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COACH LEADERSHIP COUNTS AND CIVIC MINDEDNESS MATTERS

by

Sarah L Sharpe

A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services and Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Doctor of Education
at
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March 9, 2023

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my children Morgan, Alexander, Sophia, and Gabriella. Morgan, your hard work ethic, perseverance and tenacity to keep pushing when life is arduous surrounded me with hope. Alexander, your relentless rule following and ability to question every move I make was a skill I modeled to complete this task. Sophia, with your loving, encouraging, warm spirit, you provided me with a hug each day and that was exactly what I needed to keep moving forward. Finally, Gabriella, your interactions and ability to bring laughter and fun into every situation even when life is tough, assisted me in finding the light in this journey. Guys, let this be one of our many Sharpe Adventures together. Cheers to the next chapter. I love you all!

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To my parents John and Helen Giercyk- I love you. Thank you for always believing in my craziest ideas. Both of you have given up hundreds of hours to make sure that children were living their best life while I spent many nights researching and working. You have always supported my endeavors and continue to help make my world spin, even when I could not. I am forever grateful.

Finally, to my beloved Brian, the husband that never asked questions and stayed out of the way. Thank you for continuing to support each decision I make. This ride has now come to an end. Are you ready to jump in for the next journey?

Abstract

Sarah L. Sharpe
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND STUDENT CIVIC MINDEDNESS
2022-2023
Ane Turner-Johnson, Ph.D.
Doctor of Education

The purpose of this sequential exploratory study was to investigate how New Jersey public high school coaches who self-report transformational leadership traits may potentially influence the development of civic mindedness in their respective student-athletes. Three main research questions were posed regarding coaches' transformational leadership practices, their roles in the development of students' civic mindedness, and connections between the two. It was posited that the behavior of coaches can have a significant effect on the student-athletes that participate on their teams. The theoretical lens of transformational leadership permeates this research. A mixed-methods approach was utilized. Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory instrument was administered to 126 participants and quantitative analyses were conducted. The LPI domain of "Encouraging the Heart" was the predominant trait reported. Qualitative data were subsequently collected via an open-ended semi-structured interview; all fifteen of the participants detailed instances of civic engagement activities that focused on service, community involvement, ethics and morals, good citizenship, equity, and social/emotional skills. Transformational leadership in relation to the development of civic mindedness, although widely studied in general, has not been previously measured in the context of high school coaching. Stemming from this research, specific policy, practice and future research recommendations are suggested.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Now more than ever society has a heightened polarized sociopolitical environment that needs of individuals that are empathetic and civic minded to embrace the differences and inequalities of others, while supporting and resolving social issues that are greatly impacting our communities. Providing students with the tools needed to be successful to lead active lives and empowering them to constantly improve through developing solutions and problem-solving world issues is the key behind civic mindedness (Albert Ng Ya Ken, 2016). Essential to a strong democracy is the development of educated citizens that make responsible decisions for their families, communities and our democracy (AAC&U, 2012). Civic mindedness supports an overall better society and more cultured people. Social cohesion and increasing the trust within society is an important factor for the future of our younger generations. There has been a transformation of values; traditionally one had a sense of duty towards the community, however, this is shifting, and the focus is more on self-realization (Kober, 2003). More individuals are choosing to become involved in the community on their own initiative, as a way to refine their own personal development (Cai et. Al., 2022). Musil (2009) discusses that people must move from themselves to others and then towards cooperating with others for the benefit of the larger public good. It is our job as a society to enrich and offer engagement opportunities that support making decisions that not only affect us but those around us for the betterment of the world.

It has become a strong part of many public schools' mission and vision to develop and refine the civic duties of their individual students. School districts have made commitments through their individual vision and mission statements to embrace the notion of civic mindedness for all of their students. Many schools are taking necessary steps to encourage and foster the growth and acceptance of all individuals while supporting difference and embracing all cultural backgrounds and identities. It is the duty of schools to promote civic responsibility and moral behaviors to best assist students in their individual assimilation into society. Now, more than ever before, it is critical to consider what constitutes a healthy and ethical environment that can potentially stimulate positive images and trajectories in and of both public-school districts and the students who inhabit their halls and fields. Decisions regarding how to best encourage the heart, hands, and heads of students concern not only educators and coaches but also society as a whole. Sadly, still, the contentions related to whether or not participation in high school athletics assists or hinders education endeavors continue to plague institutions and their commitments to extracurricular programs. Supporters of extra-curricular high school athletics value the contributions that sport can provide as it relates to expected academic performance and behavior as minimum requirements to maintain participant eligibility. It is now also the time to acknowledge the civic mindedness that some coaches instill in their student athletes. Coaches spend a copious amount of time with their student athletes, and they should be expected to foster the growth and mindset that schools want for their individual students. The lasting impact that coaches leave on student athletes can stay with them throughout their lifetime. Too often, athletics are viewed as an "extra," something to occupy children after school hours and to entertain and engage

community members. Athletics, however, is much more than a budgetary line item. At an extremely low cost based on the entire school budget, “high school activity programs are one of today’s best bargains” (<https://www.nfhs.org/>, 2020). Athletic programs assist in teaching lifelong lessons that complement the academics taught in the classroom (Kniffin, et al., 2014). Athletics continue to be an integral part of many students’ education and an important part of the fabric of American education itself (Merkel, 2013). The fact is high school athletics matter.

Interscholastic Sports

Research shows that an estimated 15.3 million students are enrolled in high schools across the United States, and approximately 7.8 million of them participate in athletics (Tomczyk et al., 2018). In America, high school sports offer a mirror to society reflecting America’s tapestry of ethnicity, race, class, and gender. They continue to be a source of both past and present-day national pride for many Americans as they are woven into the fabric of American life for many individuals living or coming to America (Riess, 2011). Many school-age children participate in athletics throughout their educational endeavors starting at the elementary level and continue their commitment through high school. Student-athletes spend substantial amounts of time with their peers, other student-athletes, and their coaches. Athletic coaches can influence student-athletes both on and off the playing field.

Extra-curricular athletics play an important part in the educational system and have done so since they were formally introduced to the public educational system in the

early 1900s. If done “right,” participation in athletic extra-curricular activities can provide an enriching environment for districts and students that may have long-lasting positive effects. These include better educational outcomes (Overton, 2001; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Lipscomb, 2007; Fox, et al., 2010), enhanced engagement and sense of belonging (Yang et al., 2014; Knifsend & Graham, 2012; Bohnert et al., 2013), positive youth development and life skills (Darling, 2005; Gould et al., 2012; Pierce et al., 2018; Hellison, 2009; Linver et al., 2009), healthier behaviors (Xu & Kaestner, 2006; Taliaferro et al., 2010), post-high school positive results (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003), school and community benefits (Stearns & Glennie, 2010; Veliz & Shakib, 2012), and heightened civic engagement in general (Braddock et al., 2007; Kniffin et al., 2014).

Benefits of Interscholastic Sport

As education became a legal necessity for children in the United States, athletics evolved to become an increasingly relevant aspect of the school experience.

Massachusetts became the first state requiring schooling for children in 1852, and it became the first state to provide organized interscholastic athletics. Through sports organizational efforts, an outlet was provided for low-class immigrant children who formerly were playing in the streets (Freidman, 2013). Interscholastic high school sports developed in the 1870s and 1880s and, by the end of 1903, the YMCA was instrumental in establishing the first public high school Athletic League in New York City. This league instilled values in its participants and only children with good behavior and those that had received at least a B average were permitted to play (Ibid). At the time, educators wanted to rein in, and control injury and other adverse outcomes related to unregulated

sports gatherings and activities (Gould, 2016). School leaders and coaches identified a need to model and set standards and expectations for both current and future student-athletes with the understanding that these children would eventually be part of a society that would be contributing towards the benefit for all people. Other states soon followed Massachusetts' lead, and in the late 1800s and early 1900s, there were high school athletic leagues all over the country.

Early high school athletic endeavors were developed almost exclusively for the benefit of Anglo-American boys. Over 177 cities organized school sports programs between 1903 and 1915. The pioneer of these programs was Luther Gulick who established the New York Public Schools Athletic League (Putney, 2011). Boys all over the country found school-sponsored sports they enjoyed. The purpose of the initial development of these activities was to “encourage a healthy, strong body and mind through competitive exercises” (education.stateuniversity.com, 2020). Up until the late 20th century, however, there remained pervasive sexism within the programs of high school athletics. With the passage of Title IX in 1972, the participation rates of girls rose dramatically (Seefeldt & Ewing, 1997). In 1971, data compiled by the National Federation of State High School Associations suggests that 294,015 girls compared to 3,666,917 boys participated in high school sports. By 1995, those numbers rose to 2,240,461 and 3,536,359 respectively (ibid.). Additionally, serious barriers for African American and minority students existed prior to the passage of Civil Rights laws (Lapchick, 2008). These barriers extended to sports as well as academic opportunities. Although certainly there is more work to be done, the efforts of lawmakers and school districts have, over the past sixty years, significantly “leveled the playing field”

opportunities available to *all* students, and the turning point of this could be attributed to *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (Duigan, 2021).

Outcomes Related to Sport Participation

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was formed to guide fair play and safety in sport, guidance for athletic governance, academic regulation, and revenue generation under one organization. Since the NCAA was formed in 1906, it has implemented and monitored rules and regulations that high schools must follow. Today, the NCAA organizes institutions into competitive play, regulates grade point averages for students, and has the power to test students for prohibited substances such as steroids. Currently, the New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJISSA) further governs and regulates play for student-athletes across the state in New Jersey high schools. This organization was developed in 1918 with a membership of twenty-one members and has grown to over 430 members in 2016 (NJISSA, 2016). Each of these organizations' mission and vision statements detail purposes related to the development of good citizens and the requirement of specific criteria that must be met in order to participate or maintain participation. As these organizations indicate, the traits and characteristics that can be learned through interscholastic sports participation in the schools can be vitally beneficial for students' overall current and potential achievement and success.

Playing high school sports can lead to future academic opportunities. The advantages of segueing secondary athletics to college athletics are both immediate and lifelong. Four hundred and sixty thousand student-athletes compete at the collegiate level, and they compete in twenty-four sports every year and this is more student participation

on record than ever before (ncaa.org, 2020). These student-athletes have access to advanced technology, academic tutoring, and highly qualified academic advisors. Over \$3.5 billion in athletic scholarships are awarded each year to over 180,000 NCAA student-athletes. The NCAA has also recently developed a student-athlete leadership program entitled “Athletes Using Their Power.” Their mission is “to educate and empower student-athletes, coaches, and athletics administrators through transformative experiences that develop effective leaders, cultivate an inclusive community and enhance the college sports landscape” (www.ncaa.org, 2020). Participating in high school and college sports fosters an environment offering students the skills to learn, compete and succeed all while having access to the best medical care, coaches, fields, and equipment available. In return, student-athletes graduate at higher rates than their peers and are better prepared for post-graduate life (NCAA, 2020). Governing organizations hold athletic programs to specific standards. If high school sports are implemented incorrectly, adverse outcomes such as stress, burnout, motivational loss, increased risk behaviors, and lower morality can result (Gould, Cowburn, & Shields, 2014). Part of the mission of effective athletic organizations is to hold all athletes to demonstrate and operate in a manner that displays civic mindedness. This mindedness provides structure and support for years beyond participation in high school athletics. Coaches have a critical role in this process. Athletics can provide a stable yet nurturing and fulfilling environment for students at the high school level. They can provide opportunities for meaningful good citizenship life lessons. Some of the positive benefits identified for student-athletes related to athletic participation include discipline, commitment, perseverance, and personal growth related to self-concept (Patel & Brown, 2017). Students who participate

in extracurricular activities, including sports, have improved goal-setting skills, demonstrated time management, showed emotional control, and exhibited leadership, intelligence, and the ability to get along with others (Dworkin et al., 2003; Hansen et al., 2003). Students who participate in athletics exhibit confidence, are happier, are less anxious, and have a decreased risk of suicidal behavior (Taliaferro et al., 2008). In public high schools around the country, student-athletes are expected to serve as positive school community members in the public eye. Participating in interscholastic athletics can assist in character development and, it has the ability to teach motivation, discipline, perseverance, and self-esteem which may not be easily learned in the classroom (Caudil & Mixon, 2012); thus, athletics may well provide additional support to the traditional classroom setting.

Playing high school sports leads to expanded opportunities for students in the future. According to the NCAA data, African American student-athletes experience a graduation rate advantage, by ten percentage points, over African American non-athletes (NCAA, 2014). It is essential to highlight, however, that African American male students at the top conference level schools experience significantly *lower* graduation rates than the overall student population (Harper et al., 2018). Gender differences regarding student-athlete college graduation rates are also interesting. Women have higher graduation rates than men since the 1980s, as of the 1990s when the NCAA started tracking its athletes, and Division I female athletes excel more than male athletes academically. Additionally, women in sports graduate at a higher rate than men (Nagel, 2018).

Through sports participation, student-athletes build an internal support system to aid in their matriculation to society and learn to operate as an adult. Interscholastic

athletic events help student-athletes grow in terms of their responsibility, honesty, maturity, character, self-respect and respect toward others (Chu, Segrave, & Becker, 1985). Benefits of participating in high school sports include reduced dropout rates, increased interest in continual educational endeavors beyond high school, and more positive educational experiences (Hartmann, 2008; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). Some researchers believe that by participating in extracurricular activities students can increase their sense of belonging and reduce truism and dropout. It is believed that by developing relationships and increasing networks within schools the student dropout rate is decreased (Mahoney, 2000; Mahoney and Cairns, 1997). This and related research indicate that perhaps engaging with networks of people such as athletic teams help students to feel connected to their high schools and such connections may lower dropout rates and enhance academic achievement.

Coaches Leadership

Motivation is the process whereby goal-directed activities are instigated and sustained (Shunck et al., 2014). From its inception, “social cognitive theory has emphasized the importance of motivation in human behavior” (Ryan, 2019). In sports, motivation is an element and series of connections produced by teammates and coaches that inspire athletes to work collaboratively with one another to meet goals and demonstrate success (Bridge & Roquemore, 1996). The critical role of a coach in competitive interscholastic sports is obvious. Research shows that coaches have a significant influence on their athletes’ overall emotional and moral development, their individual motivation, and their future educational and career goals (Gould, 2014). The

behavior of coaches can also have a significant effect on athletes who participate on their teams (Outlaw & Toriello, 2014). The relationship between a coach and their athletes can determine both the levels of stress and motivation for their overall teams and individual players (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003), and both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can be determined from the external outcomes affected by coaching behaviors. For example, effective coaches often use technical assistance and positive feedback in an attempt to increase overall effort (Hansen, Gilbert, & Hamel, 2003). Amorose and Horn (2001) found that student-athletes had increased support for their coaches when they were provided with higher levels of positive feedback from coaches who used democratic leadership and used intrinsic motivation. Similarities exist between a teacher's academic expectations for students and those of a coach to an athlete; which suggests performances can be predicted by the coach's expectations (Weinberg & Gould, 2003). In addition, the coach-athlete relationship can affect achievement, work, and quality of life (Frey, Czech, Kent, & Johnson, 2006). This reflects Bandura's social cognitive theory work (2001) as it relates to motivation research. Bandura suggests that there are shared mutual interactions among self, our behaviors, and the environment. So, how can coaches motivate students who perhaps do not have a high level of initial talent for sport or civic mindedness? Behavioral, personal, and social/environmental factors all create reciprocal interactions when viewed through the lens of social cognitive theory (Ryan, 2019). People use "vicarious, symbolic, and self-regulatory practices as they strive to develop a sense of agency in their lives" (Ibid). Coaches possess the ability to allow for student-athletes to learn vicariously through positive observations, and this is particularly effective because the learning environment is one that has been *chosen* rather than *imposed* (Bandura,

2001). Motivation in the sports team/coaching relationship is a key process because the athletes are more apt to attend to, retain, and model things they feel are important.

Coaches can heavily influence this process.

Although striving to win is always the goal, student-athletes gain additional benefits from interscholastic athletics with transformational athletic coaches. Banwell and Kerr (2016) contend that coaches can impact student-athletes' development through modeling and mentoring, building relationships, and reflection. Coaches can influence and guide environments that can result in positive outcomes for student-athletes. The multitude of roles that coaches fulfill for some student-athletes can provide them with the responsibility for the overall development of their athletes and their personal character building, physical, mental, and moral growth (Brunelle, Danish, & Forneris, 2007).

An effective coach is necessary to support the social, emotional, and physical needs of athletes so that they can work towards their greatest potential (Becker, 2009). The way student-athletes respond to their coaches can depend on the style of leadership that coaches employ with their teams (Riemer, 2007). Coaches are held accountable for competitive activities that are extemporaneous and unable to be predicted (Edwards, 1973). Life can be spontaneous and unpredictable and effective coaches can potentially instill civic mindedness to help navigate student-athletes through challenging times. One of the essential roles of interscholastic sports coaches is to recognize the importance of modeling and teaching character traits (Lumpkin & Stokowski, 2011). The research of leaders, such as coaches, demonstrates a variety of leadership qualities that help one's leadership style emerge (Zaccaro, 2012). Through effective leadership styles, coaches can model and inspire student-athletes to engage and implement positive leadership behaviors

themselves. In return, those skills can transfer into the everyday life of student-athletes, and these attributes can contribute to the development of their citizenship for the future. On the contrary, coaches with ineffective leadership styles may model behaviors and characteristics that have potentially adverse outcomes.

Coach leadership can be attributed to the overall success of a student- athlete or an athletic team (Ch'ng & Koh Tan, 2006). Coaches have the ability to match their leadership styles with their athletes learning styles to produce increased team satisfaction and personal development for individual athletes, which in return can impact overall performance, motivate athletes to perform better (Moen, Hoigaard, & Peters, 2014). The reciprocal connection between coaches' leadership styles and the effect upon student-athletes may transfer outside of the traditional field setting, as student-athletes learn from their coaches how to operate in a civic-minded manner in society. Pido (2014) found that there is a significant relationship between coaching leadership style and athlete satisfaction. The result could mean that by motivating improvement on the field this could transfer to everyday off-field experiences as student-athletes live their lives and contribute to the global good and the development of an ideal citizen. Having the ability to demonstrate adaptability in different situations as a leader can model and influence the future of the individual athletes and athletic teams with whom the coach engages.

Leadership is generally defined as “a process of influence” (Gilbert, 2018). Transformational leadership, although widely studied in general, has not been extensively measured in the context of high school coaching situations. However, knowledge gained from the study of leadership theory as applied in politics, psychology, and organizations is applicable to the “society” of high school athletic teams.

