists are often exhibitionists as a way of flaunting their superiority or gaining admiration of others (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). A narcissist may purposefully act in an overly outgoing manner to gain attention. Through this type of spotlighting behavior, it becomes possible to increase positive self-view through gaining attention and appearing entertaining (Buss & Chiodo, 1991; Paulhus, 1998). Exhibitionism then provides a two-fold sense of gratification in that the individual receives self-enhancement as well as further establishing their superior position to others as more amusing or outgoing.

It has also been demonstrated that in order to impress others, an exhibitionist may engage in dishonest means to achieve their success (Brunell et al., 2011). The narcissist has high ambitions for their own achievement which can lead to cheating. The exhibitionism component of narcissism predicted greater cheating which can be explained by the lack of guilt (Brunell et al., 2011). This type of behavior establishes a connection to not only personal dishonestly but academic dishonestly as well. The body of literature exploring cheating exists primarily in the academic arena but due to the grounding of this behavior in a lack of guilt a narcissist exhibits,

cheating may well take place in other venues such as professionally, athletically and personally as well. There is a tendency to set aside moral standards to get ahead (Brunell et al., 2011; Twenge & Campbell, 2009; Weikel et al., 2010). An example may be seen in the words of the famous golfer, Tiger Woods, who famously stated when exposed for pursuing multiple relationships; “I convinced myself that normal rules didn’t apply. I never thought about who I was hurting” (Ro, 2013, para. 4). It is necessary to help student athletes recognize that these types of behaviors that may cause serious consequences to their college experience both athletically and academically. Weikel and colleagues (2010) reported the need for such involvement by counselors and student affairs professionals as students that report to counseling often do not identify the cause of their distress as stemming from the exhibition of narcissistic tendencies. What has not been explored in the body of research is the perception of narcissism through the lens of the student athlete or specifically the baseball player where the team structure may necessitate the need for high levels of self-esteem or narcissism to succeed in an individualized, spotlighted role.

Lack of Empathy

Finally, a narcissist exhibits lack of care and empathy for others. The narcissist uses relationships and people to maximize self-admiration (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Although at first a narcissist may be extremely popular and sought after, this attention is a short-lived experience as eventually peers and others see through the façade. Narcissism predicts high original likeability but later distaste (Twenge et al. 2008). Therefore, the true self-focus in relationships with others may provide original satisfaction but then leave the narcissist confused and lacking when the relationship is terminated by the other party. Narcissism then, might be seen as a tradeoff of positive and negative outcomes. In the short term, there are positive

outcomes for the narcissist who receives the required attention as well as others who are dazzled by the outgoing and confident personality. However, the negative outcomes for self and others appear in the long term (Twenge et al., 2008).

Failure to care about the feelings and opinions of others has obvious implications personally and professionally. Narcissists have a lower intensity for traits such as intimacy (Menon & Sharland, 2011) and may lack loving relationships. In the workplace, narcissistic behavior is also problematic. It is associated with risky decision-making, counterproductive behavior and white-collar crime (Brunell et al., 2011). Therefore, narcissism is a behavior that is concerning as an intrapersonal and interpersonal construct. Society is at risk when there is lack of empathy and respect for others (Fridley, 2009). Yet despite these problematic consequences, there has been little research to date that aids in furthering the ability to understand the student athletes' perceptions of the trait of narcissism, its role in sport, and how narcissism in any degree might impact their successful college experience.

Implications

First, it is important to distinguish between clinical narcissism and narcissism as a personality construct. Less than 1% of the population is clinically narcissistic (J.M. Watson, 2012). Narcissism as a personality trait exists on a continuum. At individual points on the continuum the behavior may weaken social interactions (Ryan et al., 2002). Social interactions are a very integral part of the college experience of the student athletic along with their athletic and academic goals. Achieving success in these areas is important for the student athlete and requires motivation and strategies that differ with each individual. However, a high level of narcissism can have unpleasant consequences in all aspects of the college experience. It can be demonstrated that some college students with elements of narcissism, such as grandiose sense of

self, often seek counseling after repeated affronts to their self-esteem (Weikel et al., 2010) but many others fail to recognize the consequences of their traits. It is important for university staff and faculty to become more aware of the needs of this unidentified group of students which may often include student athletes.

Given the potential consequences to personal lives, as well as to society, it is a puzzle as to why the trait of narcissism is seemingly so prevalent in today's younger generation. Twenge and Campbell (2009) have labeled the increase in narcissism as having reached epidemic proportions as its levels rose comparably with obesity, a well-publicized health concern, over a thirty-year span. As mentioned in Chapter 1, narcissism was born out of good intentions. The original intent was to instill self-esteem in children to allow them the confidence to achieve success (Boyd, 2014). However, the misconception arose that if a little is good, more must be better; self-esteem blossomed, and narcissism exploded. Twenge and Campbell (2009) reported that "one out of four college students agreed with the majority of the items on a standard measure of narcissistic traits" (p. 2). However, research has not explored narcissism within the realm of student athletes, specifically baseball players.

Narcissism Versus Self-Esteem

There is much confusion about the concept of narcissism and its connections to and differences to self-esteem. The classic view is that narcissism is a façade for low levels of self-esteem (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2010). It has been stated that low self-esteem is a cause of violence (Long, 1990; Schoenfeld, 1988) and due to inner self doubts individuals lash out in some manner as a way to gain esteem. Narcissists have the tendency to demonstrate unwarranted levels of anger, as previously stated, within the elements of grandiose sense of self and entitlement if their expected outcomes are not met. However, other studies have suggested that narcissists have high

levels of self-esteem. Baumeister et al., (1999) suggested that violence results from very positive views of self that are threatened by others. Narcissists care about being superior, even if they are not convinced that they have achieved that superiority. This may then explain the resulting behaviors of aggression; fear that the mask may be lifted. Consequently, either high or low levels of narcissism could be found together with either high or low self-esteem (Bushman & Baumeister, 1988).

Additionally, it is possible that narcissists have levels of self-esteem that is reactive (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2010). Often it can be seen that narcissistic behavior is dependent upon a certain situation or within a particular aspect of life. Therefore, the level of self-esteem is situationally unstable, changing its relationship to narcissism. More research is needed in this area to develop consistent data. Despite this uncertainty, the increase self-esteem movement is still perpetuated to excess, and narcissism is on the rise (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Within college sports, often the coach employs techniques and phrases that are designed to increase self-esteem and create success. What is undetermined is if this increased level of self-esteem or narcissism is necessary to be successful in the sport of baseball or if it is a detriment, not only to baseball, but to the overall college experience for the student athlete.

As stated, this rise in narcissistic behavior is thought to be an outgrowth of the movement in psychology and education to increase self-esteem to promote success (Brown et al., 2009). However, many feel that “self-esteem programs are a medicine with unknown effects” (Twenge et al., 2008, p. 925). It may be seen that in attempting to produce students and athletes that are successful, parents and coaches are over-praising, often for unwarranted accomplishment. In attempting to instill a sense of self-esteem beginning in childhood, some student athletes may have been praised to the point of being excessive. Repeatedly telling someone that they are

wonderful, successful, and great will undoubtedly make them believe that it is true. This belief leads the child or teen to become narcissistic, displaying entitlement, exhibitionism, and exploitative characteristics (Raskin & Terry, 1988). These elements of narcissism can be destructive and have dire consequences that appear over time. The consequences include loneliness, failure to take responsibility for actions or to accept consequences for decisions, and the inability to relate to others personally and professionally (Twenge & Campbell, 2009).

Another major consequence of narcissism is its impact on others who are subject to often unkind, uncaring treatment from the narcissist. With the rise in narcissism the self-esteem movement is in question as it is becoming widely believed that enhanced self-esteem is a consequence not a requirement of achievement (Tobin & Hwang, 1997). It behooves higher education administration and sports professionals therefore, to gain understanding into student athletes' individual achievement goal orientation in relation to traits such as narcissism to better aid the student athletes' motivations in achieving their goals.

Ego Orientation and Narcissism

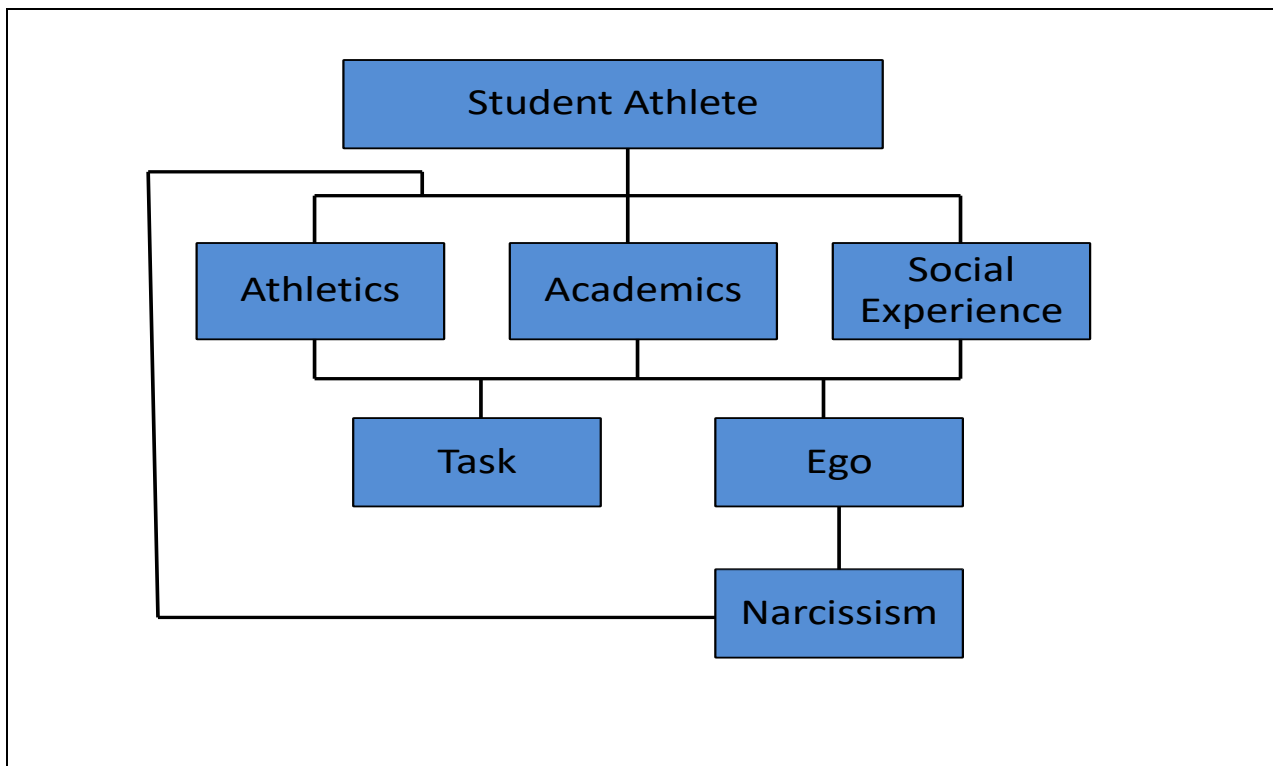
To date few studies have investigated the beliefs about causes of success in sports (Lochbaum & Roberts, 1993). This gap in the literature creates a void as it becomes increasingly difficult for coaches, counselors, and administration to guide the student athlete through the challenges of competitive athletics and academics. This study addressed the gap by examining achievement goal orientation in college student athletes who play baseball. This research sought to determine the perception of how task and ego orientation and the trait of narcissism may contribute either positively or negatively to student athletes in determining a successful college experience both academically and athletically.

Although little research has been done on the relationship between narcissism and ego orientation, it has been found that narcissism shares more of a relationship with ego orientation than with task orientation (J.M. Watson, 2012). This study also sought to further understand the perception of the relationship between narcissism and ego orientation in student athletes in NCAA baseball programs.

Figure 1 shows the components of the construct and the way in which those components might connect.

Figure 1

Components of the Student Athlete College Experience



The student athlete can be seen to have three main components within their college experience: academics, athletics, and the social experience. Connected to these three components are the individual's achievement goal orientation of task or ego. Narcissism also is connected to

the three components of the student athlete's college experience, academics, athletics and social. What remains unknown is the degree to which these connections are present in each component as it is expected to vary between components and individuals, potentially based on their player position and/or NCAA division. This study will not explore the goal orientations within the social experience component but note that it is an area in need of further study.