Transformational Leadership

Originally developed by Burns in 1978, the transformational leadership theory was further expanded by Bass (1985). Bass added to Burns's concept by explaining how transformational leadership could be systematic and explained how it impacts follower motivation and their overall output. Transformational leadership causes a change in individuals and social systems. Some theorists, such as Sergiovanni (2006), view transformational leadership as the ideal way to meet the needs of all stakeholders in the educational setting. Sergiovanni's demonstrates that leaders can influence positive change by motivating and encouraging all members of the organization focusing on a collaborative approach to problem solving and working toward the development of norms and commitments, by taking ownership of their actions. It focuses on shared mindset and cooperation towards an end result. "All members are given opportunities to communicate the best way to achieve end results which better ensured a strong culture and commitment level" (Jacquelin, 2017). Transformational leadership supports optimistic change in followers, who, in this study, are high school athletes, with the end result of forming followers into leaders. This leadership style improves motivation, morale, and follower performance. This brings together the follower's sense of identity and the collective identity of the team. Transformational leadership inspires followers and challenges them to high standards while understanding the strengths and weaknesses to best support them in the future. Transformational coaches inspire student-athletes (the followers) to accomplish more by concentrating on the followers' values and helping them to align these values with the values of the organization. The job of professionals working in

education is to aid in the production of civic-minded individuals (students) that can contribute to the greater good in society. Interscholastic athletics plays a significant role in education, and the impact of effective coaches may improve the educational system and potentially society as a whole. Transformational coaches can inspire, encourage, and lead their teams in a direction to achieve more than they thought was possible in all areas of life.

Problem Statement

The benefits of transformational leadership are well known, however, there is little research exploring how transformational leadership of coaches impacts student-athletes. Educational institutions have implemented curricula and programs to aid in the assistance of developing students beyond the expectations of the traditional classroom, and educators and legislators seem to understand that there is a necessity to prepare students for their expected roles in current and future societal settings. A natural extension of this opportunity rests with extra-curricular high school athletics. This study will seek to acknowledge that the transformational leadership traits coaches use with athletes can aid in the positive development of student-athletes and potentially enhance students' own leadership capabilities and civic mindedness as they live their lives.

Extracurricular activities, such as athletics, can have a lasting impact on student growth and development (Klesse, 1994). Forming an identity for maturing high school students can be a difficult and confusing process and can result in a lack of motivation (Kim et al., 2021). Outlaw and Toriello (2014) posit that the behavior of coaches can have a significant effect on athletes that participate on their teams. Horn (1992) identifies

that coaches should employ leadership techniques that demonstrate moral and model behavior because it can have a pivotal outcome on the player's mental and physical health. Understanding the history, relationships, and potential influences of coaches will allow public high schools in New Jersey to better reach and understand students and their needs as these relate to their developmental trajectories into future leaders and meaningful contributors to society.

It is necessary for coaches to understand their players' needs to serve them best both on and off the field (Cruz and Kim, 2017). The main challenge of coaches is to understand players well enough to identify the potential outcomes that can result from both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that the athlete's value (Bell, 1987). Understanding the characteristics of effective coaches and how their specific leadership styles can develop strong relationships between the coach and their respective athletes may lead to a correlation of transformational leadership and civic minded practices. The impact that high school coaches can have on the development of future citizens is pivotal. Demonstrating core morals and values, understanding motivation theory and the utilization of transformational leadership practices in all aspects of high school athletics is vitally important to the overall mission of public education.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this two-phased mixed methods explanatory study is (1) to identify transformational leadership traits of New Jersey public school high school coaches in a diverse sampling of school districts; and (2) to explore the perceived impact of leadership that athletic coaches have on the overall civic minded development of high

school student-athletes. This research involves analyses of quantitative data via administration of the Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) to public high school coaches to identify coaches with high transformational leadership qualities through a participant survey model. The second phase of the study involves in-person and online exploratory interviews and the subsequent coding of resultant patterns, regarding coaches' perspectives on the relationships between transformational leadership styles the perceived impact.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study:

1. What transformational leadership practices do New Jersey Head High School Coaches self-report according to their responses on the Leadership Practices Inventory?
 - a. Which practices do NJHSHC most frequently self-report in their responses on the LPI?

2. What perceived role to NJHHSC play in the development of students' civic-mindedness?

3. How do high school head coaches connect their transformational leadership practices to the development of students' civic-mindedness?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the purpose of the current study:

Interscholastic Athletics/Sports. Interscholastic athletics/sports is the system and organization of sports competitions between schools at the high school level that can be local, regional, and statewide.

Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership is the Leadership Practices Inventory or LPI, an online assessment tool used to assess specific leadership behaviors. This is a self-report assessment designed to measure leadership competencies (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Transformational Leadership. Leadership that stimulates and inspires followers to achieve more than they thought possible, extraordinary outcomes and to form their own form of leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Theoretical Framework

This study will be examined through the lens of transformational leadership. An overabundance of scholarly research suggests that transformational leadership is significant and has benefits for those that utilize its tenets (Bass, 1999; Bass et al., 2003; Cummings et al., 2010, Green, 2015). Through the work of many social scientists trying to identify what encompasses leadership, Mora (2012) suggests that leadership is linked directly to performance or results and identities that leadership is a process of intentional influence, leadership means having followers, inspiring people, and achieving results.

Transformational leadership allows for the shaping of a new culture or structure of governance. It shares leadership among the group to implement the use of effective

change in the developmental processes among group members (Bramford-Wade & Moss, 2010). Transformational leaders gain the interest of followers by identifying the goals and tasks they seek (Robbins & Coulter, 2007). Coaches have the role of developing student-athletes into ideal citizens while participating in interscholastic sporting events. Transformational leadership can result in extraordinary outcomes that can contribute to winning sports records (Kahn et al., 2015). Understanding how transformational leadership can be implemented to guide student behaviors and impact civic mindedness will be the focus of this study. Transformational leadership theory acknowledges the importance of emotional, symbolic, and highly motivating behaviors that appeal to the mind and heart of the follower, such as the athlete (Ergeneli, Gohar, and Temirbekova, 2007). Based on the principals of Bass (1985) and Posner and Kouzes (1988), it is highlighted that transformational leadership is the process of leaders motivating followers by developing trust, increasing awareness, and providing followers with the tools to perform beyond expectations. These expectations can be applied to all areas of life, which aid in the development of citizenship.

This study will be rooted in the leadership dimensions of Posner and Kouzes (1988) the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), which consists of five transformational leadership aspects: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. The Leadership Practices Inventory directly relates to the beliefs and practices of transformational leadership. Posner (2016) identifies that the LPI is conceptually based on the transformational leadership model of Kouzes and Posner; it is an analysis of over three million participants and their leadership

experiences. Athletic competitions are dynamic environments that are ideal for transformational leadership (Posner and Kouzes, 1988).

Transformational leadership first evolved with Weber (1963) from charismatic leadership. Burns in 1978, made a clear distinction between transactional leadership and transformational leadership when it was identified that through transformational leadership, the needs of followers are raised, and one looks to change individuals, groups and organizations. Transformational leadership allows followers to look beyond their selves and work toward the greater good for the entire group (Bass, 1997). A transformational leader engages followers in leadership that creates a vision that allows for innovation and motivation (Bass, 1999). Through transformational leadership, athletes are expected to question themselves and are provided with the opportunity to be more proactive. They are challenged to become more innovative and creative and to rethink their underlying assumptions while developing new outcomes. This process of self-discovery allows athletes to develop themselves both on and off the sports field as this concept of transformational leadership is applied in all areas of their lives. Clear evidence has shown that transformational leadership and performance are linked (Lowe et al., 1996; Breevaart et al., 2014).

Through transformational leadership, coaches inspire, motivate, challenge, model, and encourage student-athletes to develop into model citizens for the future.

Transformational leadership allows leaders to communicate a vision and share a symbolic influence or motivation that will inspire followers' behaviors beyond what they typically see for themselves for the good of the group (Avolio and Bass, 1988; Kouzes and Posner,

2000). Positive motivation and characteristic modeling can impact character development for athletes as they follow the motivation, inspiration, and leadership of their coach.

Civic Mindedness

Educational institutions develop missions and visions that revolve around creating a well-rounded student with notions of civic-mindedness while acknowledging the need for assisting the child with the tools needed that will assimilate them and assist them in contributing to society as a good citizen with moral development (Kezar, 2002). Schools receive funding to develop and create programs that offer civic-mindedness. These programs provide students with the opportunity to engage in community service initiatives and projects (McLaughlin, 2010). Educational institutions should offer regularly organized opportunities for their students to engage in for an increased understanding and acceptance of the world around them in which they regularly engage. As part of the educational experience, coaches might look to offer civic-mindedness experiences for their student-athletes. Student-athletes working for and with members of their communities in a civic engagement lens can provide a unique opportunity for coaches and school personnel to harvest and grow intellectual development and critical thinking while encouraging student-athletes to take ownership of their civic responsibilities (Mayhew & Enberh, 2011). The Civic Missions School report acknowledges that schools can play a clear role in increasing student civic engagement (Levine, 2003). This report highlights the societal commitment needed to encourage and teach students to be civically engaged and act with civic responsibility; through teaching these components in athletics, student-athletes can bridge these

concepts to their personal experiences and the academic setting (Moore & Mendez, 2014). When learning institutions implement civic-mindedness concepts, they promote civic engagement (Hatcher, 2011) and increase learning outcomes (Steinberh, Hatcher, & Brindle, 2011). In addition, civic-mindedness allows students to see their connection to the community, society, and justice systems (Einfeld & Collins, 2008). It is essential that when coaches and athletes interact, they build relationships based on understanding and the acceptance of embracing diversity and a demonstration of how one can contribute to their communities through service and volunteerism (Lo Re, DeSimone, & Buddensick, 2011). Building a sense of civic responsibility can be one way to develop civic mindedness. Students who have civic responsibility participate in actions that result in the greater good for society and their community (Mayhew & Enberg, 2011).

Civic engagement volunteer activities sometimes offer the first snapshot for students to see life from a different perspective other than their own. These experiences often assist the students with accepting social and cultural issues unlike their own (Green, 2003). Jones & Abes (2004) discusses that this is the first time one can identify the concept of white privilege. These civic opportunities offer a perspective that student-athletes can apply to their own lives and the social and cultural norms around them. When engaging in this type of civic responsibility, students may, for the first time in their lives, begin to reflect and change their own minds sets based on the social and cultural issues they have witnessed (Amna,2012). This can assist student-athletes in the process of changing their thinking, impacting civic mindedness (Einfeld & Collins, 2008). Students engaging in these activities are allowed the opportunity and voice to discuss the differences and address the problems witnessed. At the same time, coaches and teachers

can use these experiences to strengthen the relationship between democracy, citizenship, and academics for all students involved (Einfeld & Collins, 2008). Civic minded student-athletes will have the ability to contribute to their communities and assist in developing solutions to real-world problems (Moore & Mendez, 2014). This engagement with society will help offer more sustainability for the future of communities where its members can think critically and solve societal problems (Amna, 2012; Eyler & Giles, 1999). Eyler & Giles (1999) identify this as changing a mindset. Coaches can change student-athletes minds through coaching experiences on the field. It is hopeful that when students engage in civic jobs such as volunteering at a homeless shelter, they start to question how the problem can be resolved (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). By engaging in these civic activities, students may analyze their own culture and those around them, develop self-awareness, and examine what they can contribute to society to offer change and betterment (Rhoads & Neururer, 1998; Youniss, McLellan, & Mazer, 2001). Schools and coaches are responsible for engaging individual students in service opportunities that will enrich the student-athletes with a set of tools to engage in citizenship long after they graduate, leaving a lasting mark on society as a whole for the better.

Delimitations

For the purpose of this study, a preliminary participant questionnaire, administration of the LPI, and interviews were conducted in an attempt to gain information in a manner that would answer the research questions, allowing for the triangulation of data. Each method of data collection is subjected to individual bias; in order to avoid that bias multilevel analysis was conducted. Using different data collection

methods allows for a full understanding of the data and helps to decrease risk and increase the validity of the study (Roepstorff et al., 2015).

Only coaches that have current New Jersey public high school coaching positions will be invited to participate. The data collected or reported can be misconstrued. The research-based relationship I establish with the coaches will allow for the interview and survey to be exclusively research-related because of a professional relationship that was created solely based on this study. No prior relationships existed with the participants.

The survey tool, the LPI, includes internal reliability and has consistent repeatability, it maintains consistency over time, producing the same results and respondents have found the LPI to have excellent face validity (Posner, 2016). According to Thomas (2004), the internal reliability of the LPI, measured by Cronbach's Alpha, is strong, with scales measuring above the .75 level.

There are factors in the environment that could impede participation. The motivation to participate in the study could be impacted as individuals focus on modes of survival during the national crisis. Some athletic seasons during this studies' time frame in the state of New Jersey may have been postponed or canceled, and individuals overseeing these areas are performing duties outside of their regular job duties and responsibilities to assist in all needed areas in education. As the fall 2020 athletic season restarts with outdoor athletics events post covid closures, many coaches and athletic directors have returned to their historically assigned positions. Participants may have had limited access to communication and lack the tools to participate in the study. Coaches were invited via email, telephone and internet conferencing.

Significance of the Study

This study was conducted to better understand how the transformational leadership of coaches' aid in the development of civic mindedness for student-athletes. In addition to filling the void in research on this topic, this study aimed to identify the particular transformational leadership traits that coaches use with student-athletes in high schools in the State of New Jersey. Furthermore, this study also serves as a launching pad for future research by revealing additional benefits that student-athletes gain from transformational leadership that can be applied in everyday life situations, aiding in lifelong service and citizenship.

Policy

O'Hara (2001) suggests that preparing students to succeed in the world and as socially responsible citizens at the same time is not an incompatible goal. Through educational mission statements and policy, it is important that individuals such as coaches operate in a manner that accentuates civic responsibility that aids in the development of each athlete's sense of citizenship. Coaches dedicated to fostering the growth and development of their athletes as they grow with their respected athletic programs will gain more than just athletic advancement. Educational institutions should look to use extracurricular programs such as athletics to aid in the development and teaching of civic engagement. It is vital to provide opportunities that allow students to participate in civic engagement and civic mindedness that surrounds problem solving and teamwork (Pitre et al., 2017). As teammates, student-athletes can engage in projects and philanthropic efforts that provide them with the needed experiences to develop their

leadership skills, practice the skills in a community setting, and reflect on those practices to refine individual engagement with others (Acker-Hocevar, Cruz-Janzen, & Wilson, 2012). Athletes that can attribute their advancement as contributing citizens to society can share and expand on their personal experiences in future endeavors, promoting and sustaining change that can be applied for the betterment of future generations.

Practice

According to O'Connor et al. (2018), creativity and innovation in schools are just not about the economy and school itself but also about children becoming the people they have the potential to be. It is crucial to engage in an ongoing process of educational improvement to develop learning environments that best meet the 21st-century learner's needs and prepare them for today's socially and digitally connected world (O'Connor et al., 2018). Through learning experiences, transactions can occur between an individual at that time and the environment to emphasize the importance of the interactions between people and their environment (Dewey, 1938). Through continued practice and engagement with the community and collaboration with others and problem-solving in the environment, student-athletes can develop an understanding of real-world problems such as disappointment, stress, failure, and success both on and off the sports field. By engaging with society and practicing leadership and problem-solving skills, student-athletes will gain experience that will contribute to their individual growth and civic-minded responsibilities. Coaches and educational leaders can implement regular routines and practices to promote and engage student-athletes in a routine that enables them to succeed and gain the confidence to continue to pursue and practice the skills necessary to be prosperous in today's society.

This study indicates that New Jersey public high school's should continue to seek and implement learning opportunities that engage students in situations that allow them to foster and grow into contributing members of society through athletics that surround the ideals of civic-minded members of society. Schools can develop service-learning to teach citizenship education. By doing so, educational leaders and coaches can promote civic responsibility by providing student-athletes with a chance to engage in the community to promote civic minded thinking and behaviors (Gage, 2003).

Research

Importance of this study provides insight into transformational leadership and the development of student-athletes as citizens. Through a lens of transformational leadership initiatives presented by coaches, their engagement with athletes and their expectations and delivered practices can inform and deepen student-athletes' understanding and knowledge about civic-mindedness and individual citizenship. Coaches and educational leaders can use high school athletics as a supplemental practice to deliver the tools to students to be successful. Also, this study can serve as a building block for future research and the development of evolving athletic programs in such a way to implement additional service-learning projects that promote civic responsibility and an increased understanding of individual civic citizenship for future careers and potential volunteerism. A subsequent study measuring the impact of formal service-learning initiatives implemented by athletics departments across the state and their benefits to the community and its citizens can determine if student engagement provides improved relationships between community stakeholders and the educational system. A longitudinal study of this nature could provide an in-depth look at how schools'

educational civic-minded programs are implemented, and the long-term effects sustained by the individuals involved and how they were applied to their own lives over time.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter One situates the current study within the broader context of interscholastic athletics in New Jersey secondary schools, focusing on coaching. It discusses and directs the readers towards the purpose and context of the dissertation. Chapter Two provides an examination of the literature reviewed for the study. It provides a robust theoretical basis for the dissertation. Chapter Three offers a thorough discussion of the methodological framework and offers the basis for the conclusions and recommendations. Chapter Four presents the findings of the qualitative and quantitative data of the study. Chapter Five is the study's conclusion, which provides the meaning that can be made based on the comparisons and findings conducted within the study. It also offers suggestions for future hiring, professional development, and policy change.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Transformational leaders can encourage and influence followers beyond their expectations (Newland et al., 2014). The literature review that follows examines transformational leadership and athletic coaching in public high schools.

Transformational leadership techniques can transform various environments such as the classroom, workplace, and home. This leadership style may significantly affect an athlete's performance, producing positive outcomes such as winning records. There are four primary aspects of transformational idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Avolio et al., 1999).

Interestingly, there is still little knowledge about what constitutes the impact of transformational leadership in a secondary school sports team environment.

While transformational leadership is the overarching perspective that guides my research, I also comprehensively researched the existing literature regarding civic mindedness. This study focuses on secondary education athletics and coaching and how transformational leadership relates to students' civic mindedness and motivation based upon self-perceived characteristics of coaches. Also explored is the role coaches may play in helping develop citizens outside of the school athletics departments and within school communities. Drawing from the transformational leadership theory, I have identified gaps in existing research and explore connections. Finally, research related to the validity and reliability of the LPI is included, as this instrument was designed to measure transformational leadership traits and is utilized in this current study.