Chapter Summary

Student athletes are a unique group within the realm of higher education. They are foremost students with all the challenges of rigorous academics, social pressures and developmental changes. Additionally, they face preconceived notions about their ability to be successful, both academically and athletically, and the struggle to meet, balance, and prioritize the high expectations of coaches, parents, fans, and themselves. Student athletes perceive their success through the lens of their individual achievement goal orientation of either task orientation, where understanding is prioritized, or ego orientation, in which superiority is paramount (Duda, 1989; Nicholls, 1989). As a student athletes' achievement goal orientation is influenced by personal beliefs, traits, and characteristics (J.M. Watson, 2012), it is crucial for student affairs personnel, faculty, administration, and sports staff to have a clear understanding of how those individual traits may contribute to or hinder the student athlete's success. This understanding might be obtained through creating the opportunity to allow student athletes to share their perceptions of their traits and explore their achievement goal orientation so that they can bring to light the ways in which their personal traits might have aided or hampered their success in their sport and in their overall college experience. Using phenomenology, this study explored individual baseball player's perspectives through their in-depth reflections to gain understanding of their interpretations of the trait of narcissism and task and ego orientation

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to explore how student athletes who play baseball perceive that their own narcissism and ego orientation influences their college experience. As well, data analysis looked for patterns by player position, and sought to understand what the players' perceptions of being student athletes had on their college experience. This chapter provides a description of the methodology for the study. The format of this chapter includes the following sections: the research questions, the study design, the criteria for participant selection, the procedures for data collection, and the procedures for data analysis. The final section includes limitations/delimitations of the study.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

1. How do student athletes playing baseball perceive their own narcissism and ego orientation and the influence of these traits on their college experience?
 - a. What challenges or successes do these students attribute to possessing these traits?
2. Do patterns emerge with respect to high levels of the trait of narcissism and ego orientation that connect to the baseball player's field position?
3. What type of connection exists for players that score above the mean score on the NPI-40 and their ego orientation or a task orientation?

Research Design

This study employed phenomenology as the research methodology. Creswell (1998) stated that in phenomenology, “researchers search for essentials, invariant structure (or essence) or the central underlying meaning of the experience and emphasize the intentionality of consciousness where experiences contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on memory, image and meaning” (p. 52). This approach focuses on how people see, describe, and understand or make meaning of a certain phenomenon or experience. The method pursues a deeper understanding of the experience (Patton, 2002). The participants in this type of study are individuals that have lived the phenomenon that is being explored.

Rationale

To understand the phenomena of narcissism and task and ego orientation in student athletes, phenomenology is the preferred methodology due to the opportunity it provides to allow for exploring perceptions of the lived experience. Van Manen (2014) stated that the difference between phenomenological research and other types of research is that phenomenology looks at the world at face value, as it is experienced, before the experience is thought about or theorized. This vantage point provides a pure, genuine, pre-reflective perspective on an experience and not a conceptualized evaluation. Different perspectives from study participants will be evident in their interpretations of the lived experience of being a college athlete, as the participants will be members of different teams in different divisions, all reflecting on the same phenomenon from their individual perspectives of effects on themselves and their experiences.

The study is qualitative in that individual perspectives are explored through in-depth reflections. Qualitative research offers the opportunity to look for patterns but does not reduce interpretations to a number (Glesne, 2011). Qualitative research seeks to gain understanding and

interpretation of phenomena. This study seeks to gain knowledge of the experiences of student athletes playing baseball and their interpretations of the trait of narcissism and task and ego orientation.

Method

Key to this method is that participants are willing to share their emotions, thoughts, and perspectives under study. The participants in this study described their experiences, challenges and goals both athletically in baseball and academically in college classes. They reflected on the impact of their traits and orientation on their successful college experience.

This reflection process is an important concept within phenomenology. The philosopher Merleau-Ponty (1962) believed that phenomenology should also reflect on what occurs prior to the reflection, namely the lived experience. Therefore, for research to be considered phenomenological, you must begin with the lived experience. Merleau-Ponty (1962) also felt that perception was the original human relation to the world but perception occurred at a preconscious level. In other words, “we do not know what we see” (van Manen, 2014, p. 128). This phenomenological tradition was appropriate for this study because the participants reflected upon traits and orientations that they might have been unaware of and examined how the practices of these phenomena may have played a role in their daily lives both athletically and academically. The participants reflected on how they perceived that their lived experiences were impacted by these phenomena that they did not necessarily recognize except at a preconscious level.

Theory

Phenomenologists distrust theory since the idea of phenomenology is to question the assumption of theory (van Manen, 2014). However, all theory must start from a human

experience at some point, so theory may offer insights for phenomenology in certain areas. Van Manen (2014) suggested that “rather than using theory as a scaffold for building interpretive structure, phenomenology uses theory as a foil for examining what it glosses,” (p. 66).

Phenomenology might use theory when exploring a human phenomenon or event to further the understanding of the phenomena at the point where the theory and the phenomena intersect (van Manen, 2014). In this research study, an examination using theory about achievement goal orientation and its components of task and ego was employed at the juncture of the either task or ego orientation and the personality trait of narcissism.

The conceptual framework for this study used achievement goal theory (Duda, 1989; Nicholls, 1989). This is a motivational theory that stems from educational psychology and stresses that motivation should be viewed in terms of individual traits and beliefs (Harwood & Biddle, 2002). The focus on individual perspectives here aligns well with the core elements of phenomenology too. Goal orientation emerges from each individual’s desire to be successful and is determined by how they think about or define success. In the achievement area of sports, two goal orientations are evident: task orientation and ego orientation (Duda, 1989). Task-oriented student athletes believe ability equals effort and are satisfied if they have performed a task where they made personal improvements (Cervello et al., 2007). Ego-oriented student athletes instead judge their ability in relation to others and have to demonstrate superior ability or outperform others to feel satisfied.

Participants

The participants in this study were student athletes listed on the baseball roster for their university. I intended for two universities’ teams to participate in the study, one with a Division I program and one university with a Division III program. The selection of participants playing at

two different division levels was to allow exploration of participants' perceptions in the academic and athletic experiences that may emerge for students in the various NCAA Divisions. For example, students that may be receiving a partial to full athletic scholarship and considering a professional sports career, therefore Division I, versus non-athletic scholarship student athletes, such as Division III, where athletic scholarships are not given. Perceptions of higher levels of pressure and public expectations of success may differ between the Division I and Division III levels. Division I universities have more players drafted to professional sports, whereas Division III institutions place highest priority on the educational experience of the student athlete (NCAA, 2017). This contrasting tradition between the NCAA divisions then, was intended to allow the study to explore perceptions of student athletes rooted in the traditional athletic and academic pathways relative to the priorities of their university division.

The intention was to have two teams that had qualified within the last five years for a berth in the end of the season NCAA playoffs in their respective division. Each NCAA baseball division has a yearly championship series. Participation in this series is an honor which comes through a rigorous qualification process. For the Division I university that championship series would be participating in The College World Series with the final round of games held yearly in Omaha. The process begins with 64 teams, chosen by the NCAA based on their seasons' record, to participate in Regional competition. The 16 winners then move on to Super Regionals, with the winning eight teams moving on to Omaha for the College World Series finals. For the Division III teams, the process is similar. Teams win a bid that comes with their conference championship. These 56 teams play an initial round at eight regional sites. The eight regional champions advance to the Division III Baseball Championship tournament held yearly in Appleton, Wisconsin (NCAA, 2011).

However, a workable connection was unable to be established with a Division III team due to additional procedures and restrictions mandated due to a national pandemic. Several attempts were made to secure a Division III team for participation in this study. First, by working with a local coach, contact was established with a Division III coach who expressed caution due to COVID, but after discussions on procedures, agreed, but then did not maintain contact through the scheduling process for the surveys. Next, using alumni from within William & Mary, three Division III coaches were approached with access to the team being denied due to first, lack of time, second, restrictions due to COVID, and third, lack of interest. As procedures for COVID began to be loosened over the next year, the next attempt at obtaining a team was through mass emailing of statewide Division III coaches of teams that met the criteria for the study. Ten attempts yielded four responses, two of which were declines, one replied with a general interest at a future time, and the third expressed willingness to participate. The surveys were sent, and no further contact was ever received from the coach despite email attempts.

A final gatekeeper within the athletic department at William & Mary reached out to a contact in an out-of-state institution on behalf of the study. However, the athletic director declined to allow the team to participate. Two other contacts provided from the same gatekeeper were Division III institutions that I had already been in contact with, and both had declined. This final series of events led to the conclusion that the study would have to proceed with only the data from the Division I institution.

Ultimately, the team that participated in the study was a Division I team that had qualified for Regional competition within the last 5 years. The recognition that comes with the success of participating in the end of the year championship series in Division I is enormous, earning the institution's baseball program substantial recognition and acknowledgement as well

as top high school recruits for the next several years (J. Frostick, personal communication, January 2018). The coach for the team was contacted through a gatekeeper. The personal email request (Appendix A) was not needed for this team as a direct contact to the teams' academic advisor was provided.

Once the team was identified and indicated willingness to participate in the study, participants were selected in a two-stage process. First, the entire team was asked to participate in two short questionnaires, the Narcissism Personality Inventory (NPI-40) and the Task Ego Orientation in Sports Questionnaire (TEOSQ). The second process in participant selection includes investigating the NPI-40 scores in rank order and identifying each players' achievement orientation. Originally the intent was to ask the five highest NPI-40 student athletes to participate. However, the identification of the student athletes' orientation altered the interview selection process. Five participants from the team were identified to interview. Two of these participants had the high end NPI-40 scores, one participant identified as both task and ego orientation equally, and two participants were the only student athletes to identify as ego-oriented. These players shared their reflections on their perceptions of the trait of narcissism and achievement goal orientation of either task or ego, and the college experience as a student athlete through the interview process.

Each team member that participated in the interview process, signed a consent form confirming their age to above 18 and indicated their willingness to participate in an interview (Appendix B).

Data Collection

The data collection occurred in two phases: survey and interview. In Phase 1, the participant selection phase, participants completed two surveys, the NPI-40 and the TEOSQ. The

NPI-40 consists of a questionnaire of forty paired statements that are used to determine the level of the personality trait of narcissism (Raskin & Terry, 1988). As noted in the participant selection section above, participants from the university baseball team were asked to complete the NPI-40 (Appendix C). The 40 pairs of statements ask the participant to choose the one that they feel describes them most closely. Pairs of statements include: “when people compliment me I sometimes get embarrassed” vs. “I know I am good because everybody keeps telling me so” and “I prefer to blend in with the crowd” vs. “I like to be the center of attention.” The NPI-40 is the most widely used measure of the construct of narcissism (Ames et al., 2005). The NPI-40 was administered in person in hard copy format and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The scoring helped identify the five participants with high levels of narcissism for follow-up interviews.

Also in Phase 1, participants completed the TEOSQ (Appendix D). This instrument consists of a main prompt, “I feel most successful in sport when...” and 13 statements to be rated from 1 to 5 on how strongly the player agrees or disagrees. Examples of the statements include: “others cannot do as well as me,” and “a skill I learn feels really right.” Scores demonstrate if the player is task or ego oriented (Duda, 1989). This instrument is important because both task and ego orientation require recognition of the orientation in order to aid in the creation of any needed strategies to complement or supplement the student athletes’ way of looking at and achieving success. In this study, identifying players’ individual orientation in the participant selection process allowed for the exploration of task and ego orientation and aided in understanding of the phenomena and its related challenges. The TEOSQ took approximately five minutes to complete and was administered in person in hard copy format. These data helped build a portrait of the players on the selected team.

Phase two of data collection was the interview process. Interviewing the student athletes that scored higher on the NPI-40 than others would result in participants who are higher on the continuum for the trait of narcissism and allow for the exploration of the trait of narcissism relative to either task or ego orientation. The mean score on the NPI-40 reported in Raskin and Terry's (1988) study was 15, and celebrities scored 18, thus I anticipated players with higher scores will be closer to 18. Scores from the participants ranged from 11 to 31. However, only two participants identified as ego-oriented and neither were on the higher end of the NPI-40 scores.

Nonprobability sampling was used in this qualitative study. This form of participant selection assumes that the likelihood of a person being selected is unknown and therefore it is also unknown whether the sample represents the population (Blackstone, 2012). This study employed a purposive sample as I have a particular perspective to examine, and this required finding participants who cover that perspective (Patton, 2002). Purposive samples are often used when the participants need to meet a certain criterion. In this study the criteria were baseball players on a team that has competed in the championship for the division within the last 5 years for Phase 1, then baseball players that score on the higher end on the NPI-40, for Phase 2, the interview phase.

Interview participants engaged in an interview of approximately 30 minutes. The interview began with a description of the study and its procedures. The in-depth interview helped "facilitate an interaction which permits participants to tell their own stories in their own words," (Smith et al., 2009, p. 57). It is important that the interview included a discussion as opposed to a question-and-answer session. Even in this discussion format however, the interviewer should engage predominantly in an active listening aspect as the subject expert truly remains the

participant (Smith et al., 2009). I ensured active listening by asking for clarification, repetition, and rephrasing to check for understanding.

Prior to the interview, I created an interview plan that included questions that guided the interview process (Appendix E). These questions were carefully devised to shape and guide the interview. The schedule was designed in advance in order to create thoughtful questions and anticipate any concerns or awkwardness that may arise. It was important that the agenda was loose and allowed for follow-up on matters that were not necessarily on the schedule. Smith and colleagues (2009) revealed that “unexpected turns are often the most valuable aspects” (p. 58). Throughout the interview I periodically summarized and rephrased the participant’s comments and thoughts to check for accuracy in interpretation by the researcher.

Notes and a recording of the interview occurred. Expansion of the notes took place directly upon completion of the interview time and consisted of in-depth thoughts, perceptions and further details including behavior patterns, gestures, reactions, and perceived attitudes to be used in later analysis.

The participant selection and the following section below of data analysis was informed in part by a pilot study completed with high school baseball players. This pilot looked at narcissism and task and ego orientation and the perceptions of these phenomena on the future goals of the players. The results of the pilot study informed the research design in this study. I also determined the need to explore both task and ego orientation in relation to the trait of narcissism following the results of the pilot, therefore, both the NPI-40 and the TEOSQ were included in the participant selection for the interview phase. Additionally, the pilot study informed the data analysis section below in that the discussion with the participants in the pilot

demonstrated the need for unstructured, loose interview questions in order to allow for follow-up conversation to gain an understanding of the phenomena.

Data Analysis

Van Manen (2014) stated that phenomenology means descriptive and interpretative phenomenology as both elements are present in phenomenological research and that “all or much of phenomenology has hermeneutic (interpretive) elements” (p. 26). Therefore, the data analysis in this study used an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA is “concerned with the detailed examination of personal lived experience, the meaning of experience to participants, and how participants make sense of that experience” (Smith, 2011, p. 9). IPA has three theoretical principals. First, the main priority is placed on how the participants perceive their experience. Second, each participants’ experience should be examined individually then themes that respond to the research question are thereby discovered (Eatough & Smith, 2008). Third, IPA is considered in the interpretative tradition. Within this interpretative or hermeneutic tradition is the concept of double hermeneutics, where there may be seen two distinct layers of interpretations. In the first layer the participants try to make meaning of the experience, followed by the second layer in which the researcher makes her own interpretation (Smith et al., 2009).

As stated in the data collection section above, data collection involved two phases: survey and interview. The survey phase, which involved the NPI-40 and the TEOSQ, was intended purely for participant selection. However, due to the unexpected findings and large number of participants that were found to be task-oriented, regardless of NPI-40 score, these results will be examined. The interview phase of data collection is paramount to the data analysis. Interviews were audio recorded then transcribed verbatim. Researcher written summaries of the interviews were shared with the participants requesting their clarification and correction. The combined

reflections and interpretations of all the participants will produce common themes that can be built upon to understand the phenomenon.

Coding and Themes

Analysis of themes is a complex process requiring extensive time and introspection. Often theme analysis is done by counting of words or coding of terms or even by computer program. However, van Manen (2014) offers that understanding the thematic meaning of a phenomenon or lived experience cannot be done by numbers or rules. Instead, it requires a “seeing” of the meaning. This visualization comes from reading and reflecting on the transcript. IPA recommends “immersing oneself in the data” through multiple readings (Smith et al., 2009, p. 82). Listening to the audio recording while reading the transcript is suggested to ensure that the participant becomes the focus of the analysis. It is also recommended to record or keep a journal of personal observations and recollections of the interview and then set this aside to focus entirely on the participants’ ideas. These observations can later be reevaluated and used to enrich understanding of the phenomena (Smith et al., 2009) while first focusing on the participants’ perceptions through the text. The participants’ text yielded a plethora of information from the student athletes that shared personal recollections and in-depth reflections. These ideas were further expanded upon based on my journal notes which enhanced the overall impression and underlying ideas of the text.

The text should be read first in a holistic approach, attending to the text as a whole, then with a selective approach, underlining or highlighting essential phrases, and looking to “capture phenomenological meanings in thematic expressions or reflective descriptive-interpretative paragraphs” (van Manen, 2014, p. 320). Finally, the text should be examined with a detailed reading approach in which every sentence or sentence cluster is examined to discover what it

might reveal about the phenomenon. Through the three reading approaches the thematic expressions and phrases that capture the meaning of the experience is identified (van Manen, 2014).

IPA views analysis in steps that embellish the holistic, selective, and detailed readings identified by van Manen (2014). Step one involves reading and re-reading the transcript from the interview to enter “a phase of active engagement in the data” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 82). The repeated readings allow for understanding of how the narratives may connect the interview pieces and highlight the richer, detailed sections as well as the contradictions that may be present in the text. The second step examines the content and language through initial noting. In this step it is important to maintain an open mind and identify anything of interest. Throughout this step of initial noting the goal is to produce a set of notes and comments on the data (Jeong & Othman, 2016). There are no rules that govern what is to be commented upon or how to divide the text into units of meaning. Instead, through this free analysis, a growing understanding of ways in which the participant thinks about and understands an issue and makes meaning of things that matter to or concern them, begins to emerge (Smith et al., 2009). It may be helpful to identify the comments by descriptive, linguistic and conceptual types of comments and highlight each by a different color or font although this way of exploratory commenting is not intended to be prescriptive (Smith et al., 2009).

The third step of analysis in IPA is developing emergent themes. At this stage the focus is centered on the connections and relationships between the exploratory notes of the second stage. The themes are often expressed as phrases that reflect the words and thoughts of the participant as well as the analysts’ interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). Step 4 is searching for connections across emergent themes. This step, similar to Step 2, is not prescriptive and encourages

innovation. Possible ways of looking for patterns in emergent themes might include abstraction, polarization, contextualization, numeration, and function (Smith et al., 2009). Organizing themes in more than one way may be helpful along with a graphic representation of the emergent themes through the creation of a table or other figure. Step 5 is moving to the next case. Step 6 involves looking for patterns across the cases where it may be seen that “themes which are particular to an individual case also represents instances of higher order concepts which the cases therefore share” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 101). The results of this process may also be best shown through a table or graphic showing the connection for the group as a whole.

Trustworthiness

The element of trustworthiness is important to evaluate the worth of a research study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There are four criteria identified to establish trustworthiness that include: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is confidence in the truth of the findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider ensuring credibility to be one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. Shenton (2004) offers provisions to promote credibility which include: the adoption of established qualitative methods, familiarity with the culture of the participants, iterative questioning, reflective commentary by the researcher, and member checks. These can be insured through the consciousness of the researcher throughout the process along with the vastness and richness of the information collected. Transferability shows that the findings may be applied in other contexts. Qualitative research studies usually are specific to small numbers of participants and environments making the findings applicable to other situations or populations difficult (Shenton, 2004). However, it becomes the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that contextual information is provided to allow a transfer to similar situations (Firestone, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1984). Dependability

requires that the findings are consistent and repeatable. Shenton (2004) offers that ensuring that the processes in the study are reported in detail will demonstrate dependability. Confirmability is the extent the findings are shaped by the participants and not by researcher bias. Stating reasons for approaches and methods, admitting to weaknesses in techniques, and discussing theories not borne out by data, will aid in informing confirmability (Shenton, 2004). A summary of the results of the study was made available to all participants via email or postal service mail at their preferred request upon completion of the study.

Researcher Perception and Assumptions

An interest in student athletes stems from my involvement as a parent of highly competitive athletes. Having spent many hours throughout many years watching high-level tournaments in both baseball and soccer, observing players, parents, and coaches, and attending parent meetings by NCAA and professional coaches, I obtained a definite perspective of the challenges and obstacles in the path of a student athlete first reaching and then maintaining status at the NCAA level. Based on my experience in this role an assumption I made was that to be successful, coaches and parents taught and encouraged their players to have high self-esteem, and that an outcome of this activity often resulted in what appeared to be narcissistic behavior. I assumed then that the more successful the player, the higher the degree of the trait of narcissism. After completing a pilot study however, my assumptions were questioned.

The pilot study was completed with high school senior baseball players that were actively playing baseball at the high school level and two of the three players also played on a showcase team. A showcase team is a team designed to compete nationally at college showcase tournaments in order to be seen by college recruiters and coaches. The results of the pilot study showed that the less experienced player, the player that had never been on a travel or showcase

team and was also the weakest player in terms of statistics, scored the highest on the NPI-40 and was ego orientated. The most successful player in terms of both stats and experience in travel and showcase baseball, scored the lowest on the NPI-40 and was task-oriented. This left me questioning both my assumptions and the literature on narcissism and task and ego orientation. Since this pilot occurred at the high school level, it left unanswered how narcissism and ego orientation might differ for college athletes. These college athletes represent a different type of player given their current status in Division I and Division III programs where they face numerous challenges. The concept of bridling (Dahlberg et al., 2009) to acknowledge the role that previous ideas and knowledge play in the research process, was employed in the interview and data analysis process.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study is delimited to a single institution. The only institution at which I was able to gather data was a Division I school with a highly competitive baseball team. This study was also delimited to student athletes that were currently on the active playing roster for the university. At the selected institution, a total of 44 players were on the roster, of which 20 agreed to participate. A nonprobability purposive sample allowed for the fact that a researcher has a perspective to examine and finds participants that cover that perspective (Blackstone, 2012). Purposive samples are often used when the participants need to meet a certain criterion. In this study the criteria are baseball players on a college roster, then baseball players that score on the higher end on the NPI-40.

The generalizability of the findings is lessened due to purposive sampling, as qualitative researchers rarely use random sampling, which may be seen as a limitation (Merriam, 1995). Yet, the depth of information is present through the exploration of the essence of the

phenomenon. Therefore, a limitation of this research is that it may not be generalizable to all Division I student athletes. Other limitations include the influence of coaches, support systems for student athletes within the universities, and the overall individual nature of the campus (Hoover, 2012). The experiences of the players occur within a context and culture, both of which can influence the perceptions of the players in how they understand their dual roles as athlete and student. This research did not focus on these influencing factors but acknowledges their existence as a limitation. When relevant, players' comments on their experiences during COVID are noted.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore how student athletes playing baseball perceive that their own narcissism and ego orientation influences their college experience. Data analysis looked for patterns by player position and sought to understand what the players' perceptions of being student athletes have on their college experience. This chapter provided a description of the phenomenological processes, participant selection, and the IPA that will be used in this study. The following chapter reports the findings from this study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the summary statistics from the instruments used in Phase 1 of data collection and the emerging themes that were brought to light during Phase 2 in the interview portion of the data collection process. Because of unforeseen complications due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, there was limited access to student athletes when data collection began in the spring of 2020. Thus, the results of the study only include student athletes from a Division I program. First, this chapter presents a summary of the data from the two instruments the Division I athletes completed. This overview helps situate better the interviews conducted at the site institution. Next, the chapter contains a short description of the case site to provide additional context for the interviews. Finally, this chapter contains key findings from in-depth interviews with five student athletes on the baseball roster of a successful baseball program. For the purpose of this study, recall that a successful program is defined as a program that has qualified within the last 5 years, for a berth in the end of the season NCAA playoffs to include either the final eight or the Regional or Super Regional rounds.

There are several major themes that emerged from the study which include: (a) defining success, (b) personal performance priority, (c) extrinsic motivation. These findings allow for an opportunity to better understand the experiences of student athletes and their interpretations of the trait of narcissism and task and ego orientation. In particular, a focus centers on the interpretations these student athletes have about narcissism and how it relates to task and ego orientation. When possible, the influence of player position and class year is presented.