The Effects of Athletic Participation

Educational Outcomes

Compared to any other voluntary activity offered for adolescents, sports have the most significant number of participants (Cziksentsmihalyi & Larson, 1984; Larson & Verma, 1999). Currently, there are almost eight million high school student-athletes in the United States (NCAA, 2021). Research has shown a positive interrelationship between high school sports participation and academic achievement (Burns et al., 2020; Dyer et al., 2017; Ewing et al., 2002). In contradiction, adverse effects of athletic participation on academics also have been identified (Lizandra et al., 2016; Eide & Ronan, 2001). Many student-athletes will compete in the same labor field as other graduates, where their abilities on the playing field are perhaps less important than their academic achievement (DeBrock, Hendricks, & Koenker, 1996). Student-athletes spend a vast amount of time practicing and competing which can affect their social, emotional, and educational outcomes. It is possible they can accumulate different skill sets and achieve different educational outcomes based on time spent with their coaches (Routon & Walker, 2015; Wesley, 2015). Student athletes can learn to persevere in tough times, stay dedicated, and accept failure. These traits may be harder to teach in a traditional classroom setting.

Some of the elements that weigh heavily on student-athletes include academic eligibility requirements, academic tutoring, and social norms regarding the importance of academic achievement (Fox et al., 2010). Both high school boys and girls have shown evidence of a higher-grade point average related to organized sports participation, and

sports are associated with improved academic outcomes (Fox et al., 2010; Fredricks, 2006; Kleitman & Marsh, 2003; Marsh, 1993; Eccles & Barber, 1999.) Adversely, some researchers have found no relationship between sports involvement and academic performance (Sauerwein & Fischer, 2016). Academic supports are available to some athletes who may determine the outcome of their success. College acceptance rates for athletes are higher at academically rigorous schools (Bowen & Levin, 2011), and this could result in athletes choosing paths that may be less rigorous to stay eligible to participate in sport (Arcidiacono et al., 2012). Most sport participation and academic achievement research has been conducted in the United States where there are criteria to remain eligible, linking participation to attendance patterns, grades, and social relationships between peers and teachers (Coakley, 2011). The overwhelming research data in this area, however, point to findings that indicate that athletic participation aids in overall higher academic achievement (Sangmin, 2014; Bradley et al., 2013; Chu & Zhang, 2018; Dyer et al., 2017; Owen et al., 2021). Student-athletes know they must perform academically at a certain level to play their sport. All the public high schools in the United States responded to the NCAA's requirement to raise the minimum GPAs of athletes to 2.3 from 2.0 effective in 2016. Student-athletes must maintain a certain level of academic achievement to participate on high school sports teams.

Engagement and Sense of Belonging

Participating in extracurricular activities becomes important for many students during adolescence. They explore developing interests and identities, make friends, and aim to fit in with their peers (Dworkin et al., 2003). The stage-environment fit theory suggests that students who feel that they belong place increased value on learning and

education (Eccles & Midgley, 1989), resulting in a greater connection to school and increased participation in activities (Brown & Evans, 2002). However, the demands that athletics put on students may cause them to not take advantage of other opportunities for social interaction because of their quest for superior athletic performance.

Due to the lack of opportunities for social interactions, sports may be the only way for student-athletes to connect socially (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1997). This is a particularly interesting phenomenon to explore during a pandemic era. In other words, sports participation might be one of the few ways these students learn how to interact in a group, how to respond to leadership, and how to act as leaders. Dotterer et al. (2007) found that minority students in grades six to nine connected with school more when they participated in extracurricular activities, such as athletics, and that they seek out social situations such as sports to satisfy their social needs (Allen, 2003; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Participation in a moderate number of school-based extracurricular activities like athletics may help high school students to feel more connected to their peers and the school environment, and fitting in and belonging with others is likely an important precedent of academic motivation, self-efficacy, and performance (Benner et al. 2008; Knifsend et al., 2012; Ference & Muth, 2004). These factors may point to overall increased positive school experiences.

The need for positive school experiences cannot be denied for today's students, as almost half of the students starting high school were already "disconnected" in some way from school by the time they start ninth grade pre-pandemic (Sulkowski, Demaray, & Lazarus, 2012). In addition, participation on a sports team may have a psychological impact that affects students' sense of care and security. A perceived sense of belonging

has been viewed as a psychological component, and research has demonstrated support between perceived belonging and positive school outcomes such as adaptive self-regulation, academic competence, affect toward school, and achievement (Roeser, Midgley, & Urdan, 1996; Sarrazin, Vallerand, Guillet, Pelletier, & Cury, 2002; Anderman, 1999; Goodenow, 1993b). The opportunities for social connections via sports provide adolescents with opportunities involving shared experiences and opportunities to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships, give meaning to their sports participation, and provide socialization and belonging (Yanik, 2018).

Developing Life Skills

High school athletics and participation can be linked to life skills. Research has revealed that certain life skills can predict the outcome of a youth's future well-being, academic performance, and job satisfaction (Shek & Chai, 2020). Developing life skills allows for problem-solving, goal setting, and leadership, giving them the ability to succeed in life in the environments in which they live (Danish et al., 2004; Eime et al., 2013; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2008; Kendellen & Camire, 2017). It has been noted that student-athletes learn and refine life skills such as characteristics, leadership, hard work ethic, emotional control, time management, teamwork, conflict resolution, empathy, and goal setting while participating in athletic endeavors (Gould et al., 2013; Voelker, Gould, Cranford, 2011; Bailey, Hillman, Arent, and Petitpas, 2013). These experiences assist vulnerable youth in developing diverse life skills for success (Hermens et al., 2017). Sports coaches who promote life skills that are positive, and a philosophy based on a strong background of moral and ethical behavior with self-accountability may directly impact the development of student-athletes (Trulson, 1986).

Health Behaviors

Research shows that students who are involved in sports exhibit and maintain healthier lifestyles overall. Student-athletes report fewer health problems, higher self-concepts, and have fewer discipline problems than non-athletes (Steiner, McQuivey, Pavelski, Pitts, & Kraemer, 2000; Broh, 2002; Fejgin, 1994; Marsh, 1993). Recent research even suggests that high school athletes continue to exercise at a higher rate than their peers as they move into middle age (Cruz et al.; Angeli et al., 2017). Additionally, sport is social and provides an opportunity to satisfy a psychological need for connection with others. It provides a context that allows students to meet others, share experiences, and give support and be supported (Allen, 2006). When individuals have a sense of secure attachment with significant others, such as when they participate on a high school team, it can provide a sense of confidence to face challenges and develop their competence satisfying one's psychological needs.

Belonging is necessary for healthy psychological growth and development (Ryan et al., 1995; Ryan, 1993). Belonging to a sports team can result in varying physical and mental health experiences. For example, athletes' perspectives related to contributing to a group, giving support, gaining approval, and pleasing others can contribute to the psychological wellbeing of an athlete (Schilling and Hayashi, 2001). Engaging adolescents while they are still participating in youth sports may be the best chance to cultivate a skill set that supports life-long success, such as long-term health and behavioral choices (Manore et al., 2017). If adolescent athletes can learn how to care for their overall health and wellness needs, they may well have a high chance of sustaining these behaviors into adulthood.

Youth are often encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities like athletics to prevent possible interaction with peers involved in undesirable activities (Merkel, 2013). A sports team's climate and culture provide an ideal environment to promote life skills related to healthful choices (Goldberg et al., 2000). It is speculated that students who participate in athletics are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior (Watson et al., 2019; Elder et al., 2000; Gardner et al., 2009). Participating in sports has been positively related to a sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987; 1979). Such a sense of coherence supports a person's ability to endure stressful events in a healthful way. Vulnerable adolescents can encounter stressors daily, and a stronger sense of coherence may be an essential factor in determining the child's ability to overcome such stressors in positive ways (Super et al., 2018). Organized sport participation in adolescence also is associated with reduced social isolation (Barber et al., 2001).

Post-High School Results

Students who are dedicated to athletics are often competitive, hardworking, and disciplined individuals who value teamwork. These traits are sought and often rewarded in the labor market they might encounter later in adulthood (DeBrock, Hendricks, & Koenker, 1996). Braddock (1981) found that success on the athletic field can provide the same opportunities in which future success is grounded. Additionally, it has been found that former high school athletes fare better in terms of other measures of work attainment, such as wages and fringe benefits, than their non-athlete counterparts (Ewing, 2007).

Participation in high school sports can have additional lifelong benefits. For instance, one 2013 study found that men who played a varsity sport in high school were more likely to be active in old age and experienced decreased early morbidity risk (Dohle

& Wansink, 2013). This same study also found that these individuals experienced satisfactory and long-lasting employment records (Ibid.). There are several possible explanations for this—athletic participation in life can define a person as successful early on, it may enhance interpersonal skills for success with job performance, and it may increase a person’s employment networks early on (Otto and Alwin, 1977).

Furthermore, athletic participation is positively correlated to college attendance, higher grades, higher likeliness to graduate high school, and less likeliness to be on unemployment (Braddock, 1981; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Gorry, 2016; Troutman & Fufur, 2007). Sports participation has the largest impact on students struggling with academics as there are often many means and opportunities to help academically at-risk student-athletes to earn higher grades. In addition to supports provided by the school or coaches who understand how to leverage their particular leadership role to advocate for their students, Gorry (2016) hypothesizes that this may be the result of lower-performing academically at-risk student-athletes socializing with higher-achieving peers or driven by incentives to continue playing sports. Early networking and positive academic grade influences might affect these students as they move into their later work lives.

Athletics and Civic Engagement

There is little known about the relationship between high school athletic participation and civic engagement. This is important because of the amount of time that student-athletes spend focusing and training on their respective sport. Athletic coaches can instill civic responsibility and civic mindedness thinking among their sports teams and the dynamic sports culture. Civic engagement research argues that early experiences

and opportunities that encourage young people to develop civic identity set the course for becoming engaged adults (Musick & Wilson, 2008; Youniss & Yates, 1997). While traditionally civic engagement is considered engagement in political activities, more current uses and discussions include individuals accepting their role in helping to produce the common good and assisting in helping to solve the world's problems (Colby et al., 2000). For further understanding, the concept of civic engagement includes volunteer opportunities and participation and engagement in local organizations and groups. This more contemporary use recognizes that civic engagement can take different forms of engaging adolescents and can be represented outside of regular membership related to volunteerism and political activity. As defined by Larson-Keagy (2002), the concept of civic responsibility is the "active participation in the public life of a community in an informed, committed, and constructive manner, with a focus on the common good." Civic responsibility can be present in various settings and situations, not only in the ideal civic sector (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995).

Sports participation at all levels can be viewed as political (Sage, 2016).

Interestingly, it has been acknowledged that young voters are more willing to participate when the elections are competitive (Levine & Palfrey, 2007). High school sports can be associated with competitive values (Sage, Eitzen, & Beal, 2018), meaning that student-athletes may be more likely to vote in such elections. Sport at all levels, including sports participation during adolescence, is political. High school athletes engage in politics when casting a vote for team captains and discussing athletic policies (Fortin, 2017). This very act is a practice run for their future civic engagement.

Sports programs offer opportunities for students to become civically involved. Some have theorized that sports participation builds character (Rees, Howell, & Miracle 1990; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). Character can be identified as the moral qualities of an individual that aid them in being good and having the ability to demonstrate what is right (Beller & Stoll, 1995; Gough, 1997). When a good character is sustained, it can contribute towards civic identity. Individuals with good character carry qualities such as benevolence, care, trustworthiness, empathy, loyalty, and respect (Beller & Stoll, 1995), all qualities necessary for positive civic engagement. This set of traits involves thinking about others which is the main component of civic activities such as volunteering and assisting others. In many ways, high school athletic participation reflects these traits. Student-athletes learn to cooperate, trust in others, demonstrate sacrifice, and display good sportsmanship. Sports can teach youth about the facets of civil society (Malete et al.,; Dubois, 2020; Siedentop et al., 2020).

Sports participation is tied to socio demographic characteristics, including social class and gender, which can predict participation related to volunteering and voting (Musick & Wilson, 2008; Putnam, 2000; Quintelier, 2015; Eccles & Barber, 1999). In addition, substantial evidence demonstrates volunteering in high school positively impacts students that value civic responsibility and are likely to exhibit similar behaviors related to openness to diversity and challenge in college (Pryor et al., 2009; Whitt et al., 2001). Student-athletes, in many cases, bond together. Interestingly, this may be because the formation of relationships between teammates could potentially limit or prevent civic engagement (Harvey, Lévesque, & Donnelly, 2007) based upon reinforcement of societal hierarchy and social stereotypes (Gruneau, 1985). With these critiques in mind, some

students with similar backgrounds may not be willing to bridge together other students with differences (Kelly, 2011). However, student-athletes, regardless of socioeconomic backgrounds, are expected to work together and embrace one another's differences with a common goal in mind (Ibid). To counteract the negative potential of student-athletes not making meaningful connections with one another, Spaaij (2009) discusses the importance of the need for athletics to be organized and combined with other activities to empower decision-making practices about civic mindedness that affect all of their peers, not just those who share the same backgrounds. This includes relationships with peers and positive adults who coach and support the team (Eccles et al., 2003; Eime et al., 2013). When coaches encourage student-athletes to increase connectedness at school, when student-athletes have the opportunity to belong to a socially valued group, and when they develop positive relationships with all peers and adults, a sense of civic engagement evolves (Kort-Butler, 2012). Such involvement gives students options to find purposeful ways to belong to and give back to their communities, which may positively impact social functioning, academic achievement, and school connectedness outcomes (Ibid). Civic activities teach young people about engagement and understanding, create a sense of social awareness and selflessness, and build a sense of responsibility. They may also help to promote humanitarian ideologies and demonstrate philanthropic approaches to social problems (Rotolo et al., 2020).

Some critiques of high school athletic participation have also been identified through research that counter the development of civic mindedness among student athletes. These include such findings as occasional substance abuse and aggressive behavior (Forbes et al., 2006; Ingram et al., 2022). Still others have found that, in certain

instances, athletics isolate student-athletes from their peers (Bowen & Levin, 2003). For example, Gayles et al. (2012) discovered that, regardless of intentions, high profile student-athletes are less likely to participate in charitable activities than their non-athlete peers. These particular student-athletes, unfortunately, may not have as much time as their peers to engage in civic-minded efforts, and when they do engage, their issues are related to their roles as student-athletes and the societal issues that only personally impact them (Miller & Tolliver, 2018). Thus, as the research demonstrates, high school sports participation and varied related coaching and team activities and levels of engagement, both positive and negative, may well impact students' overall civic engagement.

Impact of Coaches' Leadership

It has been theorized by many researchers that participation in sports enables student-athletes to acquire leadership skills, self-confidence, decision-making ability, empathy, critical thinking, openness to diversity and challenge, and problem-solving skills positively (Mehtap et al., 2019; Wolniak, Pierson, & Pascarella, 2001; Taylor, 1995; Ryan, 1989). Leadership has been identified as one of the essential life skills for young athletes to gain and develop to flourish in both sports and life (Gould, Chung, Smith, & White, 2006). Student-athletes are conditioned in leadership development as they progress through high school even without the influence of their coaches, as they also are learning from team captains and role models on the field and in the classroom to develop the skills necessary to be future leaders (Pierce et al., 2020). Thus, coaches do not develop leadership in isolation. Some coaches use the athletic environment to encourage students to engage with other student-athletes from different backgrounds,

making student-athletes more likely to be culturally conscious (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001; Wolf-Wendel, Toma, & Morpew, 2001). This suggests that student-athletes, if guided effectively, are more likely to help others, even if they are from different backgrounds.

The review of the existing literature has revealed that coaches, regardless of their unique attributes, impact student-athletes. Coaches play an important role in athletes' lives and influence their performance, behavior, and psychological well-being (Kavussanu et al., 2008). Coaches are often required to work in highly stressful environments, make important decisions, deal with adversity, and be held to an extreme set of performance indicators (Giges et al., 2004; Greenleaf et al., 2001). Coaching involves attempting to influence learning and advancement while demonstrating the ability to make decisions positively affecting team effectiveness. Hodgson (2017) suggests that coaches develop these skills through experience, education, training, and conscious self-improvement. Coaching is more than just teaching skills and tactics and coaches' style of leadership impacts student-athletes significantly (Mallet & Cote, 2006).

Coaches' Leadership Training

Coaches can have a positive impact on the development of adolescents. Coaches who demonstrate empathy and understanding for their athletes may become more willing to behave in ways that promote assurance and conversation, putting their own needs aside to serve best and meet the needs of their athletes (Noddings, 2010). Coaches with formal leadership training report higher levels of positive psychosocial skills among their athletes (Vella et al., 2013; and Mac Donald et al., 2010), and student-athletes report a

stronger connection with their coaches and teammates when their coaches have received formal training in leading youth (Bloom, 2016). Coaches with more experience perceived the ability to address life skills for learning with student-athletes more than coaches with less experience (Kramers et al., 2020). A possible explanation is that less experienced coaches invest most of their energy into learning how to manage a team, leaving little time to teach life skills (Trudel et al., 2016), while more experienced coaches already have the knowledge of basic coaching. This gives them the ability to reflect on their coaching philosophy and develop a plan to include life skills as part of the process (Bean et al., 2018).

Coaches play an important role in youth sports as they simultaneously teach about physical activity and serve as a mentor, confidants, and friends (Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2011). In 2016, 276,100 coaches were employed in the United States (U.S. Department of Labor—Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). Yet, only one in three youth coaches in the United States have been trained in sports skills or tactics, and even fewer are trained in practical ways to communicate well with children (Sports & Fitness Industry Association, 2012). Additionally, a large majority of coaches lack specific training in the science of coaching (Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006). Some coaches may not be aware of the training available to them, especially regarding student-athlete leadership development. Many coaches expand their coaching knowledge through social experiences, interactions with others, and reflecting on their experience (Cushion, 2018; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). Coaches prefer informal self-directed learning in a social setting that includes mentorship and observations (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2016; Erickson, Bruner, MacDonald, & Côté, 2008).

Very few studies are currently available that specifically examine the training that coaches provide team captains related to leadership. Gould and Voelker (2012) acknowledged that many coaches train their captains by setting clear expectations, leading by example, and providing support. However, formal training such as in-person classes and online modules were not observed as techniques frequently used. In conjunction, many team captains share that they receive little to no training, and they do not feel initially prepared to take on this student leadership role (Voelker et al., 2019). Student leadership captain training is important because research shows that when coaches intentionally teach leadership, the team captain is more easily developed (Pierce et al., 2018; Gould, 2016; Gould & Carson, 2008). It could be assumed that captain leadership qualities and coaching leadership qualities are learned in the same manner—through participation, trial and error, and social interactions with peers (Voelker et al., 2011).

Coaches' Leadership Style

Youth sports coaches have an influential role to play in the lives of student-athletes, and they can potentially use this role to influence the quality of the relationships they build (Camire, 2015). Student-athletes' attitudes and behaviors can be affected by their coaches, and these behaviors can be important for understanding how athletes behave in social situations (Cote & Gilbert, 2009; Smoll and Smith, 1989; Smoll *et al.*, 1978). When youth develop secure attachments with their coaches, these can help provide the confidence they need to face social challenges and develop physical competence (Ryan et al., 1995).