Survey Findings

Twenty participants from a Division I baseball team completed both the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-40) and the Task Ego Orientation Sports Questionnaire (TEOSQ). Participants were 10 freshman, one sophomore, two juniors, six seniors, and one fifth-year student.

NPI-40

Narcissism as a personality trait can be observed on a continuum with some individuals displaying occasional moments of this trait and others having repeated displays of narcissism (Weikel et al., 2010). At individual points on the continuum the behavior may weaken social interactions (Ryan et al., 2002). The NPI-40 was developed after an analysis of the original NPI developed in 1979 by Raskin and Terry and was determined to accurately demonstrate the themes of the construct. Based on their sample of 1,018 students, the results mean score was 15.55 (Raskin & Terry, 1998). According to Pinsky and Young (2009) their study of US celebrities showed a mean score of 17.8 compared to US adults to have a mean score of 15.3. This backdrop provides a relative measure for the student athlete scores on the NPI-40 presented here.

The NPI-40 consists of a questionnaire of 40 paired statements that are used to determine the level of the personality trait of narcissism (Raskin & Terry, 1988). The 20 participating student athletes in this study had scores that ranged from 31 out of 40 as a high to 11 as a low, with the mean score being 19. This mean score is higher than that reported by Raskin and Terry (1988) in their study of college students and also higher than the mean score of US adults and even of US celebrities. The score on the NPI-40 that occurred most frequently for the participants was 17 ($N = 5$). Table 1 below shows the range of scores by class year.

Table 1*Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-40) Scores of Student Athletes From Highest to Lowest*

Class Year	NPI-40 Score
Freshman	31
Senior	27
Freshman	24
Freshman (2)	22
Freshman (3)	20
Senior (2)	19
Freshman (2)	17
Sophomore	17
Junior	17
Senior	17
5th year	16
Freshman	15
Junior	15
Senior	12
Senior	11

From the 20 participating student athletes, the highest score was 31 followed by the second highest score of 27. Of the 20 participating student athletes, the lowest NPI-40 score was 11. The freshmen had a mean score of 20.8, the sophomore student score was 17, the two juniors had a mean score of 16, and the six seniors had a mean score of 17.5. The fifth-year student had

a score of 16. The freshmen student athletes scored higher in terms of narcissism ($M = 20.8$) relative to the other half of the team ($M = 17$).

TEOSQ

Achievement goal orientation shapes a student athlete's perspective when confronting the goals of athletic and academic success (Duda, 1989). An orientation can either be task or ego, with a task-oriented definition of success prioritizing learning and personal growth, and an ego-oriented definition of success focusing on being superior and seeking public perception.

The TEOSQ is designed to demonstrate if the player is task or ego oriented (Duda, 1989). It consists of a main prompt and 13 statements to be rated on how strongly the player agrees or disagrees, with 1 being *strongly disagree* and 5 being *strongly agree*. The key provided for the TEOSQ states the number of the question and its category as task or ego. The results are tabulated by adding the points given to the questions in the task category and the questions in the ego category. The higher score shows the orientation as either task or ego. The results obtained from the 20 participating student athletes from a Division I baseball team showed that two of the student athletes were ego oriented. One student athlete scored equally for task and ego orientation. One student did not finish the survey and his results were incomplete. Task orientation was found for 16 of the student athletes. Table 2 below shows the results of the TEOSQ participants grouped by orientation.

Table 2*Task Ego Orientation in Sports Questionnaire (TEOSQ) of Student Athletes by Orientation*

Class Year	TEOSQ
Junior	Ego
Senior	Ego
Freshman	Equal
Freshman	Incomplete
Freshman (8)	Task
Sophomore	Task
Junior	Task
Senior (5)	Task
5 th year	Task

The majority of the student athletes were task-oriented regardless of class year. Task orientation is also prevalent regardless of NPI-40 score. This shows that there does not appear to be a relationship between the levels of narcissism a student athlete may possess and their ego orientation.

Table 3 shows the survey results for both the NPI-40 and the TEOSQ and the student athletes' class as freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or fifth-year as well as the student athletes' player position on the baseball field. This information is provided for the 20 student athletes from the Division I baseball team that participated in the study. The results are sorted by NPI-40 score from highest to lowest.

Table 3*Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-40) Scores with Task Ego Orientation in Sports**Questionnaire (TEOSQ) Results of Student Athletes from Highest to Lowest*

Class Year	NPI-40	TEOSQ	Position
Freshman	31	Task	Short stop
Senior	27	Task	Catcher
Freshman	24	Task	Utility
Freshman	22	Equal	Infield
Freshman	22	Task	Outfield
Freshman	20	Task	Infield
Freshman	20	Task	Pitcher
Freshman	20	Task	Pitcher
Senior	19	Task	First base
Senior	19	Task	Pitcher
Freshman	17	Task	Outfield
Junior	17	Ego	Catcher
Senior	17	Task	Short stop
Freshman	17	Incomplete	Catcher
Sophomore	17	Task	Outfield
5 th year	16	Task	Outfield
Freshman	15	Task	Pitcher
Junior	15	Task	Outfield
Senior	12	Ego	Pitcher
Senior	11	Task	Outfield

The highest scores on the NPI-40 showed that the student athletes were task-oriented. The freshmen student athletes did have higher NPI-40 scores than the other class years. Out of the 20 participants, only two were ego-oriented and those two student athletes had lower end NPI-40 scores with one at 12 and the other at 17. Player position did not play a role in the NPI-

40 score. However, the two participants that were ego-oriented were a pitcher and a catcher; both positions are spotlighted roles on a baseball team.

Summary

The interview participants were selected from the 20 student athletes that participated in the survey phase. The results of the surveys showed that only two of the student athletes identified as ego-oriented. Neither of these two student athletes had NPI-40 scores that were at the higher end of the data collected from the participants. These student athletes instead had NPI-40 scores of 17 and 12. The lowest score on the NPI-40 from the 20 student athletes that completed the survey was 11.

The student athletes with the higher end NPI-40 scores of 31, 27, and 24, all identified as task-oriented. This led to questions about the assumptions on the relationship between narcissism and ego orientation. It had previously been found that narcissism shares more of a relationship with ego orientation than with task orientation (J.M. Watson, 2012). To fully explore these unexpected results, the interview participants who were chosen from the original 20 participants, included the two student athletes that scored the highest on the NPI-40, the two student athletes who identified as ego-oriented and the one student athlete that was showed an equal orientation of both task and ego.

Case Description

The institution used in this study is a large university with an enrollment over 20,000 students. The university enrolls mostly undergraduate students that pursue bachelor's degrees in more than 100 fields. The university was ranked in the top tier of higher education intuitions by U.S. News & World Report ("Old Dominion University," 2022) and admissions is selective. The demographics of the student body show predominantly white American (47%) followed by

African American (29%). More than 75% of freshmen live on campus while the same percent of upper classmen live off campus. Over the past 20 years the university has grown considerably with important improvements in housing, sports facilities, and educational venues. The campus is in an urban setting located in a major commerce center and has deep-rooted associations and commitments with the community. The city's population numbers well over 200,000 and is very diverse.

The university plays in Division I sports. The baseball team has won more than 5 conference titles and has participated in the NCAA College World Series several times in the 1980's, 1990's and 2000's, but has never won the College World Series.

Student Athlete Profiles

Interviews occurred with five student athletes. These participants are identified by randomly assigned letters in the findings. Table 4 shows the participant, the class/year in college, player position, and NPI-40 and TEOSQ results.

Table 4

Interview Participants and Corresponding Information with Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-40) and Task Ego Orientation in Sports Questionnaire (TEOSQ)

Participant	Class Year	Position	NPI-40	TEOSQ
A	Senior	Pitcher	27	task
B	Freshman	Infield	22	equal
C	Freshman	3rd base	31	task
D	Junior	Catcher	17	ego
E	Senior	Pitcher	12	ego

Of the student athletes interviewed, two were ego-oriented with lower end NPI-40 scores. One student athlete had an equal task and ego orientation and was towards the higher end of the NPI-40 scores. The two highest NPI-40 scores belonged to student athletes who were task-oriented.

Participant A was a senior and was a catcher on the team. He began playing baseball starting at age 6 in the recreational league beginning with T-ball and then he joined a travel ball team at age 8. At age 13 he joined a club team. According to Participant A this team's "main goal is to prepare you for the next level. They do recruiting...help you with the recruiting process." However, when he was not getting any interest from colleges, he and his family contacted a friend who was a professional scout for assistance. "He did videos of me and sent them out to people he had connections with and that is how I ultimately ended up getting an offer and going to play." Participant A originally attended a different Division I school and

transferred to his current institution after his sophomore year, aided by a friend he met at a training camp. Participant A stated,

I was training down in Florida and one of the players on our team right now was training there and he saw me, and we were talking and he said “Do you still need a place to play? I can talk to my coach.” Then the next day his coach called me and that’s how we got the ball rolling to come.

Participant A played a total of 2 years on the Division I team that was the site of this research.

Participant B was a freshman and was an infielder who primarily played second base but also was a shortstop. He began playing baseball in his local Little League at age 4. He played in that league until age 10 then moved to travel ball. He stated. “I made the All-Star Game and my dad really thought that I was becoming much better than the Little League kids. So, after the All Star game he decided to put me into travel ball.” Participant B moved to several travel teams during his teenage years guided by his father. Participant B said,

But my dad realized that up until the age 13, we should probably move to a better program because at this point in my life I was young but I always knew that I wanted to play college baseball and hopefully get the opportunity to play above that too. So I changed to a better program and played there until I was say 15. So after that I joined another program which was really good.

Beginning in his sophomore year of high school, scouts began looking at Participant B for college recruitment. He stated, “And then at this point I was sort of being looked at by schools like Seton Hall, Georgetown, and Yale.” Recall that Participant B had a NPI-40 score of 22 and was equally task and ego-oriented. However, he was not recruited despite attending camps at several schools. He commented, “I would go to the camps and things like that they

invited me to because they were looking at me heavily, but as soon as I'd get there, I'd underperform." His underperformance in these high-stake recruiting events resulted in no offers to play baseball at the college level.

To get a commitment to play baseball at a college, his high school coach helped him by choosing some camps for him to attend and contacting the coaches that would attend the camps. He felt he continued to underperform at these camps that were often very large with 50 or more players in attendance. However, when he attended the camp at his current university, he had a different attitude. Participant B stated, "When I came here, I honestly didn't want to come here, so I just played like who cares." The college coach called him in at the end of the camp.

According to Participant B,

They said they had no money to give me, but they wanted me to be a walk-on on the team and I'd get every chance to play. He just convinced me on why I should come here, and that sold me right away because once I got on campus, I thought this wasn't bad whatsoever. I could see myself being here. And I saw how much the baseball program means to them and how much of a family environment here and I told myself this was where I wanted to come.

Participant B's journey highlights the varied pathways of the participants in this study.

Participant C was a freshman and played third base. He began playing T-ball at a young age and then played travel ball with five different organizations. His recruiting journey began early. According to Participant C, "My freshman year of high school I started getting recruited from travel tournaments down in Florida and that's how I got recruited here." Participant C stated that he had looked at several schools and teams before making a commit to his current

institution. He added, “I had like 20 offers.” Recall that Participant C had an NPI-40 score of 31 and was task-oriented.

Participant D was a junior and played as a catcher on the team. His entire family consisted of sports enthusiasts, and he began playing baseball in the backyard at age 3, then moved to Little League then began travel ball at age 9. He played travel until his junior year of high school in the same organization Participant D stated that,

When I was 13, I didn’t even make the A team of the travel team. I was on the B team. I stayed with it and kept trying out for the same team. And I made the team when I was 15. Although this shows a clear work ethic and determination, recall that this participant was ego-oriented but had a lower end NPI-40 score of 17. That year the team was ranked eighth in the country. Participant D felt he did not get recruited much and said, “I was very under-recruited.” His senior year he attended two camps including a 2-day camp at his current institution. “That’s where they saw me, and I committed the next weekend after the camp going into my senior year.” Camps are a very common and popular tool for coaches at all NCAA levels. Most schools either host a camp at their institution or participate at a camp at a neighboring institution. Camps are a money maker for the institution, but also give coaches an opportunity to see many players in one accessible location. However, most players recruited from camps have already established a connection with that coach in some manner.

Participant E was a junior and was a pitcher on the team. As with the other student athletes interviewed for this study, he also started with T-ball in the recreation league and then moved to travel ball. He stated that he, “played with a bunch of different travel teams and then high school, went to a private Christian school because they were better than my public school baseball.” Participant E attended a few prospect camps and looked at some Division II and

Division III schools, but said that, “I wanted to play at the DI level.” His recruiting path to the current institution came from his high school coach who was an alum of the university. “He helped me talk to the coaches. He helped me walk on here a month before my senior year so I’m here now.”

The profiles of the five student athletes in this study show similar background experiences through their beginnings in local T-ball, through travel ball and showcase teams. Two of the student athletes were recruited through camps at the university.

Findings

Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), I read the interview transcripts applying three approaches (holistic, selective, and detailed) to discover what was revealed about the phenomenon. Through these readings the thematic expressions and phrases that captured the meaning of the experience were identified (van Manen, 2014). The emergent themes were uncovered by a focus on the connections and relationships seen as the participants began to make meaning of things that mattered to them, and a growing understanding of the phenomenon is born.

The emerging themes include: (a) success defined, (b) personal performance priority, (c) extrinsic motivation. Success defined includes both working to achieve success and success as winning. A focus on personal performance as a priority shows a commitment to their craft of baseball often to the exclusion of other experiences. The extrinsic motivation for the athletes is the attention and recognition that is gained in tribute to their efforts.

Success Defined

The first theme that emerged from the interview data was the definition of success. Success was defined by the student athletes interviewed differently depending on their traits and

beliefs. Achievement goal orientation shapes a student athlete's perspective when confronting the goals of athletic and academic success (Duda, 1989). Two ways of defining and determining success emerged that were dependent upon the athlete's particular achievement goal orientation of either task or ego. The five student athletes interviewed saw success either as due to hard work or as winning.

Success as Work. The student athletes addressed the idea of success in terms of winning or losing and shared that success is created due to hard work. Recall that individuals with a task orientation believe that effort will lead to success, and that success is defined by the idea of doing one's best (Duda 1989). Four out of the five student athletes felt that success was something that required an extensive commitment and intense effort to achieve. Two of these student athletes were task-oriented, one was equally task and ego-oriented and one that said success came from hard work was ego-oriented. Participant C stated, "[Success] definitely comes from hard work. Success is something you work for. You know, you give your all to get." The student athletes felt that success was not necessarily due to a natural gift, but instead was achieved through determination and long hours of labor. For the student athletes, success usually did not come naturally, as through amazing natural ability. Participant B described success by saying,

I would say success is definitely hard work. Success comes from hard work and dedication. When you get knocked on the ground I see success as coming back up and figuring out how to get better and grow from the situation. I don't see it as just having god-given talent. That's awesome and I love that, but I see success as doing something with that talent and actually trying to better yourself and be humble at the same time.

This idea that self-improvement comes from and is connected to hard work was also a reoccurring concept. The student athletes felt that hard work would make them improve not purely athletically, but also helped them grow and develop as a person as well. One participant acknowledged the struggles and challenges with athletics, noting they felt that success was the improvement that occurred as the result of all the hard work they put in. Participant A said,

As a DI college baseball player, you are going to have ups and downs almost all the time. You can't get too high on wins, and you can't get too low on losses. What I do, and as a pitcher I am constantly working trying to change something, as long as every day I am doing something to make myself a better baseball player, that is how I define success.

Another acknowledgment of this acceptance of wins and losses along with the idea of learning and growing from those experiences, was seen with Participant B as he stated,

At the end of the day you aren't going to win everything, but I see success as the little things. It doesn't have to be the ultimate end goal. I'll always say it's the day-to-day things, like the little things that you see getting better every day.

By not regulating success to only the times a team wins a ballgame, these participants saw their achievements based more squarely on the effort they put into preparing for the games.

These four student athletes felt that success came from hard work and perseverance. They emphasized the struggles and the losses along the importance of determination to work through the challenges and improve.

Success as Winning. Although many of the student athletes shared their ideas of success in terms of winning and losing on the field in association with hard work, there was one participant, Participant D, who was more focused on the idea of winning as a motto. Recall that Participant D was one of two on the team with an ego orientation. Achievement Goal Theory

states that an ego orientation is characterized by an athlete whose actions are motivated to display superior ability or winning over an opponent. Ego-oriented athletes are also concerned with appearing superior and proving their ability (Dweck, 1999). Even though Participant D identified on the TEOSQ as ego-oriented, his idea of winning was tied in closely with working to find a way to win. His determination to win aligned with work ethic, yet his focus was clearly on seeing success as winning games. He also acknowledged that talent was not innate. Participant D stated that,

I would say success for me is just winning. I am not a crazy gifted talented athlete, do you know what I mean? I take a lot of pride in competing and being a competitive guy.

The only thing that matters is winning. I take success as if I go 0 for 4 and I catch a good game and we win I don't really care. As long as we win, I don't really care. I contributed in some way whether defensively or offensively. Being able to compete and find a way to win, that determines success. Being able to do it when you aren't having your best day.

Although Participant D was ego-oriented, his NPI-40 score was 17 which is average.

Given his reflections on winning along in conjunction with his ideas on the importance of contributing to the team effort, it can be surmised that the average score on the NPI-40 might account for the two different ideas, thereby creating a balance between the ego orientation and the trait of narcissism.

Summary. The participants' ideas on success defined by a diligent work ethic showed the importance of working for team success and improvement in relation to the team sport. These ideas led to the next theme which addressed the individual's focus on achieving success and how it relates to their personal performance.

Personal Performance Priority

Achievement Goal Theory is a motivational theory that shows how an individual's goal orientation is determined by how they think about or define success (Duda, 1989). In the achievement area of sports, two goal orientations are evident: task orientation and ego orientation. Task orientation focuses on personal improvement and growth, while ego orientation focuses on a comparison to others. The student athletes shared that they were self-focused in a way to produce success because of their focus on self-improvement. They stressed being self-aware to be able to correct mistakes, achieve learning and growth and perform well. For example, Participant C said,

I think it hurts you if you are thinking about other people. You have just got to control and do what you can do. You can't control what the other guy does or worry about what the other guy does. You've got to be focused on yourself.

Looking at the concept of self-focus, which is closely related to the components and characteristics of narcissism, self-focus could be seen as potentially damaging to the concepts of teamwork, working for a common goal, and sportsmanship. However, the student athletes did not see their self-focus as harmful in a way that excluded or alienated others. Instead, their self-focus seemed to be for the benefit of personal improvement, which contributed to success for the team because of a common goal among the players to play well. Additionally, the student athletes did not compare themselves with teammates in terms of level of performance. Instead, their attention was focused on their own self-improvement in order to benefit the team. The participants did not see their play as a competition to outperform or do better than their teammates. Participant A explained,

There's always trying to climb the ladder in a bullpen because you want to be the guy they go to in the big moment, so you are sometimes kind of comparing yourself. But that is more of what the offseason is for, you push each other, compete with each other. Once you get into the season it's never like, "ooohh he did bad, time for me to do good," "man down I've gotta step up." It's never I've gotta be better than this teammate of mine.

Rather, the idea was not one of competition to be better than teammates or outperform teammates during the season. This perspective further strengthens the beliefs associated with task orientation as opposed to ego orientation. Task orientation is correlated with achievement motivated outcomes such as positive emotion, motives of skill development, and team membership (Lochbaum et al., 2016). Participant C, who stated the idea of focusing on yourself, identified as task-oriented, but he scored the highest of the participants on the NPI-40. Participant A as well identified as task-oriented with an NPI-40 score of 27, yet he stressed the concept of working as a team.

Social Pressures. Due to this personal performance priority and the challenges that accompany this mindset, all the student athletes did mention related pressures in various areas. Most felt that time management and juggling their dual roles was a challenge, but they seemed to accept that as routine and somewhat expected. Participant D said,

I would say trying to balance everything. Time management is definitely where I feel the most pressure. There's so much stuff I have to get done in one day, how can I, what plan do I use to get everything done, to handle my school work and handle my baseball responsibilities. I feel like the pressure is I need to come up with a plan to get it all done.

Participant A had similar ideas on the struggles of fitting everything in and the excessive work. He stated,

It's not glory. Nothing shiny unless you're at a SEC [Southeastern Conference] school. I don't even think at an SEC school. There is nothing except maybe some of the cool gear you get. It is a grind and you will work every day. Mondays when you have off you still have lift. That's optional but if it's optional and you don't go you are going to get in trouble.

This constant pressure to meet the expectations of the coach and teammates as well as inner expectations, is a challenge for student athletes. Most seem to recognize this challenge as a given and accept it as part of the role of a Division I student athlete.

One student athlete felt the pressure of performance priority in terms of a personal social challenge. Participant B shared circumstances that performance priority created with his girlfriend.

We had been together like 4 years. Once I got here it was a really hard time trying to manage my time with baseball because this was a whole new environment for me and I was busy throughout the whole day and she'd never get time to talk to me At the end of the day, I was trying to play for a spot on the team and show them what I can do and that was really stressing me out and it took away my attention from her. She felt like she had to end things. That's why I say that was my struggle in my social life and baseball.

The challenges to maintain a social life or a relationship are complicated due to the rigorous schedule of a Division I athlete. Many athletes' schedules are designed through the athletic department and are tightly regimented to include mandatory tutoring, a full course load, 4-hour afternoon practices year-round, and evening study halls (Jolly, 2008). The student athletes recognized that, unlike their non-athlete peers who have the freedom to choose how to balance the components of the college experience, their schedule was very regimented. Participant C

pointed out that “It’s not all fun and games. It’s a lot. People think that, ‘oh you’re so lucky.’ Yeah, we are lucky but it’s not all fun and games.” Even though players received attention due to their play on a Division I baseball team, it came at a personal cost for them. Additionally, student athletes must maintain a required GPA in order to be eligible to play.

Student athletes’ grades were a pressure mentioned by one participant in referring to finding the time due to the focus on his baseball. Participant C said,

Yeah like in the fall I had a 4.0. School wasn’t hard but now it’s getting close to the season; stuff is picking up. Now it is getting a lot harder to get all your assignments done plus do a practice.

For baseball players, the spring season begins in February and continues through May and beyond if the team qualifies for play-offs. According to Woodrey (2017), during the spring 8 hours a day are spent by the players at baseball facilities 6 days a week; these hours add up to more than the equivalent of a full-time job. Often there is little time for anything else, including the necessary academic workload. This relationship between academics and athletics addresses the idea of student athletes finding a way to balance their roles as both a student and an athlete.

Balancing Dual Roles. There has been extensive research on the relationship that athletics have with academics and how the student athletes are perceived as scholars (Aries et al., 2004; D. Horton, 2011; Simons et al., 2007). The student athletes interviewed seemed to see academics as interwoven with athletics. In reflecting on the academics of his experience, Participant C said, “it is just getting through it and getting it done.” Academics were viewed as a required part of the overall package of playing NCAA baseball without a focus necessarily on the learning occurring within a major or in their degree. Ultimately, it appeared that baseball and a successful baseball performance were the student athletes’ primary focus. Thus, keeping the

academic part of their identities under control helped support the participants as athletes.

Participant A shared that,

Well yeah, being on top of the game in the classroom definitely relieves a lot of stress because if you are on top of your classwork you are not thinking about the next paper you have to write after practice when you get home. I feel like harping on everything you have to do because you didn't do it when you should have done it, it just puts a little bit more stress and doesn't allow you to perform at your full potential.

The relationship between academics and athletics is tightly woven. Success in athletics can be compromised by academic struggles. Failure to maintain the required GPA will cause a loss of playing time and the potential loss of a scholarship. Players noted the loss of playing time or a starting role but did not address the scholarship piece. This might be because many were walk-ons and did not receive athletic money to play baseball. Additionally, however, is the related stress of academic struggles and the potential impact which can affect a student athletes' performance on the field. At the college level academics and athletics are deeply intertwined as student athletes link success in college with success in their sport (Fletcher et al., 2003).

Participant D spoke of the challenge of the dual role and elaborated by reiterating the pressures and challenges of keeping the long-coveted roster spot saying,

It's tough. It's a grind but you have to be fully invested every day because as soon as you slip up, either your spot on the team is going to leave, or your starting position, or your grades. You have to be on top of everything, you can't just pick one.