Coaching behaviors may positively impact student-athletes. Coaches are also responsible for setting the social-emotional tone of the sporting environment and the cues coaches give off impact student-athletes (Longshore & Sachs, 2015). These cues can be affected by the coach's leadership style (Carreres Ponsoda et al., 2012). Coaching behavior with a high level of supportive and instructive behaviors with low to diminished punitive actions can positively link student-athletes' psychological development, impacting the overall individual (Smith et al., 1995). Positive youth development promotes youth strength, potential, resilience and competency in their social environments and helps lead them to become functioning members of society (Lerner et al., 2005).

Student-athletes favor and rate a calm and poised coach higher in character than a coach who pressures them to perform, and studies have shown that a coach's behavior is important in athletics when engaging with student-athletes and has a long-lasting impact (Allan & Cote, 2016). Coaches who behave morally with both actions and words create an environment that can potentially contribute to the character development of their student-athletes. There is a positive relationship between social responsibility and democratic coaching behavior; conversely, a negative social responsibility exists between student-athletes and a coach's demonstrated autocratic behavior. Overwhelmingly, student-athletes favor coaches with democratic coaching behaviors (Lee et al., 2017). Perhaps more of today's coaches need to understand this finding.

Coaches' Feedback

Every time a student hits the field, coaches are provided with the opportunity to improve their athletes' performance, motivation, and well-being. Developing a motivational climate and culture is a significant coaching factor related to an athlete's experiences and willingness to continue participation (Ames, 1992). A coach's feedback can be an essential factor in motivation (Duda, 2001) and can be viewed in a variety of ways that may be both positive and negative (McArdle & Duda, 2002; Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2007; Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979). Coaches share valuable feedback with young athletes and have the constant opportunity to acknowledge performance. The feedback they deliver can create an effective environment for team culture, or it can do the opposite. As Webster et al. (2011) found, a coach's feedback can lead to effectiveness and better overall outcomes for student-athletes. Coaches who allow student-athletes to have a voice can provide athletes with self-determined extrinsic motivation and the opportunity to take the initiative, leading to greater outcomes for student-athletes (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Student-athletes' perceptions of their coaches weigh more than the actual coaching behavior displayed (Horn, 2002). A coach's belief structure can impact the feedback they provide to students.

Ethical Coaching

Exactly how a game is won or lost matters. Ethics and leadership are important topics to explore in the field of athletics. Ethical leadership is identified as demonstrating appropriate conduct to others through personal actions and relationships and expecting

followers to conduct themselves similarly through reinforcement and decision-making (Brown et al., 2005). Coach leaders who display ethical behaviors may strengthen student-athletes values such as trust, integrity, and honesty through behaviors such as rewards and punishments (Brown et al., 2005). This leadership style demonstrates the importance of ethical standards and moral tone (Mayer et al., 2012). Ethical leadership focuses on moral traits, concern for others, fairness, and trustworthiness (Engelbrecht et al., 2017), and it is directly linked to leadership.

“Winning” and “losing” in athletics provides an opportunity for educational gains for a sports team, and how a coach approaches and reacts to both is critical (Vella et al., 2010). While measures of sports performance can be impacted by variables beyond a coach’s control, coaches are ultimately responsible for a team’s success (Mallett & Côté, 2006). Coaches’ characteristics, actions, words, and behaviors directly impact student-athletes and students’ ability to “win” (Halpern, 2011). Ethical behaviors displayed by coaches can impact individual student-athletes and the team as a whole. They can influence individual and team success, and a coach’s behavior can affect a student-athlete's behavior and voice (White & Rezania, 2019).

Finally, as a social context capable of impacting others’ rights and wellbeing, sports represent an important setting for developing ethical thought and action (Bandura, 1991). If guided, high school athletes understand school society norms, regularly receive feedback, learn about their individual and collective roles and responsibilities, and grapple with others’ expectations and obligations while developing discipline and organizational and communication skills (Maslen, 2015). Mills (2019) explored the concept of “value-based coaching” in a 2019 study in which he specifically investigated

the idea of habit-based ethics as these relate to athletic coaching. He found that sports coaches are “likely to play a critical role in the moral development of those who participate in sport” (2019, pg 9). This finding builds upon existing research in both sport and developmental psychology fields that previously emphasized the critical role coaches play in children’s skill development and moral functioning (Lyle & Muir, 2020; Dionigi et al., 2018; Côté, Bruner, Erickson, Strachan, & Fraser-Thomas, 2010). Coaches play a crucial role in developing morals and constructing student-athletes' moral environment (Mills, 2019). There is civic importance to this function.

Coaches’ Leadership

The leadership traits, skills, and techniques coaches use vary. These include verbal persuasion, feedback, verbalizations of expectations of others (such as teammates or the wider school community), encouragement of “self-talk,” and positive imagery. Such techniques are considered weaker than persuasive techniques based upon a student-athlete’s accomplishments (Feltz, 2001), and their effectiveness varies. As an additional caution regarding coaching techniques, Bandura (1997) notes that persuasion can be more effective than enabling, in other words, students who do not possess adequate skills tend to give up quickly despite any coach’s influence or persuasive techniques. So, what is a coach to do? A coach should focus more on player improvement than persuasion and try to develop high self-efficacy for players (Feltz et al., 2008; Feltz, 2001). Perhaps instead, coaches might focus on actual accomplishments and personal measures of self-improvement for their student-athletes.

Coaching can be utilized as a powerful tool for change and learning for student-athletes and influence student athletes' decision-making and behavior (Devine, Meyers, and Houssemand, 2013). Each of these experiences offers a unique set of influences for the individual student-athletes. Overall, athletes are impacted by their coach's behavior (Boardley, Kavussanu, and Ring, 2008), and it can affect their choices, amount of effort expended, grit endured, and ability to push through during difficult times (Schunk, 2001).

At times, coaches and student athletes' emotions and behaviors can be interconnected (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). Coaches' leadership traits can have the ability to inspire and lead student-athletes in a way that can transform outcomes.

Coaching and Transformational Leadership

Leadership is a social-emotional interaction. Effective coaches must create, articulate, and communicate visions that student-athletes believe for themselves and want to follow if teams are to be successful. What student-athletes gain in the leadership-follower exchange must be worth their efforts. "Commitment rather than compliance is critical" (Jacquelin, 2017, p. 54), as transformational leadership is motivational, emotionally charged, and compassionate (Martin, 2016). Unlike autocratic leaders who focus on rewards and punishments, transformational athletic coaches meet the needs and desires of their athletes through motivation and empowerment. Burns' (1978) transformational leadership theory challenges followers to believe that "whatever the separate interests [they] might hold, they are presently and potentially united in the pursuit of 'higher' goals, the realization of which is tested by the achievement of significant change that represents the collective or pooled interests of leaders and

followers” (p. 426). Transformational athletic coaches help student-athletes find meaning in their pursuits, and they serve as living examples and role models.

The leadership traits athletic coaches embody and live are very important. Leadership is the main factor impacting and determining organizational outcomes and success as leaders develop a perception for change and potentially influences others to share their perception (Zekeri, 2004; Vroom & Jago, 2007). Transformational leadership is a dynamic form of interaction between leaders and followers where both parties play a role in influencing the other’s actions and vision (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership can motivate followers to accomplish more than they expect (Khanin, 2007), and truly transformational leaders can develop and encourage new leadership roles to emerge among their followers. According to Burns (2003), leaders and followers search for shared meaning and active collaboration, sharing roles and ideas guided by transforming values. Bass (1985) suggests leaders can inspire followers to do more than they thought was possible by putting their own desired results aside. Coaches can act as transformational agents influencing student-athletes both on and off the sports field.

With this theoretical framework in mind, leaders, and perhaps coaches, can persuade others to improve followers’ contributions beyond expectation by raising followers’ understanding of the importance of the desired outcomes. Such leaders get followers to put their own desired results aside by embracing collective goals. When coaches demonstrate the importance of morals and values related to their student-athletes, the individual students accept the significance of these values. They may begin a transformation in their own lives, demonstrating the importance of these values too. Transformational leaders understand their followers’ needs and wants, striving to guide

them to transform and produce results based on intrinsic motivation instead of a reward (Lee & Hidayat, 2018). Leading individuals based on intrinsic motivation allows for actual ownership and a shared vision for both the coaches and athletes.

Transformational leadership is also about raising people's awareness and improving people's lives (Burns, 2003) by allowing them to believe in themselves more than they initially thought was possible. Athletic coaches have the potential to accomplish this through interactive learning experiences and collaborations with each other. Through the lens of transformational leadership, coaches can offer opportunities for student-athletes to develop into leaders themselves; in return, they can join in collective leadership efforts to impact and change the lives of others on their teams and beyond.

Transformational leadership, in particular, has received support as an athletic coaching leadership style to promote individual motivation and enjoyment as well as group cohesion and collective efficacy (Price and Weiss, 2011; Zacharatos, Barling, & Kelloway, 2000). Specifically, transformational leadership that focuses on inspiring athletes not only to perform tasks but to move beyond self-interest to actively contribute to goals of the group and their development moves beyond transactional leadership, which emphasizes direction, supervision, and feedback as rewards and punishments to shape follower behavior (Zacharatos et al., 2000). Examining the process of life skills development and transfer, Pierce et al. (2017) have proposed that life skills can be developed or internalized as discrete psychosocial skills, knowledge, general shifts in dispositions, and even identity transformations. When life skills have been internalized, life skills transfer is a youth/learner-centered process with characteristics of the learning

context (i.e., high school sport) and the transfer context (e.g., classroom, employment, community engagement) influencing the nature and occurrence (or not) of life skills transfer. Bandura (1989) suggests that coaches who are transformational leaders can help student-athletes identify and experience successful transfer accomplishments (e.g., use of leadership on the field to use of leadership in the classroom). This is potentially a vital factor when considering the coach/student relationship.

Transformational leadership shares power through teamwork and collective autonomy motivates followers, increases performance, and empowers self-efficacy. This systematic process promotes collective achievement among all members of the team. According to Burns (1978), “Leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize.” Sergiovanni (2004) acknowledged that when collaborative cultures work together, such as high school teams made up of leaders (coaches) and followers (athletes), ideally, the two come together to create a bond of people committed to working together towards goals and shared purposes. Effective coaches can utilize leadership traits and characteristics that inspire, motivate, and arouse student-athletes. When an athletic team achieves a balance between autonomy and collaboration, as suggested by Sergiovanni, there may well be a unique culture that results. Leaders, such as coaches, have the power to directly develop and impact the culture of their teams--either positively or negatively.

Coaches have a crucial role to play in the development of athletic participants. They are considered prominent agents in shaping the environment and characteristics of the young people with whom they interact (Cote & Gilbert, 2009). A coach’s behaviors may lead to positive youth development by influencing how athletes respect each other

and themselves (Gould et al., 2007). As a result, an athlete's social responsibility could be affected by factors related to a coach's leadership style (Carreres et al., 2012). During adolescence, role models have opportunities to increase positive outcomes. They can foster young people's strengths that can affect attitudes, skills, strengthen relationships, and help them overcome adversity as they transition into adulthood (Morton & Montgomery, 2013)—or they can do the opposite. The ties that student-athletes develop with their peers and critical adults, such as coaches, within the context of athletics can affect them not only in adolescence but throughout their entire lives (Brustad et al., 2001). Then, the coach's role may be to engage students in learning opportunities related to these things and provide support by building self-awareness, self-confidence, and self-expectations to lead in sports and other life contexts. Student-athletes may be inspired to work harder and increase trust because of coaching behaviors and traits. Ultimately, their entire lives may be changed forever by the right coach.

The Leadership Practices Inventory

This Leadership Practices Inventory has been administered to many different types of leaders/managers and used in private and public sector studies. This model is used by both practitioners and researchers to gather insight and data (Bass and Riggio, 2006). A Bowles & Bowles (2000) study supports that the Leadership Practices Inventory can measure different aspects of leadership as identified by Kouzes & Posner (1995). Primarily it measures one's transformational leadership traits. The LPI has been heavily researched, and Zagorsek et al. (2006) found that it is better suited to assist leaders in improving their skill set than identifying strong leaders. This indicates that by utilizing

the LPI, coaches can understand where they can demonstrate improvement and better reach their athletes. The LPI has been used across many professions, including within the educational environment, specifically with principals, coaches, superintendents, and student-athletes (Metz et al., 2019).

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this sequential explanatory design was to understand what leadership traits coaches use when producing winning sports teams. Through an administration of the LPI, this study identified New Jersey high school coaches with high transformational leadership traits. By interviewing the coaches with the highest self-reported scores who have responded to the LPI, this study also sought to identify how coaches perceive their own influence on the civic mindedness of the students-athletes with which they work.

Three research questions guided the exploration of transformational leadership and student-athletes as related to civic mindedness.

1. What transformational leadership practices do New Jersey Head High School coaches self-report according to their responses on the Leadership Practices Inventory?
 - a. Which practices do NJHSHC most frequently self-report in their responses on the LPI?
2. What perceived role to NJHSHC play in the development of students' civic-mindedness?
3. How do high school head coaches connect their transformational leadership practices to the development of students' civic-mindedness?

The Assumptions of and Rationale for a Mixed-Method Research Study

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the intent of mixed methods research is to highlight and specify the integration of the quantitative and qualitative data in the study. Mixed methods research is a combination approach to research. It uses both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analyses to answer the research questions. Qualitative research allows the researcher to collect non-numerical data to deepen one understands of a problem. Quantitative research tests causal relationships and identifies patterns and averages while analyzing numerical data sets. A mixed methods approach helps to neutralize the weaknesses related to one specific type of study bringing together both forms of data related to surveys and interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Mixed methods are typically used to dig deep down further into the research and help the researcher to identify stronger supports and/or evidence, by triangulating data sources it is a means for seeking a way to bring together qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Fielding (2012) suggested that mixed methods provide great “analytic density”, and the goal of data integration is to produce a more comprehensible product in which the data from various methods can be interpreted together in a purposeful way.

Mixed methods are appropriate for this study because it provides a more complete understanding of the data. Bryman (2006) identified many reasons that mixed methods research is a good choice: it allows for triangulation, comprehensive understandings, the assimilation of different viewpoints, and assists in the decision-making process for participant sampling. Mixed methods research allows for the integration of quantitative

data with qualitative inquiry to identify thread between the data (Vedel et al., 2019). This is a strength of mixed methods (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). These complementary methods can bring new perspectives (Lieber & Weisner, 2010). Fries (2009) argue that mixed methods studies are able to identify relationships between demographics and the individual actions of participants. Adversely, weaknesses of a mixed methods approach may include the participants not sharing all or truthful information, the need for high awareness to detect the correlated practices, and the need to determine the most effective way to mix the data (Iaquinto, 2016).

Research Design: Sequential Explanatory Approach

The sequential explanatory design begins with quantitative research followed by data analysis. Then, the qualitative research builds on the results from the quantitative data helping the researcher to make inferences by triangulating the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is considered to be explanatory because the quantitative data is expanded on through qualitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). It is sequential as the initial phase is the quantitative survey, followed by the second phase the qualitative interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The qualitative data helps to increase the understanding of the quantitative data, in addition, the quantitative data helped to form the qualitative inquiry (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). When comparing both quantitative and qualitative results, researchers are able to gain more in-depth results as compared to only reviewing one data set alone (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). My study is a sequential design because in phase one a larger number of participants have completed the

quantitative survey, followed by a small number of participants from the same study that have volunteered to engage in the qualitative interview phase (Collins, 2016).

Context

Nearly eight million student-athletes participate in high school sports in the United States each year (NCAA, 2020). There are 612 public high schools in the state of New Jersey and there are 330 registered NJISSA coaches working with student-athletes across the entire State of New Jersey. This number does not include volunteers.

Mixed Methods Sampling

Mixed methods sampling poses some challenges related to both the qualitative and quantitative inquiry (Collins, 2016), it is important to maximize the credibility as a paradigm and address the challenges (Kvale, 1995). The process of selecting the sampling design, making decisions about how the sampling, and the type of sample that will be utilized are the beginning steps for addressing any related threats to the study (Collins, Onwuegbuzie, and Sutton, 2006). When making decisions about the sample the researcher should consider the purpose of the research (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Creswell, 2014, Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), the rationale of the study with a mixed methods approaches (Collins, Onwuegbuzie, & Sutton, 2006; Creswell, 2014, Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), and the research questions (Collins, 2016).

Samples should produce sufficient data concerning the study of interest which allows for deeper context that improves descriptive validity and interpretive validity (Maxwell, 1992) and demonstrates data saturation and the repetition of information from

different sources (Flick, 2018; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The researcher should also be able to make statistical and/or analytical generalizations (Collins, 2016). Finally, challenges can be avoided by using sampling designs that are realistic, efficient, practical, and ethical, choosing the sampling design is an important process in a mixed methods study (Collins, 2016).

The sampling scheme in this study will be multistage purposeful random sampling with a two-stage funnel approach, in the first stage there will be emphasis on the variation and during the second stage emphasis on the similarity (Palinkas, 2013). The focus of this study was public high school coaches, but in order for those individuals to participate each high school had to meet specific criteria which included state accreditation and membership to the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association. In addition, each school was required to be acknowledged as a four-year public secondary high school institution located in the state of New Jersey.

Sampling Design

Quantitative Sampling

New Jersey head high school coaches working in public schools were the participants in this study. The sampling design for this study was multistage (clustering). I first identified the groups or organizations and obtained names of individuals within those clusters and then sampled within them (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Initial contact was made with high school athletic directors to identify coaches and then I reached out to those coaches specifically with an invitation to administer the survey.

Contact with athletic directors was done through email, which explained the study and asked for their willingness to identify coaches that have met the criteria listed in the email. The criteria included identifying head coaches that work with public high school student-athletes. Once these coaches were identified I used snowball sampling to identify other coaches that could possibly meet the initial criteria and participate in the study (Emerson, 2018).

This study used a heterogeneous sample of both men and women, including all public high school sports, and coaches from all three sports seasons were invited to participate. A total of thirty-five coaches are needed to participate in the survey to generate significant findings.

Qualitative Sampling

The population for the qualitative sampling included the individuals that completed the first phase of the study and completed the LPI survey tool. During the second phase of the study, purposeful sampling was used. Purposeful sampling means that the researcher specifically chooses individuals based on their knowledge, interests, or certain criteria (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this study participants that were identified to have high characteristics related to transformational leadership, via the LPI, were chosen to participate. Purposeful sampling is used to attain representation and comparability with a population (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Using quantitative participant characteristics (transformational leadership) as identified by the LPI determined which participants to use for the qualitative phase (Creswell, Plano Clark, 2011), which complemented the explanatory design participant selection model. . The participants that were identified in the top twenty-five percent with the highest

transformational leadership traits according to the LPI were used for the qualitative research portion.