This sediment again showed the pressures student athletes face and the stress involved in playing their sport at a Division I level. The struggle to manage dual roles creates a series of changes. Pescosolido (1986) reported that social identity changes in predictable ways through three stages.

Originally students enter college in a state of expectancy, followed by a stage of disillusionment, and ending with reconciliation. This stage of reconciliation can be seen in the student athletes and their acknowledgment and acceptance of the pressures and challenges.

Another participant looked at grades as competition and compared academics to the way he views any obligation in life. Participant D said,

Being competitive is the way you go about things. Whether it's I want my grades to be better than yours, I want my baseball team to be better than yours. It could be anything. I want my room to be cleaner than yours.

For some, academics were merely another form of competition. Ego orientation is characterized by an athlete whose actions are motivated to display superior ability or winning over an opponent. Ego-oriented athletes are concerned with appearing superior and proving their ability (Dweck, 1999). Thus, ego orientation influenced approaches to both the sport of baseball and the academics. Participant D was ego-oriented and shared the philosophy of competing and being the best in everything. The idea of competing led to the next theme that emerged which expanded on the question of motivating factors.

Extrinsic Motivation

Individuals' perspective guides their motivation and pursuit of their goals. Using achievement goal theory with task orientation and ego orientation, a motivating factor may be either self-improvement and betterment, or recognition and glory as an outcome. The student athletes interviewed seemed to lean towards being motivated by recognition. For example, Participant E shared that his motivating factor was "just putting myself out in the spotlight." Recall that Participant E is ego-oriented but had a low NPI-40 score of 12. This desire for the spotlight is one of the components of narcissism, exhibitionism which looks for the admiration of

others, which is also is a trait of ego orientation. Similarly, Participant A reflected on motivation as,

Seeing those moments on the big screen. Like in the World Series. How it becomes so....I guess...I mean...it's like the whole crowd is cheering and roaring, but you know inside one of those players' heads, whether on the mound or at bat, it's just silent. They are just in the moment. That's something you can't describe experiencing. That's something I would die to [have happen to me].

The motivation of being able to excel at the pinnacle of the sport in the College World Series is one form of external motivation the participants noted. The College World Series has a rigorous selection process; only 64 Division I teams, out of 299, qualify for Regionals; 16 of those teams go on to Super Regionals and 8 play in the finals.

The student athletes did not appear to be motivated to succeed by intrinsic goals such as how they defined success as personal improvement and getting better. Instead, they appeared to want to demonstrate their success to others or were motivated by extrinsic factors. This clearly is associated with ego orientation in that this orientation is characterized by how they appear to others. Participant D felt that,

My motivation is winning and there's always that thing of proving all the people who didn't take a chance on you wrong, show them we are going to win over here, it's not our fault you didn't want to pick us up.

One of the components of narcissism is entitlement. Narcissists believe they are special or superior to others, therefore they are entitled to have more than others (Brunell et al., 2011). The idea of winning to show people that you are good or make them sorry they did not recognize you, can be seen as entitlement. However, Participant D is low end of the NPI-40 results but is

ego-oriented. He exhibits the characteristics of ego orientation with the desire of appearing superior and proving ability (Dweck, 1999).

Chapter Summary

The participants in the Division I team for this study evidenced more task orientation than expected. The freshmen held higher levels of narcissism ($M = 20.8$) compared to the rest of the team ($M = 17$). There was no pattern with respect to high levels of narcissism and the players' position on the field thereby answering the second research question. The student athletes interviewed described their experience as a student athlete by admitting to the intense rigors of the reality of life as a student athlete. They also felt that success in their sport is going to come due to hard work and extra effort. This task orientation aligns with the overall number of the team scoring in the task category ($n = 17$) compared to the ego category ($n = 2$) with one student athlete being equally task and ego. The participants' goals of winning were founded on a strong work ethic. This focus on hard work showed a clear sense of task orientation in the student athletes. They felt more compelled by self-improvement as opposed to comparison or competition with their teammates in order to achieve the desired results. This answers the research question showing a connection between the NPI-40 score and a task orientation as opposed to ego orientation. On the alternate side, however, was the theme that the student athletes were motivated by extrinsic factors such as recognition for their accomplishments. This characteristic is associated with ego orientation and the trait of narcissism.

True, the participants saw winning as the motivation for their playing on a Division I baseball team, and this type of focus is most often aligned with narcissism and ego orientation. Yet almost counter-intuitively, most of the participants presented from a task orientation that

relied on personal effort and hard work to achieve success. Holding these two findings together presents an oxymoron.

Social desirability was a consideration in examining the data. Student athletes are young adults and may be inclined to want to present themselves in a positive light. I did contemplate if the participants shared what they felt was the appropriate response, as opposed to what they truly believed. However, if this was true, the pattern was inconsistent. Social desirability would have dictated low scores on the NPI-40, which was not the case. Therefore, the likelihood that the participants only chose to present themselves in the best manner on one of two surveys, seemed unlikely. Overall, the high levels of narcissism in student athletes seems to balance out with their task orientation and the ego-oriented student athletes have low levels of narcissism.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

This final chapter begins with a summary of the findings from the Division I student athletes that played on a successful baseball team, and then discusses the perceptions of these participants through the lens of their achievement goal orientation. How student athletes view athletic success is dependent upon their achievement orientation of either task or ego, and this determination guides the student athlete in their perceptions. The final sections of this chapter discuss the implications for student athletes, coaches, and professors, followed by areas of future research.

The purpose of this study was to explore how student athletes playing baseball perceive that their own narcissism and ego orientation influenced their college experience. At the college level academics and athletics are deeply intertwined as student athletes link success in college with success in their sport (Fletcher et al., 2003). This link, therefore, necessitates that student athletes must achieve athletic success, defined as winning and playing at a high level, along with academic success in order to have a successful college experience. However, there are multiple challenges to creating a successful balance between academics and athletics. The challenge of how to balance these dual roles remains a barrier to success for many and an unsolved problem facing administration (Gaston Gayles & Hu, 2009). To increase understanding of the student athlete and to create strategies to assist them with their challenges, it is important to understand a student athletes' perception of success and achievement in their college years. The findings from this study serve to aid student athletes, coaches, and professors in understanding the motivating

factors for student athletes, and thereby learning what strategies to create for their success overall in college.

Three major themes emerged from the data: (a) success defined, (b) personal performance priority, (c) extrinsic motivation. These themes allowed an opportunity to understand the experiences of student athletes and their interpretations of the trait of narcissism and their achievement goal orientation of task or ego. The premise of achievement goal framework is to determine the lens through which an individual perceives ability and success (Lochbaum et al., 2016). This framework shows how the two different ways of approaching a goal reflects the personality of an individual, with the task-orientated student athlete prioritizing mastery of skill, and the ego-oriented student athlete being concerned with appearing superior and proving their ability (Dweck, 1999). The way in which each student athlete defined these constructs guided the way in which they sought success, as what motivated individuals was influenced by their perspectives of success.

This chapter is organized by findings based on the research questions posed. Following is a discussion of how the findings relate to previous literature and of emerging concepts on understanding how student athletes playing baseball perceive that their own narcissism and achievement goal orientation influenced their college experience.

Summary of Findings

The data collection occurred in two phases; survey and interview. Twenty participants from a Division I baseball team completed both the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-40) and the Task Ego Orientation Sports Questionnaire (TEOSQ) in the survey phase of data collection. These participants included 10 freshman, one sophomore, two juniors, six seniors, and one fifth-year student. The scores obtained from the 20 participating student athletes, ranged

from 31 out of 40 as a high, to 11 as a low with the mean score being 19. This mean score is higher than that reported by Raskin and Terry (1998) in their study. The freshmen student athletes scored higher in terms of narcissism ($M = 20.8$) relative to the other half of the team ($M = 17$). The TEOSQ results obtained from the 20 participating students showed that two of the student athletes were ego-oriented. One student athlete scored equally for task and ego orientation. Most participating student athletes scored as having a task orientation ($n = 17$).

The second phase of data collection consisted of interviews of five players on the team. Through these interviews, three findings emerged. The first finding that emerged from the interview data centered on how participants defined success. Achievement goal orientation shapes a student athlete's perspective when confronting the goals of athletic and academic success (Duda, 1989) and how a student athletes define success is dependent upon their particular achievement goal orientation of either task or ego (Duda & Nicholls, 1992). Four out of the five student athletes interviewed saw their success as happening due to their hard work and effort. Two of these student athletes were task-oriented, one was equally task and ego-oriented, and one was ego-oriented. One student athlete defined success in terms of winning. This student athlete had an ego orientation.

The next finding that emerged was personal performance priority. The five student athletes interviewed all shared a focus on self-improvement and personal responsibilities as a priority. Student athletes have to produce visible results of their success (Hudd, 2007) through high academic grades and athletic statistics. The five student athletes all shared that this requirement was challenging at times, but that their focus was unquestionable, regardless of the demise of their social lives. Although it is often perceived that student athletes place academics lower on their list of priorities (D. Horton, 2011) this was not the case for the participants. Instead,

the five participants saw academics as a part of the larger picture, as a component of the college experience as a student athlete, and as something that was required to be viewed as successful in order to play baseball at a high level and maintain a spot on the roster.

The final finding that emerged was extrinsic motivation. According to Achievement Goal Theory, a motivating factor may be either self-improvement or betterment for the task-oriented individual, or recognition and glory as an outcome for the ego-oriented individual. One of the participants, an ego-oriented respondent, defined success as winning as noted above. Although three of the student athletes that were interviewed showed a task orientation, and one was equally task and ego-oriented, all five shared the motivating factor of recognition. They all desired the spotlight big win or to be recognized as more successful than the competition.

Pilot Study Connections

The pilot study was completed with high school senior baseball players that were actively playing baseball at the high school level and two of the three players also played on a showcase team. The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of high levels of narcissism and ego orientation and the players' perception of success and future goals. I had assumed at the start of the pilot study that the more successful the player, the higher the degree of the trait of narcissism. However, the results of the pilot study showed that the less experienced player, the player that had never been on a travel or showcase team and was also the weakest player in terms of statistics, scored the highest on the NPI-40 and was ego-oriented. The most successful player in terms of both their baseball statistics and experience in travel and showcase baseball, scored the lowest on the NPI-40 and was task-oriented. The current study shows both similarities and difference to the findings of the pilot study.

In the current study, several of the non-starting players scored on the higher end of the NPI-40 which shows similar results to the pilot but instead of being ego-oriented like in the pilot study, they were all task-oriented. However, of the five student athletes interviewed for this study, two were starters, one an infielder and the other a pitcher. Of those two, one had the highest NPI-40 score of 31 out of the participants and was task-oriented, the other had the second lowest NPI-40 score of 12 but was ego-oriented. In this study, unlike the pilot, high levels of narcissism were not related to an ego orientation. The complexity of these findings highlights the need for further study.

Emerging Concepts

Several concepts emerged from the study that shed light on the connection of narcissism to the theory of achievement goal orientation. Narcissism as a personality trait can be thought of on a continuum with a low concentration of the associated behavior on one end and higher concentrations on the other end. At individual points on the continuum the concentration of the associated behavior may weaken various social and professional interactions (Ryan et al., 2002) therefore being of concern to a successful college experience. An ego orientation has been surmised to share many similarities to the trait of narcissism (J.M. Watson, 2012) making the combination potentially problematic for a student athlete. However, the concepts that emerged did not discover this anticipated combination.

Narcissism's Connection to Task or Ego Orientation

This research sought to determine the perception of how task and ego orientation and the trait of narcissism may contribute either positively or negatively to student athletes in determining a successful college experience both academically and athletically. Specifically, in this study, research question three looked for a connection between a higher-end NPI-40 score

and either task or ego orientation. Although little research has been done on the relationship between narcissism and ego orientation, prior research found that narcissism shares more of a relationship with ego orientation than with task orientation (J.M. Watson, 2012). Narcissism consists of components such as a grandiose sense of self, a sense of entitlement, the excessive need for attention and admiration known as exhibitionism, and lack of concern for others (APA, 2000). Ego orientation in sports is characterized by an athlete whose actions are motivated to display superior ability or a win over an opponent. Ego-oriented athletes are concerned with appearing superior and proving their ability (Dweck, 1999).