The qualitative sample size was smaller compared to the quantitative sample as I looked to gain insightful, in-depth, findings from each participant compared to the quantitative sample (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Fifteen participants were identified for this stage in order to reach data saturation, which entails ascertaining similarities in the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and identifying a point when no new analysis is produced (Urquhart, 2013). I reached data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Data Collection

After obtaining approval from the Rowan University Institutional Review Board, I collected data in the field. Initial communication was made via email to athletic directors and coaches in New Jersey public high schools. A total of two emails were sent asking athletic directors to forward my email to coaches that met the criteria. Twenty different schools participated to gather demographic data in order to answer the research questions. Varsity sport programs include all men and women sports that were sponsored by the selected institutions. The first and second emails were directed to the athletic directors and coaches and offered a series of questions that addressed the demographics. These emails also included a link to the survey and requested that the attached LPI survey link be completed only by coaches who met the criteria. The study was conducted spring of 2022.

Instrumentation

Two types of tools were used for the data collection efforts of this study. In phase one, (the quantitative phase), the Leadership Practices Inventory tool, (Appendix A permission for use) a self-reported survey instrument, was used to collect data regarding individual leadership qualities of high school coaches. This was used as a probability sampling tool which aimed to identify a representative sample related to transformational leadership. Additionally, coaches who were identified as having strong transformational leadership characteristics as identified by the LPI were asked to participate in phase two, which was a qualitative interview. This initial questionnaire and invitation to participate was emailed to athletic directors and state recognized coaches at all public high schools in New Jersey. Coaches that elected to participate in the study received an emailed link to an online LPI survey. Advantages that existed involved a self-administered survey online that included access via the internet; hence it was easier to send reminders, and the data could be processed and analyzed immediately (Fink, 2013).

Quantitative Instrument

This study used a quantitative method facilitating a survey tool called the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) as the source of quantitative data collection. Through the Leadership Practices Inventory a quantitative study was conducted using a survey that was administered to coaches that met the specific criteria. A survey is a tool that can be used by researchers to collect data that relates to people's beliefs, attitudes, opinions and effectiveness of programs (Fink, 2013). The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) is conceptually based on the transformational leadership model of Kouzes and

Posner (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). This model was developed based on thousands of leadership experiences and over 3 million people have taken the LPI (Posner, 2016). The LPI has made changes through the years to improve the validity of its survey (Fink, 2013). Kouzes and Posner indicate that a large amount of leaders' success relies heavily upon the ability to understand the underlying details of leader and follower relationships.

Their research shows that successful leaders have a common set of leadership practices. This model has five distinct leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. The LPI was originally designed with both qualitative and quantitative properties to produce validity (Posner & Kouzes, 1993). It is a statement-based model where participants use a Likert scale to represent their personal use of the behavior described. The Leadership Practices Inventory takes eight to ten minutes to complete and for this study will be scored and administered electronically. The Leadership Practices Inventory uses the five leadership practices to identify which of the five behaviors is their personal best (Díaz, et al., 2019). Each of these five practices is tied to transformational leadership.

Challenge the Process rates one's ability to seek and find ways to drive change, show growth, be innovative, their ability to take risks, and if they dare to be different. This trait allows individuals to grow from mistakes and use them as indicators for success and improvement in the future (Bennis, 1984), experimenting and learning from the outcomes. By *Challenging the Process* one confronts adversity and inequalities head-on and indicates someone is willing to fight the battle, begins the adventure for change as a group, and celebrate small wins and gains to demonstrate to the group that

the challenge is worth fighting for. Kouzes and Posner stated, “Small wins play an important role in Challenging the Process because they produce the kind of visible results that attract people to be connected to a successful group or team” (2013, p. 142). This type of leader is willing to fight for their team and stand up for what is right.

Inspiring a Shared Vision allows the leaders to be visionary and share what they see for the future while inspiring those around them to share the vision. This is done through compatibility, common interests, and goal setting. It forces the leader to share and set goals with targeted aims for the future. Leaders share these goals and targets with their followers inspiring them to share the vision and seek ways to reach the outcomes and to “help others to see existing future possibilities” (Kouzes and Posner, 2013 p. 65). Once the goals are set, steps can be taken to accomplish the team targets. When followers are inspired, they begin to also take action and support the progress. Once these followers are identified leaders can utilize them to accomplish all that they set out to do.

Enabling Others to Act enriches followers with the ability to trust the process and work together as a team. While building trust, interactions with followers increase, and they are trusted with more responsibility. This trait demonstrates to the group that the leader is willing to relinquish power. The leader offers support and provides the opportunity for followers to complete more complicated tasks, without interference. Leaders demonstrate that they trust the followers and allow them to solve problems without involvement. During this process, one teaches members of a group how to accomplish tasks and work together as one unit. Teamwork is shared and everyone demonstrates the ability to contribute and work toward a common goal (Chang,

2014). Followers' sense of self improves and they may feel more important to the organization. By *Enabling Others to Act* leaders instill pride in their followers and they are willing to do more.

Modeling the Way is essential as the leader models how the followers should act. They lead by example and are positive role models for others to emulate. Often we hear that these individuals will do what they say and say what they mean (Chang, 2014). Leaders demonstrate a commitment to their teams and roll up their sleeves and dig in the trenches with their followers. This type of leader understands their own leadership style and can identify stories in their lives that have helped them to grow and become the person they have become. When leaders *Model the Way* they are dedicated to the plan, share the positive outcomes with others, and welcome volunteers to join them.

Encouraging the Heart allows leaders to acknowledge and celebrate the individual followers that are working hard toward the common goal. Such leaders take the time to express gratitude toward individuals that are doing what is right as compared to what is wrong. They celebrate successes of the team and encourage or coach followers to continue to keep working hard toward their personal best (Chang, 2014). They are actively involved with their teams and celebrate their successes often.

These five practices model tenets related to transformational leadership. Burns (1978) discusses inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart when he identifies the need to have a common vision, create an environment of collaborations, and celebrate the success of individuals. Carlson (1996) also discusses the vision of the future, having trust, and empowerment, which can be linked back to the five leadership practices and transformational leadership theory. In addition, Kotter (1999)

contributes that leaders should encourage others to embrace change, develop a vision for the future, and energize people to act.

The internal reliability of the LPI is consistently strong across many different populations and levels of management (Posner, 2016), the Cronbach's alpha score ranges from .80-.92 which can be considered very strong (Thomas, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The LPI has demonstrated consistent face and predictive validity and it is practical and efficient (Fornito & Camp, 2010). The original intention of the LPI was to assist leaders in developing a stronger skill set from peer feedback. This study will be using the LPI to investigate the transformational leadership qualities of coaches. The LPI score indicates that it can maintain predictable outcomes across different subgroups and areas. Gender, geographic location, leadership position, physical abilities, and age do not influence the LPI scores, and they do not systematically vary (Posner, 2016). Kouzes and Posner (2007), through the LPI and transformational leadership conceptual framework, identify that an individual that leads through fear and dictatorship will have difficulty producing lasting effects; however, a relationship built on trust, confidence, and respect will outlast the most difficult times and leave a lasting result. According to Northouse (2016) effective leaders demonstrate these characteristics which can be identified through participation in the LPI. Through identification of these practices, one may be able to improve their own leadership capabilities (Posner & Kouzes, 2003), as the LPI can recommend what behaviors and actions individuals need to focus on.

Permission to use the tool was obtained from the authors of the LPI. This document can be viewed (Appendix I). Each participant in the study was issued informed consent, the demographic questionnaire, and the link to participate in the LPI survey via

email. A statement of acknowledged informed consent preceded the survey tool link. Participants were given a four-week window to complete the survey.

Qualitative Instrument

Qualitative data collected via the interview process was the second part of this mixed method study. Qualitative research was used to seek answers to questions from the real world. Rossman and Rallis (2017) discuss that qualitative research has two unique features- first, the researcher is the main facilitator and factor in why the research is being conducted and the purpose of the qualitative research is to learn about the topic from the social world. The qualitative interviews sought to fill gaps identified in the quantitative phase of the study. This phase of the study was rooted in participant beliefs and how a coach's direct experience with student athletes can influence a student athlete's civic mindedness via transformational leadership practices. See Appendix B for the final protocol/ interview schedule.

Interviewing

Kvale (2006) identifies the importance of interviewing and allowing the interviewee the opportunity to have a voice in research. Interviews provide an understanding of the world from a subject's point of view and allow participants to freely present life situations in their own words. Determining and collecting interview data was done after the candidates were picked and they agreed to participate. The candidates previously volunteered to continue with the study after completing the survey in phase one. Informed consent was discussed and sent via an email.

A protocol was developed to interview the candidates. Questions were centered on feelings and perspectives about individual perceptions related to student athletes and

civic mindedness. Each of the fifteen interviews lasted approximately 30-60 minutes and encouraged participants to provide a deeper explanation of the information than was reported on the LPI (Rubin, 2013). During and at the end of each interview, I took descriptive field notes addressing related concerns or topics associated with each interview. Phillippi (2017) identifies the necessity of field notes to assist in documenting anecdotal data. The interview was then transcribed and coded, and an analytical memo followed to help determine what the data set could contribute to the current research. Analytical memo writing and field note journaling proved to be efficient in identifying trends and common codes in both the survey responses and interviews. I developed an analytical memo for each document identifying trends, defining codes, and highlighting patterns and prominent findings that related to the survey data previously collected in this study.

Data Analysis

A mixed methods study was used to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data separately using specific methods identified as appropriate and then the results from the data were integrated together for a final mixed methods analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Mixed methods data analysis is a form of data integration that joins data together from different sources using a variety of method to conduct the analysis (Li, Marquart, & Zercher, 2000). By using the analytical strategies, data analysis through integration “not only involves the analysis of a qualitative and a quantitative strand, but also entails an analysis of the interaction between the two strands”, mixing the methods of data collection (Vogl, 2018). Various types of data analysis procedures provided

opportunities for the research to represent, interpret, and validate the data results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

It is rare that real data is ever error free (Huang, 2020). Data cleaning is important to the validity of the study as un-cleaned data can lead to problematic data points offering untrue assumptions and misleading guidance (Osborne, 2013). Data cleaning can encounter two problems: missing data and errors. Missing data can introduce a bias into the study and decrease its validity, while data errors can be avoided by presenting a careful study design and pre-testing the entire research protocol (Salkind, 2010). Once my data was collected any missing data was found by contacting the participants right away (Salkind, 2010).

Quantitative Analysis

Fundamentally, the survey was used to identify the leadership characteristics and traits that coaches use with student-athletes. To study this group of coaches, analyses of the five practices was completed. I looked to identify trends in the quantitative sample to identify regarding which participants had the highest scores and then used the quantitative data to identify the qualitative sampling participants. The LPI was used for criterion sampling of participants that received high scores on the Leadership Practices Inventory. Criterion sampling was used to precede the use of the qualitative study and was purposeful and based on the scores of the instrument (Sandelowski, 2000). I used the highest scores overall from the combination of the five practices to choose qualitative participants. Choosing the high scores is also known as extreme case sampling (Sandelowski, 2000). I used this sampling as a tool to expand on my understanding of

the data and continued the research by engaging in a qualitative study which involved interviews.

Qualitative Analysis

A qualitative inquiry was used to investigate the research question relating civic mindedness and the influence that coaches can have on their student athletes from their perspective. Qualitative research was used to seek answers to questions from the real world. Rossman and Rallis (2016) discuss that qualitative research has two unique features. First, the researcher is the main facilitator and factor in why the research is being conducted and the purpose of the qualitative research is to learn about the topic from the social world. This type of research is rooted in empiricism which explains a philosophical approach where knowledge is obtained by direct experience through the physical senses (Ibid). My study was rooted in participant beliefs and how a coaches' directs experience with student-athletes can impact civic mindedness. Through questioning and structure, I posited that a coaches perceptions on student-athletes and civic mindedness have been formed due to their past and current coaching experiences, known as phenomenology. This process was evident and thoroughly completed through a series of fifteen interviews. Kvale (2006) identifies the importance of interviewing and allowing the interviewee the opportunity to have a voice in research. The interviews provided an understanding of the world from the participants' point of view and allowed them to present life situations in their own words. This allowed for a voice that may not otherwise necessarily be heard.

Interviewing

The sampling for choosing interview participants was purposeful. It was important to choose individuals that demonstrated high transformational leadership qualities. Determining and collecting interview data was done after the candidates were picked and they agreed to participate. A consent form was discussed, and I submitted the same for final approval from the IRB at Rowan University. The interviews were recorded and kept on a flash drive in a locked cabinet to protect the data and to honor the confidentiality of the participants.

During the interview process, a protocol was also developed, and an approved list of questions was also presented to interview the candidates. These questions were centered on coach leadership style and the perceived impact on student-athlete civic mindedness. Each of the fifteen interviews lasted approximately thirty-five minutes. Once each interview was completed it was transcribed and coded and an analytical memo followed to help determine what the data set could contribute to the current research. Analytical memo writing and field note journaling proved to be efficient in identifying trends and common codes among the interviews. During the coding phase, the first round was process coding and I focused on gerund words and identified the main topic or tone in each passage of interview responses. A large list of codes was developed to better understand common threads and themes among all interviews. These codes were defined, and pattern coding was used to develop a code identifier which resulted in second style coding. I developed a codebook during this process to better organize and see the actual codes in progress. When sorting and identifying the codes it is important to note that I referenced my field note journal when

defining the codes and looked for a correlation between all codes. Upon completion of the codebook and analytical memo writing it was evident that some themes and topics did emerge. This reflects Rossman & Rallis' (2016) concept that discuss the researcher at work and reflexivity wherein the researcher reflects on their work while thinking about their research and write about it. The field note journal provided this opportunity.

Mixing and Integration

Triangulating the data collected from the qualitative phase and the quantitative phase is the most common approach to mixing data (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018). For this study the triangulation design was used which is when quantitative and qualitative data were collected to gather different but reciprocal data on the several topics and ideas to better understand the research problems (Morse, 1991). The sequential explanatory mixed method approach allowed for the triangulation of data. I used two phased mixed method design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The qualitative data helped to build, support, or expand upon the quantitative data results. The purpose was to bring together data at different strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses in both the quantitative and qualitative data (Patton, 2002). A mixed methods design was used to bridge quantitative results with qualitative data to formulate new thoughts or ideas based on the data collected and merged together (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This model was followed. In this design participants for the qualitative research were selected based on the responses from the quantitative data.

In this study I used the quantitative data collected from the LPI and the qualitative data codes from the interviews to make assumptions about the data. Due to the ability to

collect data at different times I was able to be a single researcher during this study. According to Greene (2007) this type of mixed methods study is the most widely used in human social sciences. It is a two-step process that allows the two data sets to talk to one another. Through integration and analysis, data was merged to explore a new meaning and understanding. The mixing of this data was completed by connecting and correlating the results from the data analysis of the LPI to the data collection gathered from the interviews. I obtained quantitative results that led to the consequent collection and analysis of qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This mixing allowed for a way that the two data types could be connected. As a researcher familiar to the field of student athletics, the review of literature, and an understanding of coaching, codes and themes emerged during the qualitative analysis of data. The codes that emerged were both relational and different compared to the quantitative data variants that were identified. First, I reviewed the survey findings and then I compared those findings to the qualitative codes (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The data was collected sequentially. The qualitative findings gave a stronger voice to the quantitative findings. Having a mixed method design emphasized the strengths of each approach and minimized the limitations and weaknesses of the study (Drew, Hardman, & Hosp, 2008).

Combining research methods has gained momentum (Timans, et al., 2019), however, mixed method research does have some limitations. Mixed methods research requires a significant understanding of multiple methods. Understanding and integrating both types of data may present challenges (Drew et al., 2008). Selection bias can result in a relationship between two variables that may be affected by the selectivity of the individuals that are being observed (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). The amount of time

needed to collect data from both quantitative and qualitative resources can present difficulty and the path of progress from quantitative to qualitative inquiry deciding which elements of the results to pursue can take additional time and be laborious (Drew et al., 2008). Researchers sometimes treat the qualitative and quantitative analysis as separate realms which can inhibit the overall findings (Bryman, 2007). As I proceeded with both my quantitative and qualitative data collection and subsequent analyses, I remained cognizant of these potential challenges.

Trustworthiness and Legitimation

Having validity and trustworthiness through the study gives the researcher the ability to face threats and challenges related to both quantitative and qualitative data analysis (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Conducting triangulation between data sources increased the validity (Drew et al., 2008), as the source of data included results from the LPI and in-depth interviews following the LPI survey. Using multiple sources of data to create conjecture about data made this research study more credible (Toma, 2006). Due to the rigor of the mixed methods explanatory design, rigor demonstrates a component related to validity (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Validity represents the truthfulness of the findings (Altheide & Johnson, 1994).

The validity of quantitative and qualitative research looks different. Leininger (1994) contends that using the same criteria for quantitative and qualitative validity can be awkward, confounding, and confusing. Using field notes and a journal offers the ability for reflection and substantiates the validity of the data (Janesick, 1999). Having the ability to substantiate against distortion and conjecture through a valid and reliable

process is important (Maxwell, 1996). Validity was considered as it related to the sequential explanatory design approach. This study sustained data saturation and verbatim transcription which are also identified as techniques for demonstrating validity (Whittemore, 2016). By explaining the quantitative results in more depth, qualitative samples were used, maximizing the importance of one phase explaining the other (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It was important for me to consider and weigh all of the options for following up on quantitative results because the findings could be compromised if not (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Survey responses could result in a threat to the validity of respondents who may not answer the questions honestly, in spite of the Cronbach's internal validity of the Leadership Practice Inventory which is high. The interactions that I had with these participants were in real time and personal. I took notes in my field journal and listened intently as individuals spoke. This increased the likelihood of the interpretations being valid as McConnell-Henry (2011) recognizes that researchers should listen during a research interview with the intent of interpreting what they hear.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is to create an environment where information is brought together to address real world problems, create new knowledge, identify solutions, and lead innovation for the future (Wittmayer, 2014). This study could have not been conducted without considering my role as a researcher which included my life experiences, background, perspectives, and view of the world. Through my experiences and perspectives regarding coaching, I have often been intrigued by the leadership traits

that coaches use with athletes.. I have had the opportunity to coach many losing teams and have only come close a few times to winning with teams that I would have not marked as my greatest most skilled student athletes. My direct experience, beliefs and assumptions have helped to guide this study as I was intrigued by leadership, as a transformational leader and coach, and how winning may not always be everything as the ability to inspire the heart and lead the way to develop ideal citizens is a win in itself.

My background has left me a “loser” more often than not, in a superficial way. I have worked hard, had many successes and have received many accolades through my educational career. I am passionate about my own student-athletes and I am curious about the leadership qualities of coaches and how they can impact civic mindedness. My role as a leader in education is evident as I have been named teacher of the year twice over ten years. Additionally, I serve as teacher in charge with administrative duties. My passion to inspire the heart of my students and model the way is important. I often found myself wondering, do coaches share the same aspirations about developing well rounded citizens as I do? Is it all about winning? My biases, beliefs, and assumptions regarding student-athletes and coaches were beneficial to the overall study. As a researcher my philosophical view in education is progressive. This allows for individuality. My focus is on the whole student. My philosophical base is pragmatism and I promote democratic social living (Creswell, Plano & Clark, 2018). The role of the researcher is to guide for problem-solving and scientific inquiry, based on interests as learning is rooted in the concept that individuals learn and rise from experiencing the world around them (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The world of student-athletes extends far beyond the classroom.

Ethical Considerations

Some of the hardest choices individuals make involve the collision “right vs. right”, these decisions are deeply rooted in basic core values (Kidder, 1995). Research involves collecting data about people and from people (Punch, 2014). Demonstrating ethical behavior when conducting quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research is critical in the research process and ethical stances must be considered. Ethical consideration was considered during each phase of the research study including the development of the study, starting the study, during data collection and analysis, sharing the data, and keeping the data in a safe place (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Researchers need to protect their research participants (Israel & Hay, 2006). The researcher must be dutiful and show respect to all participants and their site at which the research is being conducted. At the beginning of the study, I identified the research problem, disclosed the purpose of the study, offered no pressure to sign the consent form, and respected the culture of the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I discussed informed consent, the process of getting permission to conduct and collect data for the study and allowed individuals the option to participate in the study (Fink, 2013). During the collection phase, I showed respect for the site, avoided deception, respected potential power imbalances, did not exploit the participants, and avoided collecting harmful information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). During the analysis phase researchers should share both positive and negative results and respect the privacy of the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I went through the process of gaining IRB approval to ensure that the participants were not at the potential for harm during this study. All data that was

reported out was conveyed with pseudonyms to protect all participants and educational institutions in the study. When reporting, sharing, and storing data I avoided disclosing information harmful to participants, I did not share data with others, and I kept raw and other data in a secure place (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Chapter 4

Context of the Study

This sequential explanatory design aimed to understand coaches' transformational leadership traits when working with public high school sports teams. Through administration of the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), this study evaluated if coaches with high transformational leadership incorporate civic-mindedness into their training when working with New Jersey public high school student-athletes. In the first phase of the study, coaches first participated in the LPI and then, based on the results, select individuals were invited to participate in the second phase which an interview to better understand their impact on civic mindedness as it related to their student-athletes. Specifically, the coaches that scored the highest on the LPI self-scale were asked to identify their influence on the civic-mindedness of the student-athletes with whom they work via later interviews. The context of this study was situated across the entire state of New Jersey with participants from each of New Jersey's twenty-one counties.

Participants

The participants in this study included New Jersey public high school head coaches from any interscholastic team recognized by the school district. Over 450 high schools were invited to participate through direct email contact with athletic directors or the coaches themselves. The coaches were also invited to participate through two different professional organizations in New Jersey that represented New Jersey public high school coaches and sports programming. All twenty-one counties in New Jersey had a coach respond to the survey during the quantitative phase. The qualitative findings are

based on the results from fifteen interview participants. These participants were both men and women and currently work in New Jersey high schools as head athletic coaches from a variety of extracurricular athletic sports teams. Each of these participants has been a head coach in a New Jersey high school for longer than three years and many of them have coached multiple sports. The names of the participants have been changed to protect their identifying information. Table 3 shares some information about each of the coaches as gathered from the interview process.

Quantitative

A total of 126 New Jersey public high school head coaches responded to my Leadership Practices Inventory survey request. One hundred responses were used for the study as twenty-six responses were removed due to incompleteness, insufficient consent to participate, not being located in New Jersey, or not identifying as a head coach. The participants in the study were men (n=77) and women (n=49) who were identified as head coaches in New Jersey by the respective school districts in which they coach. The participants represented over fifty New Jersey public high schools from across the entire state of New Jersey. The experience of these coaches ranged from first-year head coaches to coaches with more than forty years of experience. Many of the participants in this study followed in the footsteps of their parents and guardians, becoming second and third-generation coaches. Table 1 is a representation of the data collected from the survey participants. The gray highlighted area indicates the LPI practice with the highest score when averaged by all of the participants collectively.

Qualitative

A total of 113 survey participants consented to participate in an interview. Only 100 of the respondents were considered for the interview when data cleaning was conducted. By looking at the survey data collected from the LPI, the top 20% of the coaches with the highest cumulative transformational leadership scores combined from all five LPI practices (Encourage the Heart, Model the Way, Enable Others to Act, Inspired a Shared Vision, and Challenge the Process) were invited to participate in the second phase of the study which was the interview. Out of the twenty coaches invited, I interviewed fifteen individuals to gain data saturation. All fifteen participants in this study responded to the same set of predetermined interview questions (Appendix B). The interviews were conducted over a six-week period in 2022.

Table 1

Qualitative Interview Participants

Participant Pseudonyms	New Jersey County	Type of Sports Team	Years of Experience
Elijah	Hudson	Basketball	22
Rachel	Atlantic	Tennis & Lacrosse	30
Allen	Somerset	Cross Country & Track	6
Aaron	Cape May	Wrestling	8
Antonio	Mercer	Cross Country	3
Maxwell	Somerset	Basketball	25
Greg	Camden	Basketball	40
Kelly	Monmouth	Track & Field	22
Lori	Passaic	Basketball	22
Jamika	Passaic	Gymnastics	30
David	Camden	Soccer	8
Melissa	Burlington	Tennis	48
Kris	Cape May	Football	12
Charlene	Camden	Swimming	9

Results and Findings

The findings and results below were a product from the quantitative phase, the qualitative phase, and the integration of the phases resulting in a mixed methods analysis.

Quantitative Results

The survey sought to identify the leadership practices New Jersey head public high school coaches use most frequently, as indicated by the LPI as well as to identify the participants for the qualitative phase of the study. A total of 484 invites to participate

were sent out via email. A total of 126 responses were received and 100 responses were used for the quantitative phase of this study. That resulted in a good response rate of 26%.

Seventy-seven men (61%) and forty-nine women (39%) responded to the questionnaire. The overall results were based on one hundred surveys that were cleaned and checked for errors. The data from the surveys were extracted and hand scored by a score sheet provided from John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Research Company, the company that publishes the survey and oversees and approves its use. The survey collected data on the five predetermined leadership practices using a Likert scale for responses (1 - 10). The survey instrument can be viewed by contacting John Wiley & Sons Inc. The data were sorted and disaggregated to capture the overall scores of the Leadership Practices Inventory. The maximum score that a participant could receive in each of the five practices was sixty. The lowest score that could be received was six.

Table 2*Overall Quantitative Results*

Leadership Inventory Practices	Number of Participants	Lowest Score	Highest Score.	Average Score of all Participants
Model the Way	100	29	60	51.48
Inspired a Shared Vision	100	25	60	49.36
Challenge the Process	100	31	60	49.14
Enable Others to Act	100	40	60	51.74
Encourage the Heart	100	34	60	52.82

Table 3*Leadership Practices Inventory Highest Participant Practices Percentages*

Leadership Inventory Practices	Number of Participants	Lowest Score	Highest Score
Encourage the Heart	100	7%	48%
Model the Way	100	13%	30%
Enable Others to Act	100	23%	21%
Inspired a Shared Vision	100	33%	20%
Challenge the Process	100	38%	11%

The highest average score of all the participants combined was 52.82 out of a total of 60 possible points in the category of “Encouraging the Heart.” The data indicate that 48% of the respondents reported that “Encouraging the Heart” is a practice in which they use the most frequently in their practice. Table 2 shows the frequencies associated with participant responses from each of the five practices. In addition, it shows the range for

each practice. It is important to note that the percentages reflect multiple instances where respondents equally favored one or more practices as their overall highest or lowest for self-reporting, resulting in some cases not a sum percentage of 100 when looking at the entire data set. As indicated on Table 2, 48% of the participants scored “Encourage the Heart” as their highest transformational leadership quality. In addition, it should be noted that only 7% of the respondents identified “Encourage the Heart” as their “almost always” transformational leadership trait. The “almost never” scoring transformational leadership trait as identified by the respondents was “Challenge the Process.” Thirty-eight percent of the respondents scored “Challenge the Process” as their least identified practice according to the survey.

Once the data were reviewed, sorted, and scored, the qualitative participant selection process occurred. The sum of each participant’s responses to the LPI instrument was recorded and all responses were sorted from highest scoring respondent according to point value maximum of 300 to the lowest of 30 for the respondent. Based on the sorting of the scores the highest scoring participants, which indicated high transformational leadership traits, select individuals were asked to participate in the interview process.

Out of the 20% that were invited to participate in the follow up interview, fifteen coaches participated in the second phase of the study. These participants’ overall LPI scores ranged from 300 to 269, regarding self-identification of individuals who exhibited high transformational leadership traits. The interview phase included nine men and six women participants. Of the subjects ultimately selected to participate in the qualitative portion of the study, eight of fifteen participants scored “Encouraging the Heart” as their

highest associated trait. This suggests that the coaches understand the importance of recognizing the contributions that individuals make. The sample of coaches picked to participate in the interview phase, had the same sampling that was reported in the overall quantitative phase. “Challenge the Process” relates to the leader’s willingness to take risks and failure as indicated in the survey results showed the lowest frequency. Additionally, “Model the Way,” which represents the way people should be ethically treated, had the same frequency as “Challenge the Process” when reviewing the self-reporting scores of the interview participants. Table 4 shares the self-reported scores of the qualitative interview participants. They are listed on the table in order from the highest to the lowest reported scores in numerical order. The average LPI score for the participants not interviewed is 246. However, the average score for the qualitative interview participants is 283. This indicates a thirty-seven-point difference between the data.

Table 4*Quantitative Results*

Participant Name	Gender	Total LPI Score	Highest Scored Leadership Trait	Highest Trait Overall Score
			Model the Way	60
Elijah	Male	300	Inspire a shared Vision	60
			Challenge the Process	60
			Enable others to Act	60
Charlene	Female	295	Encourage the Heart	60
			Encourage the Heart	60
Rachel	Female	294	Enable Others to Act	60
			Encourage the Heart	60
Melissa	Female	291	Model the Way	60
			Inspire a Shared Vision	60
Angel	Male	289	Encourage the Heart	59
Kris	Male	288	Encourage the Heart	60
			Model the Way	58
Jamika	Female	284	Inspire a Shared Vision	58
			Encourage the Heart	58
			Model the Way	58
Kelly	Female	283	Inspire a Shared Vision	58
Greg	Male	282	Enable Others to Act	59
Antonio	Male	277	Inspire a Shared Vision	58
			Challenge the Process	56
Allen	Male	277	Enable Others to Act	56
			Encourage the Heart	56
			Enable Others to Act	56
Maxwell	Male	275	Encourage the Heart	56
			Model the Way	56
Aaron	Male	273	Inspire a Shared Vision	56
			Model the Way	56
Lori	Female	271	Inspire a Shared Vision	56
			Model the Way	56
David	Male	269	Enable Others to Act	56

Qualitative Findings

The purpose of the qualitative phase of this study was to understand what role New Jersey head public high school coaches play in the development of student civic mindedness. The results from the quantitative survey in phase one were used to identify the participants in phase two. Based on the coaches identified with high transformational leadership according to the LPI survey, interviews were conducted with fifteen participants to explore their beliefs about the impact they have on student civic mindedness.

After analyzing and coding the interviews, several themes were identified. Ninety-five codes were extracted from the data and these codes were arranged into themes. Overall, six themes were identified in this study: family climate and culture; representing the community; wanting better than they had; instilling strong moral and ethical practices; handle with care; and availability and access to civic events. Evidence is presented via direct quotes and paraphrasing.

Table 5

Qualitative Results

Themes	Representative Quote
Family Climate and Culture	“I’m like their second mother and that’s the way it is...”
Handle with Care	“He was a freshman, into bad stuff, doing drugs, bad grades, getting in trouble; he did not represent our program, but I needed to find him a place to belong, we included him in all the extras; life has really changed for him for the better...”
Instilling Strong Moral and Ethical Practices	“I just think the whole work ethic you develop there, or in that particular sport carries over to your everyday life, your study skills, you’re learning to balance things in life.”
Representing the Community	“I think to be successful in any team, I think it’s important that you do interact with the community on some level, not only just the broad horizon of your athletes, but allow the community to see...”
Wanting Better than They Had	“I want to give back what they gave to me. And then also I had a not so good coach, who destroyed the love of a sport for me, was lacrosse. They beat me down, and I ended up quitting...I don’t want another kid to have to go through that. So, if I can stop coaching people like they coached me, well, then I can make a change...”
Availability to Civic Events	“Athletics is the foundation of civic-mindedness, it's everything we are trying to accomplish as a coach it's more than just playing it's the complexity well beyond performance, we are developing so much more than an athlete we are developing a product that money can't buy an individual that positively stands for what our community represents.”

Family Climate and Culture

Many participants referenced a family-type atmosphere and relationships among the teams. The participants specifically discussed instances in which they took on responsibilities that may be perceived as parental roles. The coaches acknowledged that they provide more than just the rules to the game- they offer life rules, advice, and

guidance to their student-athletes. Multiple coaches stated that they want to offer a sense of belonging to their athletes and they want everyone to feel like they were part of something more with the hopes that experiences are nurturing.

Many participants detailed the relationships they attempted to build with their student-athletes. Coding revealed repeated instances of terms such as “caring,” “growing,” “helping,” “modeling,” and “teaching.” These are traits commonly associated with family units in general and parenting in particular. Additionally, there were also occasions where participants discussed the need to verbally correct student-athletes in a pseudo-parental manner. Repeatedly, the coaches sometimes referred to themselves as family-like members wherein they reflected upon the importance of the development of nurturing relationships.

One coach, Maxwell, emphasized his concern with getting his student-athletes to understand his sense of care for them:

They look at you not as a coach, but somebody that cares. Could be a parent, it could be...however they view you. And you have to gain that trust as a coach, and the kids have to realize that, or kids have to see that it's not always about Xs and Os and winning. This guy in front of me, he cares about me.

Another participant elaborated on the family type of relationship that can be built and the student-athletes' perceptions of him as a father figure who is sometimes authoritative:

“I guess it's because I'm older than others and I think I have more of like a fatherly...I guess that's a way to put it, relationship with them. We have fun, but there are times when I say, ‘This is it. You're crossing the line, or we're getting close to the line’ (Greg).

Yet another coach was explicit in her own view of herself as someone who serves in a maternal role:

“I’m like their second mother and that’s the way it is...I have one girl, she’s in Texas, I’ve known her since she’s fourteen years old. She graduated college in 2009. So eight years, in 2001, she came into school...I’m like her second mother. She talks to me more than she talks to her mother...I tell their parents every year at the dinner, ‘Thank you for loaning me your daughters. Thank you for letting me have them for a little while’” (Jamika).

This pseudo-parental view was also mirrored by another female participant who stated: “We are a family and we fight like a family, we work like a family, and we swim like a family” (Charlene). Each of these coaches played roles that emulated and cultivated relationships similar to families. The role of the coach for these participants in this study can be define as more than coach. They view themselves as mentors, and family members, in a sense.

Many of the coaches’ personal experiences with student-athletes seemed to clearly be modeled after typical family interactions, such as the emphasis upon the creation of a sense of family, belonging, and trust. Many of the coaches developed what they reported as nurturing, trusting, loving relationships with their student-athletes. The structures of social relationships formed among coaches and student-athletes in the public high school sports studied appear to deliberately emulate, at least in certain ways, family structures in the broader society.

Representing the Community

Community representation and how others viewed the student-athletes were important for many coaches. The coaches wanted to see their athletes as representatives of what the school stands for and what the face of the school looks like. It was important to them that their teams represented the school in a positive manner as they stated student-athletes should be held to a high standard because they are viewed as role models for the community and school and should conduct themselves in such a manner. Also, they stated that student-athletes should be able to take the skills learned through sport and apply them to assimilating positively into the community. Instilling strong moral and ethical practices was critical to the coaches in this study. The coaches in this study articulated the importance that athletics and student-athletes played in each of their communities. They believed that student-athletes represent what many communities stand for and that they must apply learned skills to be leaders and contributors in society.

The coaches described the relationships that they wanted for their individual sports teams and student-athletes. Coding revealed terms such as “representing,” “interacting,” “working,” and “giving.” These traits and codes refer back to their overall beliefs regarding how athletes should work with and represent their community in a manner in which the coaches would be proud. Additionally, coaches highlighted the importance of representing the overarching community and the influence this could have not only on the student-athletes themselves but also on other community members.

Repeatedly, the coaches recalled instances as to when and why this type of impact was important. One coach, Elijah, asserted that student-athletes have a job to represent more than just them:

Well, I think when it comes to being part of society, being a good leader, being a good person; you have to keep that always in mind. You have to keep that you're representing someone bigger than yourself. And in the long run, when you leave a game, or leave a match, or whatever sport you're in, you want to leave it on the table that you gave your opponent the best, whether win, lose, or draw, and you represent your town, and your school to the utmost respect and dignity.

Another coach extended the idea that not only do students need to represent themselves, but they need to be active and present in the community to help build a positive presence as it is important to the school and community:

I think to be successful in any team, I think it's important that you do interact with the community on some level, not only just the broad horizon of your athletes, but allow the community to see, hey, this is what these kids are doing, positive things, as opposed to the negative things that you hear when you turn on the news every day (Rachel).

Building upon this concept even further, Charlene discussed the role of developing student-athletes in a way in which they can be leaders both on their teams and in their communities:

Coaches are just the liaison between developing leaders on the field and assisting them to refine skills as they become leaders in the community, but in the end, we all just have to help each other out. And I think that's what we have to do in society, too. So I think it's just moving forward.

Student-athletes are tasked with jobs both on the court and in the community. The student-athletes are, the participants emphasized, role models, representatives, and

stakeholders. Coaches expressed that they have the ability to encourage and develop student-athletes to perform both on and off the field in ways that model what an individual with good citizenship stands for. They made a point to highlight how they can apply skills learned from sports to life. For example, Coach Kelly explains that life is more than just sports:

I just think that it's important to understand, especially as an athlete, that there's more to it and that there's other people watching you. So you are part of this grand community, especially now with all our social media and understanding that anything you put out there, people in your community are going to see and notice, but just understanding that there is, like I said before, there is more to life than just sports, but that sports can be a metaphor for life and continuing to understand and grow.