Other characteristics of those with an ego orientation include: the need for recognition of success, avoidance of the appearance of failure, the assumption of superiority, and concern with how they are perceived. This would lead to the assumption that individuals with higher NPI-40 scores that indicate narcissism would also be ego-oriented. However, the findings of this study refute that assumption and showed that students with a high narcissism score were task oriented. Out of the 20 student athletes that participated, only 2 showed an ego orientation but their NPI-40 scores were low ($n = 12$) or average ($n = 17$). This outcome may well be due to the nature of Division I and NCAA sports that require a bonded and supportive team culture where the goal is team success.

Task Orientation. Baseball is a team sport and these student athletes have been well-schooled throughout the years as to the required mindset of a team player. From Little League, to travel ball, and into the high-level showcase tournaments that are played in front of college coaches, players have been first trained and then reminded of the behaviors that are necessary to be a good teammate and a potential recruit. These behaviors include: a strong work ethic, competitiveness, integrity, self-motivation, passion, mental toughness, and confidence (Iranshad,

2015). Players are reminded about the need to be a team player at all levels of play from Little League to showcase tournaments until a focus on being a good team member becomes second nature, with the clear expectation of cheering for their teammates and being supportive.

Observers of any high school or showcase game can witness a strong sense of comradery and a tight bond between the players. It is assumed that this team bond is further strengthened in college baseball. For example, before every inning the infielders head out to the mound and touch gloves with the pitcher in a sign of support before he throws that first pitch. These types of behaviors are not behaviors that can be related to narcissism as the focus, in this case, is not on the individual. Instead, these behaviors are aligned with the characteristics of a task orientation. This clear bond between teammates shows that task orientation creates greater acceptance by teammates (Standage et al., 2005).

Task-oriented athletes believe that sports value cooperation with others, adhering to rules, respect for humanity, and honesty (Duda, 1989). In relation to athletes who were task oriented, Duda (1989) found that the athletes' perception of sports and their personal success was defined by the idea of doing one's best. Task orientation is also correlated with achievement motivated outcomes such as positive emotion, motives of skill development, and team membership (Lochbaum et al., 2016). The student athletes that participated in the interviews were predominantly task-oriented, regardless of their level of narcissism, which manifests their training in their long baseball career of what is taught, expected, and required to participate and succeed at high level Division I baseball, namely a focus on the team and hard work.

Ego Orientation. Unlike prior research that supported the assumption that ego orientation and narcissism share a relationship (J.M. Watson, 2012), this study found that only 2 out of the 20 student athletes from the Division I baseball team were ego-oriented, and neither of

these two student athletes had a higher end NPI-40 score for narcissism. The two student athletes with an ego orientation scored a 12 and a 17 on the NPI-40. Recall that the mean score in this study was 19 and the lowest score was 11. Participant E, a senior pitcher, had an NPI-40 score of 12 and Participant D, a junior catcher, had an NPI-40 score of 17. Participant E is a starter on the team that corresponds to a spotlighted position. Both of these roles are highly pivotal positions on the team which may account for the ego orientation, as these positions dictate the play of the other team members. As key players on the team, all eyes are on the pitcher and catcher, which may rationalize the ego orientation of these two players.

The two student athletes that are ego-oriented also possess lower end NPI-40 scores, which may again revert to the established and required characteristics of team work needed to play NCAA baseball at the Division I level. A low level of narcissism may counteract a tendency to be too ego-oriented which may challenge the requirements for teamwork needed to play on a Division I team.

Success and Orientation. Only one student athlete perceived success as winning and not as hard work. That student was one of the two who were ego oriented. Participant D felt that success was winning; however, he followed that thought with the idea of how this concept was defined in terms of a team effort. Although he felt winning was success, it was how he contributed to the win as a team member, not as a personal victory. This explanation shows more of a task-oriented type of orientation in that it pertains to working together to achieve a goal. This participant scored in the lower range of NPI-40 scores.

High NPI-40 and the Connection to Goal Orientation

Due to the similarities between the concept of narcissism and ego orientation, it was expected that players with a high NPI-40 score would also be ego-oriented. Yet, the two highest

NPI-40 scores of 31 and 27 were both task-oriented. The lowest NPI-40 score of the 20 participants, was also task-oriented. However, the second lowest score of 12 was ego oriented. These various pairings highlight that there is no connection between a high NPI-40 score and ego orientation. Additionally, there is no pattern with respect to high levels of narcissism and ego orientation based on player position, thereby answering Research Question 2.

Narcissism can be seen as an individual personality construct (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Some individuals demonstrate occasional moments of narcissism, which may be beneficial or healthy, while others exhibit repeated displays of the components of narcissism (Weikel et al., 2010). Since narcissism is an individual trait, when looked at from the lens of a team sport and a team player, the individual trait may be obscured by the culture of the team. The student athletes in this study seemed to either put aside their personal trait of narcissism or use it to benefit the team as a whole.

All of the players were on the higher end of the NPI-40 with the highest score being 31 followed by the second highest score of 27. Of the 20 participating student athletes, the lowest NPI-40 score was 11. The freshmen had a mean score of 20.8, the sophomore student score was 17, the two juniors had a mean score of 16, and the six seniors had a mean score of 17.5. The fifth-year student had a score of 16. The freshmen student athletes scored higher in terms of narcissism ($M = 20.8$) relative to the other half of the team ($M = 17$). Notably, this mean score is higher than that reported by Raskin and Terry (1998) in their study of college students and also higher than the mean score of US adults and even of US celebrities. The higher mean score for the freshmen may be due to the new culture. These student athletes were stars in their smaller high school realm, and require a period of adjustment and learning to realize the expectations of a Division I baseball team.

Playing at any NCAA level is a highly coveted honor. Young players have spent years playing, training, and attending camps and showcases in order to be seen and recruited by a college coach. To even attend some of the college showcase events a player must be considered far above average at their position. These esteemed players are still aware of the tremendous odds of playing college ball at any level. The NCAA (2017) reports that out of 488,815 high school baseball players, only 7.1% play baseball in college with 2.1% at Division I, 2.2% at Division II, and 2.8% at Division III. Those players that are heavily recruited, for example Participant C who received an offer to play Division I as a freshman, are a figurative star within their baseball peer group, and this player had an NPI-40 score of 31, the highest of the 20 participants from the team. Being one of those selected few players that competed and was chosen to play NCAA baseball, may have contributed to him scoring on the higher end NPI-40 scores. Within the world of NCAA sports, these student athletes, become figurative movie stars that others look to in admiration. However, it is also important to see that a personal trait of narcissism does not appear to relate to an ego orientation. There appears to be a clear separation between personal traits and goal orientation when it comes to success as a student athlete.

Student athletes in this study with high narcissism scores do not perceive success differently if they are task-oriented or ego-oriented. Those with a high NPI-40 score see success as hard work which is task orientation. The two student athletes with ego orientation have lower end NPI-40 scores which may serve to create a balance between the two constructs leaving the individual demonstrating a task-like orientation due to their low-end narcissism level.

The Influence of Narcissism and Ego Orientation on the College Experience

The first research question in this study focused on the perception student athletes hold of the influence of their traits, such as narcissism, on their college experience. Narcissism and ego

orientation may have potentially damaging effects and repercussions in relationships with friends, teammates, and peers. Narcissistic behavior in the workplace, on the athletic field, or in the classroom can be problematic (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Therefore, narcissism is a behavior that is concerning as an intrapersonal and interpersonal personality construct for student athletes and their potential for a successful college experience. Part of the college experience is being an accepted member of the culture of the institution (Tym et al., 2004). None of the participants reported feelings of overwhelming challenges, depression, or isolation. Although time was a challenge and social events were missed, they did not report any duress or feelings of missing out on their college experience due to these outcomes.

All the student athletes in this study prioritized baseball and considered their college experience to revolve around being a student athlete. As none of the student athletes showed high narcissism and ego orientation it appeared that the players seemed to understand their roles and responsibilities along with the challenges, but that they were prepared to do the work necessary for success.

This study found that the personality trait of narcissism is an individual trait and because baseball is seen as team sport, the participants in this study did not perceive negative outcomes due to their high narcissism scores. Narcissism, although a part of the student athlete, was not connected to the team context. The players separated the trait of narcissism from their behavior as a member of the team. Although a student athlete may be ego-oriented with some degree of narcissism, or task-oriented with a larger degree of narcissism, the team context created a work ethic and level of support for others that share common goals. This created a predominantly task orientation in the student athlete. The individual separated their personal trait of narcissism from

the goal of working together as a team for mutual success. See Figure 2 for the association between narcissism and team play in baseball players.

Figure 2

Team Play and the Student Athlete



Figure 2 shows how narcissism is embedded as an individual trait for the student athletes who participated in this study, and how the focus on task orientation helped support the team-oriented culture of Division I baseball. Ultimately, the combination of the individual orientation and the team culture both contributed to the success of this winning team.

Implications for Practice

Coaches need to continue to recognize that student athletes represent a unique population of college students. As high school students that are entering the recruiting phase through the offer and commitment process, coaches need to be aware of the expectations student athletes bring to the campus and be clear in sharing how these expectations may be met. The newly recruited student athlete sees that they have fulfilled a goal that many others have not been able to achieve, which leads them to exhibit traits that may be high on the narcissism continuum. Coaches should continue to emphasize that as a member of the team, success is a mutually shared goal. Only through working together, collaboration and sportsmanship, can the team as a whole be successful. One person's personal triumph cannot lead to a win. Teams are dependent upon all the players to perform well in order for success to be achieved. Coaches should work to

build relationships within the team so that bonds are formed and the players support each other through wins and losses and challenges. Coaches should carefully navigate the role of instilling confidence in players while also making sure that the student athlete remains task-oriented. A collaborative environment within the team and emphasis on the concept of hard work to improve and perform at the best possible level should be the focus for coaches.

Faculty should become more receptive to learning and understanding student athletes. Student athletes' success in academics is connected to their success in their sport. These students feel that academics and athletics are intertwined in their roles. Professors should be aware that the student athlete both desires and is required to succeed academically and does not necessarily prioritize athletics, but instead faces numerous challenges due to the rigorous time scheduled imposed year-round in athletics. Faculty should be aware of the stereotype threat that student athletes face and take care to avoid any tendency to treat student athletes in a preconceived manner, as the stereotype threat perpetuates the conception that athletes are not students (Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1998). Student athletes that have a task orientation or ego orientation in sports may have a similar orientation in academics. Professors should be familiar with the characteristics of student athlete orientation to better understand the motivation and goals of the individual. Being familiar with the theory of achievement goal orientation may help professors establish a connection with the student athlete and be better prepared to aid the student athlete with challenges that may occur in their academic role.

Student support professionals need to be proactive in identifying student athletes that are in need of assistance. Due to the many challenges of being a highly competitive athlete and the academic requirements of the university, student athletes have little time to seek out help if needed to manage stress. Student support professionals that are aware of the responsibilities of

student athletes and can understand their pressures, are better able to step in when the student athlete first begins to face challenges. Being familiar with student athletes' perception of success and failure and how these constructs are intertwined for the student athlete, will help support professionals to be able to determine challenges early and be able to offer help. Student support professionals should design programs and help create pathways for student athletes that aid them in reaching their goals. Meeting with student athletes regularly to advise and offer suggestions in the planning process is a necessity.

Student athletes themselves should become aware of their task or ego orientation and how it might affect their performance on the field and off the field. Increased self-awareness of personal motivating factors and views of success will allow student athletes to make concrete plans to meet their goals in ways that are productive to themselves and their teammates. Continuing to demonstrate a solid work ethic, showing support of teammates, and defining and working with others to reach common goals, will help student athletes maintain a clear path forward, be empathic to others, and succeed both on and off the field.

Areas of Future Research

This study has provided new information on the relationship between task and ego orientation and the trait of narcissism. Discovering that high levels of narcissism seem to connect to a task orientation in sports opens a pathway to many future studies. It would be beneficial to see if another Division I team would provide similar information. Exploring various Division I schools that are highly selective, research universities, private versus public, or small institutions, such as under 10,000, versus large schools, may provide different data. Looking at Division I schools that have an established baseball program that may have won the College World Series

or made the finals, along with a Division I program that has never qualified for the College World Series, might also yield different findings for comparison.