The coaches in this study indicate a personal responsibility to prepare students for interactions within the community they live, the real world, and in society in general when they leave the team. They indicated they want student-athletes to take the components learned in the sports realm and apply these to everyday life situations.

In addition, many coaches detailed that they teach student-athletes how to behave and act in their communities and they believe that they are expanding student-athlete knowledge by providing them with the skills to best represent their community in a positive way. Overall, the participants expressed their belief that if teams can create and build on a sense of how to best represent one's community, they can achieve goals related to both life and sport. There is a complexity of perceived societal skills that coaches believe they instill in their student-athletes that may enrich character growth.

Wanting Better Than They Had

The coaches in this study often talked about their own past experiences as student-athletes. Much of their coaching philosophies and approaches resonated with the fact that they want more opportunities for the kids, better relationships, and increased outcomes for the student-athletes for whom they coach regularly then perhaps they themselves experienced in their own youth. Furthermore, they stated they wanted to see each generation after them succeed, and they want their student-athletes to have experiences better than they had. Being able to see their student-athletes excel and learn from them was important. Through interview discussions, the coaches vividly shared experiences that left both fond and cold memories for them. They were able to clearly identify what they appreciated as a student-athlete and what they would never allow to happen under their direction.

The coaches described clearly what they want their student-athletes to gain from their experiences on the sports teams. Coding revealed that terms such as “growing,” “influencing,” “teaching,” and “learning,” are commonly used when adults are fostering growth in young individuals, and when they want change and generational improvement. The coaches expressed passion about how they wanted to influence and build the future of potential high school coaches via their student-athletes, as many of them were student-athletes themselves at one time.

The coaches in this study recalled times when they were both negatively and positively influenced by their own past coaches. Coach Elijah identified that his past coaches were some of the most important people in his life and his job now is to pass that forward and do the same for the next generation:

I've been playing sports since the second grade. And my coaches have made such a huge influence on my life besides my father. They're probably the second most important people I've ever dealt with. And I thought I was going to be a professional athlete and then I stopped growing and I realized, well, I need an alternative plan. So I figured teaching and coaching would be the next best thing, I can do what my other coaches did. And it turned out great.

Additionally, coach Andre explains his passion for why he wanted to be a coach and the need to offer a different style of coaching than he received as that did not assist him in working towards what he felt was his potential:

I want to give back what they gave to me. And then also I had a not so good coach, who destroyed the love of a sport for me, was lacrosse. They beat me down, and I ended up quitting. But if I never quit, I never would've went to track. If I never went to track, I never would've came back to volunteer, If I never came back to volunteer...So I went through that tough part in order to get where I am today. I don't want another kid to have to go through that. So if I can stop coaching people like they coached me, well, then I can make a change, if that makes sense.

Expanding on personal improvement and applying change for the good of society, coach Lori, highlights that coaches need to do more and expect more from student-athletes, as they, too, one day may move into leadership roles and offer more to lead the next generation of student-athletes:

You take the good and the bad and you mesh together what you found helpful for yourself but also learn from the things you didn't enjoy as a student-athlete and

also try and tweak some of these different techniques... So however that is going to look whether whatever career they go into, whether they're going to be a doctor or a nurse, a police officer, a teacher, a stay-at-home mom, figure out a way to help the community by coming and coaching and trying to keep this cycle going that's been such a positive role model in my life and it needs to continue beyond my generation.

Coaches also expressed that growing as coaches and being able to understand the needs of student-athletes and the programs is essential. Coaches stated that they find ways to demonstrate to their student-athletes that one should look to use the supports around them to assist in that growth, and it is acceptable to look and ask for help. For instance, Coach Jamika recalls an experience that helped her to grow as a coach and that it is what she wants her student-athletes to also do:

I attend workshops and ask other coaches that have a successful program can you give me some pointers? I'm not afraid to be vulnerable, I want to be better, I want to demonstrate that to my players. I will never forget the day I beat my coaching mentor on the mat, wanting better for my kids helped to make this moment possible.

Coaches throughout the entire study continued to share that they want better for their student-athletes and their teams:

I think it has to do with my upbringing, the fact that maybe I was coddled too much, I want my student-athletes to be more independent, be able to do more for themselves without an adult present and make good choices on their own (Greg).

Furthermore, one coach discussed the need for not only generational change but cultural change as well. Coach Andre expressed that such a process is deeper than just passing the tools from one generation to another. It requires real modification of institutional practices and behaviors:

But I think sometimes schools could do more to encourage coaches, especially male coaches, to be more thoughtful and more vulnerable and more aware of the needs of young people, rather than an idealized sports culture that is part of the American narrative. Yeah. So that's kind of something I see as someone who's moved to this country. I think at times there's a lot of fixation about, 'Are we turning boys into men?' Rather than like, "Are we turning boys into who they want to be?"

These statements show that the coaches feel that they as student-athletes themselves they learned how to behave and act in society based on their personal experiences and that these experiences have helped to assist them in their roles for shaping their current student-athletes.

The coaches focused on improving the next generation of student-athletes. The key theme was that the majority wanted better outcomes for each of their individual athletes and wanted their coaching to have an impact on their trajectories. Each of these coaches discussed the commitment they made regarding wanting better for their student-athletes. It seemed important to them that they are able to give back and support an environment that fosters growth and generational improvement. Their desire to improve each generation and their commitment to athletics and the community and what they stand for was evident.

Instilling Strong Moral and Ethical Practices

Coaches are often tasked with modeling behavior whether they like to believe so or not. Coaching can impact the overall development of student-athletes and how they perceive game results such as a loss, how they respond to a bad call, and how they handle overall player sportsmanship. Coaches in this study stated that they have a responsibility to instill moral and ethical practices in the student-athletes they coach on a daily basis. How coaches conduct themselves and the ways that they respond to conflict and disappointment can influence student-athletes' civic mindedness and leadership skills as they continue to enter into society. The coaches interviewed discussed their role in developing the whole person and that the coaches identified that they believe that they play a prominent role in this process. It was clear the coaches in general felt they have the ability to impact the ethical code of conduct that their athletes should follow which can mold and form future morals and behaviors.

Many of the coaches in this study strove to assist student-athletes to understand that being the greatest, the best, and the strongest is not the only important facet of life. Coaches stated that being able to understand the backgrounds of their athletes assisted them aiding in the development of moral and ethical practices that coaches deemed essential for growth. Through the coding process, terms that built upon this theme included "leading," "representing," "understanding," and "guiding." Many coaches shared details regarding the development and betterment of the student-athletes' moral lives. One coach, David, discussed that what coaches do can impact ethical life:

If we're not modeling that behavior, if we're not being the ones who are starting to make connections on behalf of our team then it's very difficult to expect that

kind of behavior from student athletes, especially the younger that they are so we have to be the example of doing that community outreach, making those positive connections, setting the standards, for how we expect ourselves and our team to interact with the community. I want them to have and understand ownership, the decision they make on the field and in life can have certain actions and those actions can assist in the development of our reputation over time. (David)

Empowering student-athletes to do better and be better people seemed essential. Coaches said they empowered their athletes to also lead by example. The participants expressed that when coaches and student-athletes lead by example on a continual basis, they have the ability to impact other adults and students around them. Coach Kris shared an experience he had with a particular student-athlete and his growth overtime:

Quick story, one of my athletes was being chirped at about his color by another team. He freaked and was thrown out of the game, it happened again in his sophomore year, he stormed off the field, I worked with him, helped him to not let those things get at him, by senior year he said they are trying to annoy me, they're trying to bother me, I'm better than that and I'm like, "Damn, dude, you got it." (Kris).

Coaches Charlene and Kris both believed that assisting others to see the big picture, developing that picture beyond self is a major component of life. Coach Charlene stated, "It's all about becoming a good person in our society, taking what you have learned from being a team member and moving it forward, coaches have a job and are expected to produce on and off the field." The coaches indicated they can do this by relating what everyday life presents and adjusting their approaches to best meet the needs of individual

student athletes. Coach Rachel continued this theme connecting it to life outcomes overall:

I just think the whole work ethic you develop there, or in that particular sport carries over to your everyday life, your study skills, you're learning to balance things in life. And that has been one of the most rewarding things about coaching the sport is just watching kids improve personally, physically, mentally throughout the season, and then go on to life and gain confidence and that kind of stuff.

Through confidence and believing in oneself, our morals and ethics can be tested.

Sometimes they can be conflicted. Coach, Greg, recalled an example that he demonstrated to his student-athletes that modeled empowerment and the concept that people should stand for what they believe and lead by example:

I was passionate about suicide prevention, I was not supported by the school with my efforts, I was not an employee of the school other than coach, so I proceeded it was important to me, I taught my students that they need to not take no for an answer but reach for what they believe in, I am now supported by the school district and give presentations on a county level" (Greg) "If it's important for me to talk about, it's important for me to do".

Coaches can model and empower students to make decisions that do not always match moral and ethical values. They indicated that their actions and behaviors played a major role in the development of character in student-athletes:

That's me creating the environment for them to have the mindset to do all these things, because ultimately it's not what happens on the track or in the throwing

pit. It's do they feel prepared when they go to school? Do they then feel that they need to demand the best of themselves regardless of what they are doing? That's what we hope for as coaches is that auxiliary, that shift away from the sport into the rest of their life. And the crazy part is I might never know that. I might never ever know that I had that influence, that impact. I just have to believe what I'm doing is working (Andre).

The coaches in this study seemed to hold not only their student athletes, but themselves, to a higher moral standard. They felt that they should model the way and lead by example to demonstrate to the students that they should uphold moral and ethical standards they set for themselves. Leading by example is extremely important, according to participants, as it demonstrates to the group that you are invested in morally sound ideas.

Many times, social skills and ethical and moral boundaries are tested in sports. Coaches stated they must lead by example and react and respond to difficult dilemmas in a manner that is respectful. Developing young people into individuals seemed essential to the participants as they expressed the importance of being proud of what they can offer as ethical guides. Many coaches highlighted the importance of being someone who builds character and builds people for the future, as evidenced, for instance, by Coach Elijah.

Handle with Care

Student-athletes have varying life situations. Individual student-athletes' circumstances may be different, from one another and the participants discussed the importance of assisting them with management both on and off the field. Many times, coaches described handling students with care and offering supports unrelated to athletic

success. The coaches stated they empathized with their athletes' trials and tribulations. They considered the needs of their students outside of practices and games. Many student-athletes were described as coming from diverse backgrounds with home lives that presented challenges and demands. According to the participants, a coach can never fully understand what students face when they are not with the team. Empathy and understanding was emphasized by the participants.

Their described responsibilities suggest that they address the social emotional impact that life can present to student-athletes. As the participants shared their stories related to students needing more than just the sport itself, the coding revealed terms such as "watching," "building," "bonding," and "modeling." These traits are often associated with developing and offering supports in a time of need. Many coaches highlighted times that the student-athletes needed them for issues unrelated to the sport. On several occasions coaches identified times that the students sought their care and support far beyond the confines of a field. Coaches expressed commitment to meet student-athletes' emotional needs and to offer supports. One coach, Jamika, acknowledged that many of her gymnastics athletes have a strong need to find acceptance:

Sometimes they just can't do it, if all they have is a cartwheel that's it, I'll make it happen even if I have to throw them over the bar, they just need us sometimes more than we need them, they need to feel important because over the years, it's very much a world that's changed and they need to feel good about themselves.

The outside experiences and challenges of student-athletes' have the potential to supersede competition. Coaches expressed they have the ability to show care for their

student-athletes. Sometimes this sense of care seemed to open opportunities with unforeseen outcomes:

He was a freshman, into bad stuff, doing drugs, bad grades, getting in trouble; he did not represent our program, but I needed to find him a place to belong, we included him in all the extras; life has really changed for him for the better, as a junior he is on my team no” he continues “Again we all love to win, but how are we going to develop these kids, especially in this crazy, crazy world that we live in? How are we going to create more leaders who are good people? We have to teach them and show them we care (Maxwell).

The coaches stated that they invest in the whole young person, as evidenced by Coach Greg:

I’m running around the school with the kids schedule in my hand because I can see their grades every day and I’m knocking on doors; I’m saying, ‘Hey, you got to straighten up’, that kind of thing and just lead by, there’s more to life than just playing.

The coaches often made statements about how they had a responsibility to meet the needs of their students-athletes and that they needed to show empathy and care. They discussed handling kids with care and the impact this can have on student-athletes for the rest of their lives. Coaches expressed commitment to their student-athletes. They expressed the relationships they were building could have long-lasting effects. They described how “it is not always about winning.” Many of the coaches acknowledged that the relationship comes first, and then the winning follows. Coaches talked about investments in their student-athletes and how they encouraged them to invest in their own lives:

I didn't have a win for eight years or six years or something, I didn't walk away from it. I stayed. I had over twenty kids on my team, they stayed, and I didn't have a win, bottom line they were having fun (Jamie).

They emphasized that the investment that adults make in young lives can impact them long term, and that being invested is a time commitment. The coaches stated they were willing to put in the time to impact the future.

The participants seemed to want to take responsibility to invest in the future of their student-athletes. They seemed to seek investment in the long term as it could potentially enrich, build and foster growth for each student-athlete in a way in which they will develop into self-regulated citizens that will be able to pass on the same or similar supports to assist and help others as well. In order for these moments to happen a certain environment should be present. Trust, rapport, respect, care and honesty were key terms coaches used. They discussed teachable moments that could shape, model, and design the environment that coaches wanted to share and teach kids in a time of need. Coaches felt they had a duty to evaluate, assess and provide feedback. Sometimes the teachable moments affected the entire team and these moments were not always easy to deliver, as Coach Kelly explains when she had to “bench” an athlete who was experiencing some personal issues:

She was by far my best player going forward, but she was a softball player and had a tournament over Christmas... I established a rule that she needed to be present, she was not so she sat two games, she learned early on in her career that everyone needs to follow the rules regardless of athletic ability” (Kelly).

As coaches developed their goals and objectives for personal and team outcomes they indicated that it became easier to engage in these teachable moments as the opportunities presented themselves. Coach Rachel explained:

At the end of the day I just try to teach them that everyone should be treated with respect and compassion...I like to lead by example I teach my students and student athletes as a senior teacher that they need to be more empathetic towards each other and people around them.

Having the ability to impact the future for young generations was important to the participants. It was evident based on the interviews that the coaches on a continual basis seek and implement ways to improve the overall development of their student-athletes through teachable moments.

It's important that student-athletes are held to a standard and that boundaries are developed; these standards and developed boundaries can shape live for the better for the future. The participants reported that the impact and marks that be left can change mindsets and forge unforeseen positive outcomes. Teachable moments can sometimes be viewed as unfair, and being able to sustain an environment that is conducive to continued teaching and learning can be difficult. The participants reported that as sometimes the moments can be difficult, many times they can be rewarding and heartfelt. New Jersey public high school coaches clearly feel they are teaching life lessons on a daily basis through their high school athletic programs.

Availability and Access to Civic Events

Student-athletes have limited time to engage in other activities when they play interscholastic sports. For many of these students, they are managing academics, sports

participation, and for some even a part-time job. The idea of being available to participate beyond the school day and sport schedule is almost impossible, so when coaches take the time to organize or promote extra activities related to civics or community service it creates a sense of bonding, positivity, and overall well-being for student-athletes. Many coaches said they organized civic related opportunities for their student-athletes to participate in both individually and as teams. Activities identified by the coaches in this study included events and actions that modeled civic responsibility. Many of the coaches explained the climate, culture, and importance of these events to their programs. When coding the interviews, terms such as “giving,” “volunteering,” “working,” and “helping” clearly defined the experiences that the coaches were offering to their student-athletes and the expectations they had regarding involvement.

The participants stated that many student-athletes that had the opportunity to engage in these experiences have expressed joy during or at the conclusion of the events. The coaches in this study felt that the student-athletes demonstrated a sense of pride and began to acknowledge the importance of helping others and their communities. Student-athletes under the direction their coaches, learned to give back and support community needs and solve real world problems. Coach Melissa identified an activity that her team engaged in regularly to assist others:

We had a *Smash Breast Cancer*. We started that, gosh, I don't know, maybe ten years ago, and we raised money for that. We have a ... it was a foundation through a hospital where the money didn't go to research. It went to the hospital that identified people who were going through breast cancer treatments who couldn't afford co pays, scars, babysitting, rides to the hospital back and forth. So

we were raising money for the women in our South Jersey area. So we did that through fundraising, through tennis tournaments, tennis events, things like that. Athletic civic programs were developed to show support for civic ideals. Various such programs were identified by coaches in this study. One coach acknowledged a program that his team collaborated on with the local city and community related to this, Coach Kris said, for example:

These events are encouraged and supported by the coaching staff and other school athletic teams. So we always do a beach clean-up towards the end of summertime. There's a foundation called the Step Back Foundation that our kids volunteer to help out. We do a school wide street cleanup right before summer... There's a blood drive tomorrow that the kids are volunteering to work, we do a lot of good things down here. I honestly just think that there's too much hate and too much negativity surrounding us. And I know that we all could be better and we should all do better. So I always preach that message whenever we're in the weight room, the gym, of the football field. It's always, 'Hey, let's leave the field cleaner than when we got it. So we are going to pick up the trash even if it is not our trash... because we always want to leave a place better than we found it.' Whether that's our homes, whether that's our football program, that's our practice field it's our society. We want to leave it better than we found it.

The importance of such civic events by the coaches continued. Many highlighted the need to assist. Greg, David, and Andre all shared the importance of community involvement:

You're like "Nike just do it," it has to happen you just make time for it, you just find a way to make it all happen, they need to give back" (Greg).

Although time is limited we spend most of it running through the neighborhood, it's important for the kids to be seen, during the off season they help out in the community, our runners have limited access but do what they can (David).

The coaches put their teams in the community, offering experiences and highlighting the purpose. Coach Andre summed up what high school athletics can offer student-athletes:

Athletics is the foundation of civic-mindedness, it's everything we are trying to accomplish as a coach it's more than just playing it's the complexity well beyond performance, we are developing so much more than an athlete we are developing a product that money can't buy an individual that positively stands for what our community represents.

The coaches felt they inspired their student-athletes to be involved in their individual communities. They believed they were strengthening their student-athletes' individual civic mindedness. Coaches did discuss the hurdles that they have to overcome and the amount of time that these civic events take but agreed that providing those opportunities were essential and may be their student-athletes only chance of exposure of to such activities.

You start to look at your program and how you want your program to be viewed not only with in your community but outside your community. I have really run with a concept, it was tough at first, but now the school is having seminars and events all around mental health and my players coordinate and assist at all the events both in and out of our school (Maxwell).