Another area of future research would be to explore the various divisions in the NCAA. The NCAA divisions are characterized differently and emphasize the roles of sports and academics to greater or lesser degrees. For example, Division III stresses the importance of the student athletes' experience (NCAA, 2017). Though there is no athletic-based financial aid, this division offers substantial playing opportunities to its athletes in combination with a high emphasis on academics. Division I, however, is characterized by high budget scholarship money, well-paid coaches, and many players going professional (Yost, 2009). Division II offers a combination of both with sports scholarship money and academic aid and more localized competition that allows more academic or free time. Due to the different cultures of these divisions, the perceptions of student athletes' success, motivation, traits and goal orientation may be varied.

Finally, an area of research might involve a longitudinal study. As students grow and develop throughout their college experience, their views and beliefs may change. Examining how a freshman views success, challenges, and their college experience may produce a change when asked the same questions in their senior year. This change in beliefs could be used to further examine the relationship between traits, achievement goal orientation and the team culture. Within this area, structuring the instruments to focus on the individual versus group aspects of goal orientation, could provide further understanding of the influence of the team culture as a student athlete progresses throughout their college experience.

Conclusion

This study shed light on the perceived relationship between ego orientation and narcissism for the study participants. The study showed that the participants did not exhibit a connection between ego orientation and narcissism, which counters previous research (J.M. Watson, 2012). Instead, high levels of narcissism related to task orientation in Division I baseball players participating in this study. The study showed that narcissism seems to be a personal construct that individuals have to varying degrees. However, being a part of team environment in which where there is a shared goal, seems to create a focus on being a team player. The level of narcissism is either irrelevant or is used positively to produce results for the team. Although student athletes may be high on the narcissism continuum, the way they see success is collective. Student athletes on a team do not view motivation or success in terms of self, but instead in terms of what the team has accomplished together.

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APPENDIX A

EMAIL REQUEST TO COACH

Dear _____,

I'd like to first thank you for taking time to speak with Joe Frostick who contacted you on my behalf. I am grateful that you have expressed interest in my study and are willing to have your team participate.

The purpose of my study is to explore how student athletes playing baseball perceive that their own narcissism and ego orientation influences their college experience. This is significant for researchers, faculty, coaches and student affairs staff in that by exploring these constructs it becomes possible to design strategies to assist student athletes in balancing their dual roles, meeting their challenges, and reaching their future goals.

The players that consent will take two short surveys, the NPI-40 and the TEOSQ. The timeframe needed is approximately fifteen minutes. I would like to have the players do these forms in a paper copy. The follow up interviews would be with five players that were identified through the surveys as scoring on the higher end of the continuum and would take place either later that day or the following day. Each interview would be approximately thirty minutes. The players' names will be confidential. I would like to set up a date at your convenience as soon as possible.

Thank you again for agreeing to participate.

Sincerely,

Amy Moore

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Research Participation Consent Form

WHAT DO WE HOPE TO LEARN FROM YOU?

This investigation is designed to explore how student athletes playing baseball in different NCAA divisions perceive the various psychological factors that influence sports performance.

WHY IS YOUR PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT TO US?

Studying your perceptions, reactions, and input can provide helpful perspectives for researchers, educators, parents, and coaches to consider. Awareness of psychological factors such as personality traits and achievement goal orientation can make us more cognizant of areas that need to be focused upon to improve student athletes' college experience. Sharing interpretations, thoughts and feelings can make us aware as individuals of certain behaviors and patterns that are emerging. These noted behaviors can then be used to demonstrate awareness to others the impact of various traits on student athletes.

WHAT WILL WE REQUEST FROM YOU?

- I will request that you complete the 40 question NPI-40. This consists of forty paired statements where the participants will choose the best statement to describe themselves. The time frame for completion is approximately fifteen minutes.
- I will request that you complete the 13 question TEOSQ. This consists of thirteen statements in which you rate your agreement or disagreement level on a 1-5 scale.
- I may ask you to participate in an interview of less than one hour.
- If you are interviewed, I will request that you allow me to audio record, transcribe and analyze what you say during this interview as part of the data for this study.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Please know that:

- The confidentiality of your personally identifying information will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.
- Your name and other identifying information will be known only to the researcher through the information that you provide. Neither your name nor any other personally identifying information will be used in any presentation or published work without prior written consent.
- The audio recordings of the interviews described above will be erased after the study has been completed.
- You may refuse to answer any questions during the interviews if you so choose. You may also terminate your participation in the study at any time. (To do so, simply inform the interviewer of your intention.) Neither of these actions will incur a penalty of any type.
- Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decline to participate, this decision will not endanger your class standing, any grade, or future relationship with the College of William & Mary.

- A summary of the results of the study will be sent to you electronically once they are complete.

HOW CAN YOU CONTACT US?

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the interviewer, Amy Moore (amoore@email.wm.edu) at The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia or her dissertation chair, Dr. Pamela Eddy (pamela.eddy@wm.edu). If you have additional questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, Dr. Jennifer Stevens, Chair of the Protection of Human Subjects Committee, by telephone (757-221-3862) or email (jastev@wm.edu) or Dr. Tom Ward in the School of Education at email (tjward@wm.edu).

Student Athletes:

By checking the “I agree to participate” response below, then signing and dating this form, you will indicate your voluntary agreement to participate in this study, and confirm that you are at least 18 years of age.

- I agree to participate.
- I don’t agree to participate

A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

SIGNATURES:

Participant: _____ Date: _____
Interviewer: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

NPI-40

Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI)

1. A. I have a natural talent for influencing people.
B. I am not good at influencing people.
2. A. Modesty doesn't become me.
B. I am essentially a modest person.
3. A. I would do almost anything on a dare.
B. I tend to be a fairly cautious person.
4. A. When people compliment me I sometimes get embarrassed.
B. I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so.
5. A. The thought of ruling the world frightens the hell out of me.
B. If I ruled the world, it would be a better place.
6. A. I can usually talk my way out of anything.
B. I try to accept the consequences of my behavior.
7. A. I prefer to blend in with the crowd.
B. I like to be the center of attention.
8. A. I will be a success.
B. I am not too concerned about success.
9. A. I am no better or worse than most people.
B. I think I am a special person.
10. A. I am not sure if I would make a good leader.
B. I see myself as a good leader.
11. A. I am assertive.
B. I wish I were more assertive.
12. A. I like to have authority over other people.
B. I don't mind following orders.
13. A. I find it easy to manipulate people.
B. I don't like it when I find myself manipulating people.
14. A. I insist upon getting the respect that is due me.

- B. I usually get the respect that I deserve.
15. A. I don't particularly like to show off my body.
B. I like to show off my body.
16. A. I can read people like a book.
B. People are sometimes hard to understand.
17. A. If I feel competent I am willing to take responsibility for making decisions.
B. I like to take responsibility for making decisions.
18. A. I just want to be reasonably happy.
B. I want to amount to something in the eyes of the world.
19. A. My body is nothing special.
B. I like to look at my body.
20. A. I try not to be a show off.
B. I will usually show off if I get the chance.
21. A. I always know what I am doing.
B. Sometimes I am not sure of what I am doing.
22. A. I sometimes depend on people to get things done.
B. I rarely depend on anyone else to get things done.
23. A. Sometimes I tell good stories.
B. Everybody likes to hear my stories.
24. A. I expect a great deal from other people.
B. I like to do things for other people.
25. A. I will never be satisfied until I get all that I deserve.
B. I take my satisfactions as they come.
26. A. Compliments embarrass me.
B. I like to be complimented.
27. A. I have a strong will to power.
B. Power for its own sake doesn't interest me.
28. A. I don't care about new fads and fashions.
B. I like to start new fads and fashions.
29. A. I like to look at myself in the mirror.
B. I am not particularly interested in looking at myself in the mirror.

30. A. I really like to be the center of attention.
B. It makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention.
31. A. I can live my life in any way I want to.
B. People can't always live their lives in term of what they want.
32. A. Being an authority doesn't mean that much to me.
B. People always seem to recognize my authority.
33. A. I would prefer to be a leader.
B. It makes little difference to me whether I am a leader or not.
34. A. I am going to be a great person.
B. I hope I am going to be successful.
35. A. People sometimes believe what I tell them.
B. I can make anybody believe anything I want them to.
36. A. I am a born leader.
B. Leadership is a quality that takes a long time to develop.
37. A. I wish somebody would someday write my biography.
B. I don't like people to pry into my life for any reason.
38. A. I get upset when people don't notice how I look when I go out in public.
B. I don't mind blending into the crowd when I go out in public.
39. A. I am more capable than other people.
B. There is a lot that I can learn from other people.
40. A. I am much like everybody else.
B. I am an extraordinary person.

SCORING KEY

Assign one point for each response that matches the key.

CITATION

Raskin, R.N., & Hall, C.S. (1981). The narcissistic personality inventory: Alternative form reliability and further evidence of construct validity. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 45, 159-16.

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APPENDIX D

TEOSQ

TEOSQ

The Task and Ego Orientation in Sports Questionnaire (TEOSQ) (Duda 1989)^[1] can be used to assess whether an individual defines success in a sporting context as "task orientated" or "ego orientated".

How to conduct the test

- The assistant explains the test protocol to the athlete:
 - Consider the statement "I feel most successful in a sport when..." and read each of the questions on the questionnaire below and indicate how much you agree with each statement by entering an appropriate score where:
 - 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree
- The athlete completes the questionnaire -no time limit
- The assistant determines and records the athlete's TEOSQ scores

Questionnaire

I feel most successful in sport when...

Question	Score
1) I am the only one who can do the play or skill	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) I learn a new skill and it makes me want to practice more	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) I can do better than my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) The others cannot do as well as me	<input type="checkbox"/>

5) I learn something that is fun to do	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) Others mess up, but I do not	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) I learn a new skill by trying hard	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) I work really hard	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) I score the most points/goals/hits, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10) Something I learn makes me want to go practice more	<input type="checkbox"/>
11) I am the best	<input type="checkbox"/>
12) A skill I learn really feels right	<input type="checkbox"/>
13) I do my very best	<input type="checkbox"/>

0 (Zero) is treated as 1 and a value above 5 is treated as 5

Assessment

Select the "Calculate" button for an assessment of your Ego & Task orientation.

Ego Orientation <input type="text"/>	Task Orientation <input type="text"/>	(1 = Low 5 = High)
--------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	--------------------------

NaN = You did not enter a number as a score

The Ego and Task orientation results are calculated as follows (q=question):

- Ego Orientation = $(q1 + q3 + q4 + q6 + q9 + q11) \div 6$
- Task Orientation = $(q2 + q5 + q7 + q8 + q10 + q12 + q13) \div 7$

References

1. Duda, J. L. (1989) Relationship between task and ego orientation and the perceived purpose of sport among high school athletes. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 11, p. 318-335

<https://www.brianmac.co.uk/teosq.htm>

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE / GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain to me how you started in baseball and the process in getting to the level you are at in college ball.

Probes:

- a. When did you start playing?
- b. Were you on a travel team?
- c. Describe your recruitment (if it occurred) to your current college team

2. Describe what has influenced you most have had throughout your life to date regarding advice and guidance in baseball.

Probes:

- a. Who do you turn to when faced with a decision?
- b. What type of questions do you think about when determining your choices?
- c. How has your family served to help you?
- d. How have your coaches served to help you?

3. What type of assistance do you seek when you have questions or problems?

Probes:

- a. Do you turn to particular people, family, coaches, friends?
- b. Do you rely on written sources of support (e.g. self-help books, blogs, online resources)?
- c. Do you rely on yourself?

4. How would you define success?

Probes:

- a. Does success come from hard work?
- b. Does success come from inner talents?
- c. Is success measured by wins or awards?
- d. Is success measured by inner satisfaction?

5. Describe for me your experience as a student athlete.

Probes:

- a. How do you describe yourself to others?
- b. What has your experience been in class?
- c. What has your experience been as an athlete?

6. Describe for me what pressures, if any, you perceive as a student athlete.

Probes:

- a. What pressures do you perceive in the classroom?

- b. What pressures do you perceive on the field?
- c. How do you cope with the pressures you face?

- 7. What motivates you to work as hard as you do?
- 8. What are your goals for the rest of this season?
- 9. What are your goals after college?
- 10. Is there anything else that I should know to understand better what it means to be a college baseball player?

VITA
Amelia Trojanowski Moore

Educational Background

PhD. William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA
Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership (2022)

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