Coaches with high transformational leadership in this study all identified the need for volunteerism and community service as part of their individual programs. Each coach interviewed was able to identify a time or place that their team participated in or organized a community service/volunteerism activity. Throughout the interviews, fostering civic mindedness seemed to be part of normal operations for the participant coaches.

Integration

New Jersey public high school athletic coaches who identified with high transformational leadership traits had a commonality of impacting students in a way that might positively impact the world. These coaches may have the ability to influence student-athletes with whom they regularly interact on the sports field in a much more far-reaching capacity. They seem to use similar approaches to reaching each student-athlete at their individual levels and seemed to want to do the best they could to provide them with the tools to be successful both on the field and in life. The overarching idea was that every one of the coaches cares about the best interest of their student-athletes. They reported building relationships that resemble the tenants of a family unit. They focused on the importance of larger community involvement and emphasized moral and ethical practices that showed the importance of civic practices. Each of the themes discussed can be tied back to what society views as the supports young people need to grow up and lead civically involved lives. Ultimately, families care about one another and take time to pause and look out for each member. New Jersey high school coaches in this study with high transformational leadership did just that. They developed and created environments

of care, support, and trust. The way that care was shared and delivered with each coach and sports team looked different; however, the underlying message was they care.

It was important for many coaches that they develop impactful relationships. This role generated respect and the types of relationships that were not typically expected. The mutual respect highlighted by many interviews allowed for the coaches to reach the student-athletes at many levels, including levels of connection that one many might not think exists on sports courts and fields. These coaches reported spending time well beyond the regular practice schedules with their student-athletes providing services to meet the needs of each child. Services include feeding them, providing transportation, doing laundry, and inspiring them to attend college or choose a fruitful career path after high school. They reported they are working well beyond their job description; however, student-athletes sometimes need more. They need the direction and support that they may not otherwise receive off the field. All of the coaches in their own opinion were able to identify ways and reasons that they impacted student-athletes in a positive way. There is a potential that high school coaches can offer more and should offer more for the future development and growth of their student-athletes. Having the ability to impact students on a personal level in a positive way can assist them to assimilate into society well and to becoming productive members of their communities and, thus, make a greater impact overall on society.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Limitations, Implications, and Conclusion

Research argues that early experiences related to civic and community service can impact the formation of future civic identity and involvement of today's youth as they become engaged adults in society (Musick & Wilson, 2008). Public education serves as an "engine for boosting levels of social capital" (Campbell, 2006). It is believed that in adolescence lifelong behaviors and beliefs are developed (Johnson, Crosnoe, & Elder, 2011). Civic involvement and community service provide clear benefits for students. These benefits include cultural awareness, refined interpersonal skills, improved critical thinking, and personal satisfaction (Schatteman, 2014). Therefore, the coach/student-athlete relationship may well serve as an important indicator regarding student-athletes' potential civic and community engagement trajectories and student outcomes (Bissett et al., 2020). The coach and athlete relationship can result in both positive and negative effects concerning student-athletes' participation in sports, their communities, and in the larger world in which they live (Jowett, 2007).

This current study explored the role that specific transformational leadership traits as identified by the Leadership Profile Inventory influence how New Jersey public high school coaches perceive their impact on student-athlete civic mindedness. This chapter will begin with a discussion related to my three research questions and the extent to which they align with the theoretical framework. In addition, this chapter will include a discussion of limitations and implications related to practice, leadership, policy, and future research as the findings can connect a larger discussion among high school athletic teams, athletic departments, and the schools in which they reside on local, state, and

national levels. Finally, this chapter will discuss the findings and tentative conclusions related to the study's three research questions, the literature, and the theoretical framework that guided this study. The three research questions were:

1. What transformational leadership practices do New Jersey Head High School Coaches self-report according to their responses on the Leadership Practices Inventory?
 - a. Which practices do NJHSHC most frequently self-report in their responses on the LPI?
2. What perceived role to NJHSHC play in the development of students' civic-mindedness?
3. How do high school head coaches connect their transformational leadership practices to the development of students' civic-mindedness?

One hundred twenty-six New Jersey high school coaches participated in the Leadership Practices Inventory survey tool. This tool explored the transformational leadership traits that the coaches self-reported as actively employing while coaching their student-athletes. The LPI is a survey tool with thirty questions addressing the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership identified as "Model the Way", "Inspire a Shared Vision", "Challenge the Process", "Enable Others to Act", and "Encourage the Heart". This survey is conceptually based by the transformational leadership tenants of Kouzes and Posner. The LPI utilizes a 10-point Likert response scale ranging from "Almost Never" (1) to "Almost Always (10)." Through self-assessment the Leadership Practices inventory was administered, and the participants rated themselves based on how they frequently utilize each of the thirty behaviors. These thirty behaviors are broken into

subscales that contain six questions related to each scale. The subsequent results from this tool identified fifteen New Jersey high school coaches with high transformational leadership who, post LPI administration and upon the researcher's emailed request, participated in a semi-structured interview wherein they engaged in an exploration of how the coaches themselves perceived their impact on their student-athletes' civic mindedness. The goals of this study were to examine the role that New Jersey public high school coaches play in the development of students' civic-mindedness and to explore if specific transformational leadership styles, according to the results of the LPI, played a role in the outcomes as described by the coaches themselves. The data from the survey and the interviews were sorted, transcribed, integrated, and analyzed to address the researched questions posed in this study. Hence, the information that was collected resulted in a reduction and analysis of the data to produce multiple themes. In this chapter, I discuss the findings and how each relates to the research questions and the theoretical framework. Finally, this chapter concludes with recommendations for policy, practice, leadership, and future research.

Discussion of the Results and Findings

Frequently Reported Leadership Practices

The first research question asked about the most frequently self-reported practice as identified by the coach participants in this study on the Leadership Practices Inventory survey tool. The Leadership Practices Inventory is a tool used to identify the transformational leadership practices that individual's use when leading others. The validity and reliability of the LPI has been well documented (Posner, 2016). This study

indicated that certain practices were more frequently used and identified by the participants. Out of the five practices available, two practices had the highest frequency. Those two practices were “Encouraging the Heart” and “Modeling the Way.” Forty-eight percent of the participants indicated that “Encouraging the Heart” was the trait they used most often as this was the most frequently reported practice in the study. The second most reported practice was “Model the Way” with thirty percent of the participants identifying it as their most frequently used practice.

Encourage the Heart

Coaches identified that they related most closely with the practice “Encourage the Heart.” This practice is important because it highlights how leaders (coaches this study) care about the student-athletes and want to see results. In a study conducted by Kouzes and Posner (1995), they found that when individuals are encouraged in organizations the overall performance was higher. “Encouraging the Heart” helps group members to connect with one another (al-Baradie, 2014). Positive feedback provided by coaches can positively impact student-athlete performance (De Muynck et al., 2017; Fransen et al., 2018). According to Mertens et al. (2018), in a study geared to examine motivation, it was identified that coaches are able to influence players’ accuracy, competence, and intrinsic motivation through athletics. The results in the quantitative survey portion of my study are consistent with the literature in that “Encouraging the Heart” may well impact student-athletes as this is a practice that is used regularly by coaches. Although teams are focused on the final result, “Encouraging the Heart” resonated with the leaders as they reported they demonstrated care towards their followers while expecting them to positively produce favorable outcomes regarding their overall efforts. “Encouraging the

Heart” challenges leaders to pay attention, personalize recognition, relate stories about success and values, celebrate together, and be an example for others to follow” (al-Baradie, 2014). All the interviewed participants indicated that they engaged in these specific activities. While the literature shows that encouraging others is an ideal way to reach followers, this study was able to demonstrate that New Jersey public high school coaches collectively use the transformational leadership style of “Encouraging the Heart” to make specific connections with their student-athletes. For example, coding revealed that all fifteen of the coaches that were involved in the semi-structured interview focused multiple times on recognizing contributions and celebrating values in addition to team victories.

Model the Way

The second highest reported practice indicated by the survey results was “Model the Way.” This practice is important because coaches set examples for their student-athletes through their actions and establish and illustrate the importance of demonstrating that they are committed to high expectations for others (Kouzes et al, 2010). Modeling the way and setting a good example of the behaviors that are desired for a group are important. Modeling and emulation are important ways that individuals learn, and many student-athletes may indeed copy the behaviors and actions of those around them and respond in similar ways when navigating athletic situations (Smith & Smoll, 2012). Coaches can impact positive developmental experiences related to both winning and losing when they model behaviors that encourage athletes to think intellectually and use positive social interactions while challenging young people to work on strengths and weaknesses in these areas. Student-athletes model the positive behaviors they observe

from their coaches (Vella et al., 2013). Modeling behavior regarding how we want others to act is consistent with information revealed during a review of related literature. The results that were produced on the LPI in this study support what other researchers of leadership have also found regarding leaders' actions. Bass & Avolio (1994) have identified transformational leadership using the following four descriptors: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration; recent leadership studies have started to clarify and support this conception. For instance, Kouzes and Posner (1995), reiterate the importance of exemplary leadership for generating the leader- follower trust relationship. In addition, they state that leading by example is a visual component that supports followers when developing assumptions and beliefs. Being visible complements ones access to the leader and assists in promoting the assumptions and beliefs favored or endorsed by the leader. Leading by example offers a visual model for individuals devoted to the overall operating system (Abu-Tineh, et al., 2008). The coaches interviewed in this study similarly suggested that using a form of modeling when leading a group can enhance individual and team success and that this success can be applied both in the real world and on a sports field or court.

Civic Mindedness

To answer research questions two and three the coaches with the highest transformational leadership score according to the Leadership Practices Inventory were subsequently invited to be interviewed during which a semi-structured methodology was utilized. Research question two examined the role New Jersey public high school coaches play in the development of students' civic mindedness. Research question three explored

how coaches connect their transformational leadership practices to the development of students' civic-mindedness. The themes that were extracted from the data include the development of a family-type climate and culture, representing the community, wanting better than they had, instilling strong moral and ethical practices, handle with care, and availability to civic events. These themes and the data collected from the LPI and the coded interview information were used to answer research questions two and three.

Development of Student Civic Mindedness

The second research question asked specifically about the role New Jersey public high school coaches play in the development of students' civic-mindedness. During the interview phase, the high school coaches in this study spoke unequivocally about how implementing and offering civic related opportunities to their student-athletes assisted in the development of a positive climate and culture that they desired for their individual sports teams. This climate and culture, according to the description in the verbatim transcripts, often resembled a family unit. Many of the coaches interviewed in this study were able to identify at least two or more service-related activities in which their teams participated under their direction. All of these activities were associated with helping or assisting others and giving back to their communities. Each of the fifteen interview participants in the study were able to identify at least one service-related project or activity that they lead or have had their teams participate in. Each coach verbalized that participation in the community expanded their teams' understanding of the real world and offered an insight into how one should behave civically in the future. In addition, the coaches also reported that these experiences strengthened bonds and relationships among the players themselves and the student-athlete/ coach. Each event that the coaches

organized or encouraged their teams to participate in allowed for growth and personal improvement, especially from a moral and ethical lens as described by the coaches themselves.

The growth and improvement of team cohesion as detailed by the coaches in this study are consistent with Holmes et al.'s findings (2022) when these researchers discuss that a single service event or an event that lasts over time may have a positive impact on student engagement with a course or assignment. The participant coaches assigned specific civic-based tasks and expected their student-athletes to give back to their individual communities in a variety of ways according to my findings. The duties and opportunities that coaches provided in this study allowed for growth and engagement that may indeed impact student-athletes positively. These experiences included assisting others and assisting the community, while focusing on the moral and ethical development that models good citizenship. The literature in leadership has demonstrated that transformational leadership where "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (Burns, 1978) is firmly related to engagement. The coaches interviewed seemed to have an inherent understanding that it is critical for organizations to have a strong relationship between leaders and followers (Anderson, 2000).

Transformational leadership plays an important role in civic virtue and behavior. Therefore, leader-follower interaction is a critical factor that often drives the direction of the organizations culture; this can often determine the direction of an organization's members' related to their positive and negative behaviors (Huang, Lalopa, & Adler, 2016; Rhodes, 2015). The coaches interviewed in this study had the highest scoring

transformational leadership scores of all participants according to their self-reporting on the Leadership Practices Inventory. This is important to the study because transformational leadership highlights a shared vision that encourages, inspires, and motivates changes in those who follow. In this study, the coaches stated that they modeled and demonstrated ways to lead ethical lives committed to values that good citizens contribute to the betterment of society. The public high school coaches in this study reported that they created and shared experiences for and with their student-athletes that embrace and support civic mindedness. The self-reported efforts of these coaches allow for a growth mindset among their student-athletes to view civic mindedness as a way to behave in the future and as an opportunity to solve real world problems. This mirrors existing research that shows that transformational leaders motivate followers to “adopt civic behaviors and attitudes to achieve future milestones” (Gregory Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004).

Family Climate and Culture

Many of the coaches reported they purposely develop a sense of climate and culture that supports a nurturing and caring relationship that models a familial unit. This is consistent with a review of literature regarding how a sense of care and belonging can impact civic mindedness. For instance, Flanagan et al, (2007) found that young people are more willing to invest in the public good if they feel connected to the people and institutions in their communities. As coaches provide student-athletes with civic related opportunities this assists them in expanding on their individual selves as they learn to care and help others. Simola at al., (2010) found that transformational leadership practices themselves encompass a high degree of care and focus on the need of others as

indicated in this study when coaches discussed their commitment to help others and to creating civic related experiences for their teams.

As relationships grew between coaches and student-athletes over time, some coaches viewed themselves as quasi-parental figures for their athletes. These frequently articulated pseudo roles may play a part in the development of civic mindedness that coaches expect from student-athletes. Overton (2010) identified that an individual's commitment to civics is based on the relationships they build between individuals and the situations in which they are involved. This study suggests that high school athletic coaches who possess high transformational leadership traits may develop familial relationships with their student-athletes that in return can assist in the development and refinement of their commitment with civic mindedness when coaches present their teams with opportunities to engage in civic related events and activities under their direction. By developing social credit with their student-athletes, the coaches, like researchers have articulated in the existing literature, play an important role in encouraging their followers to adopt civic virtue behavior (Gouthier & Rhein, 2011; Reitsamer & Brunner-Sperdin, 2017).

Handle with Care

Many of the coaches in this study acknowledged that it was important that not only did they show care and teach the student-athletes how to care for others but that the athletes themselves needed specific, individualized care and support. Transformational leadership encourages and inspires, generating a sense of care between the leader and the follower. Practices the coaches in this study reported showed a sense of care for the student-athletes and seemed to, according to the coaches, reinforce the development of

civic mindedness that they wanted to instill in the athletes for whom they coach. The coaches reported that they tailored individualized and specific forms of caring behaviors to students. This was articulated by the coaches sixteen times during the coding process. The coaches emphasized the importance of caring for the team, caring for the community, and most importantly caring for oneself and understanding the importance of developing a sense of one's importance and value within the larger community. By showing care and increasing overall civic engagement within and outside of their respective organizations, the coaches introduced student-athletes to new perspectives that could increase their sense of empathy and care for others. Palombaro et al., (2020) in a study related to care and civic mindedness has suggested that developing civic mindedness can protect against that lack of care that individuals may have for one another. My particular study supports and contributes to the literature concerning that having a sense of care and providing student-athletes with supports related to the care they need can impact their willingness to participate and understand the importance of civic development in the future. When care is provided, the student-athletes themselves seemed to, according to the coaches, increase their own sense of care and may as a result be more inclined to care for others and adopt lifelong behaviors that model civic mindedness and the ideals of helping the communities in which they live. Civic behavior is often characterized as a "responsible and constructive involvement of employees" (Organ & Ryan, 1995). This can often be conceptualized as an individual level of organizational citizenship behavior (Khan, Ali, Khan, & Jehan, 2019). Loyalty, faith, and individualized care result (Bertland, 2009; Jehan, et al, 2020). When followers engage in

a social relationship with leaders, the followers begin to lead others in a positive way to achieve the goals of the organization (Bahadur, Khan, Ali, & Usman, 2020).

Instilling Strong Moral and Ethical Practices

Coaches who use transformational leadership can encourage, inspire, and challenge followers to use both moral and ethical practices in sporting contests. Elite athletes are often tested morally and can be surrounded by practices that encourage cheating, aggression, and psychological warfare (Harden, 2011). The coaches in this study with self-reported high transformational leadership traits discussed the importance of teaching student-athletes how to behave in moral and ethical ways that would represent the ideal citizen in the communities in which they live. Coaches assist in the development of the morals and ethical practices that our student-athletes learn through the experiences they provide. Through the service-related initiatives that the coaches in this study described the student-athletes generated a sense of belonging, became excited to participate, and developed the habits of a good citizenship (Fox & Singleton, 2008). It is the job of the coach to teach character through sport by modeling and reinforcing the individual mindset and development by demonstrating and providing examples of moral courage and doing what is right (Lumpkin, 2011). The coaches in this study reported doing the same thirteen times during the semi-structured interview process.

According to the literature, when developing good citizenship through school programs, stakeholders accept young people as valued resources in the community (Manning & Patterson, 2005). In this current study the coaches clearly identified the positive relationships that their teams have built with the communities in which they live. They noted specific instances related to moral and/or ethical development. These

relationships are beneficial to the future, beneficial to how student-athletes portray themselves, and beneficial to how the athletes may behave once they graduate or no longer belong to these individual sports teams. This study added to the body of literature by illuminating instances of high school coaches who model and represent ethical and moral behaviors who may in turn have the ability to prepare and mold the future behaviors and attitudes of student-athletes. Such behaviors have the ability to impact future civic minded thinking and participation among student-athletes that had exposure during high school while participating on a sports team that offered civic related opportunities during high school. It is well documented that leadership impacts both current and future behaviors (Ali et al., 2019; Pitafi et al., 2018; Son et al., 2014).

Connecting Transformational Leadership and Student Civic Mindedness

The third research question in this study explored how high school sports coaches connected their transformational leadership practices to the development of civic mindedness among their student-athletes. This study was driven by a sincere interest in high school coach leadership. Coaches in this study clearly reported that they used aspects of their transformational leadership style to connect and reach each student-athlete they coach. Through stories, examples, and explanations the coaches in this study identified how their leadership reached students and offered them the ability to be change agents. Leaders that utilize transformational leadership understand that they can be a change agent able to direct, guide, and motivate people while building trust when engaging in the change effort ahead (Akbar & Tirtoprojo, 2021). It is the role of the coach, the transformational leader, to support the entire organization by assisting each member in their journey to accept the organizations values and beliefs (Avolio &

Luthans, 2006). The coaches in this study discussed repeatedly the importance of the mindset and the importance of representing the communities in which they live. They often stated that they expect each student-athlete to be contributors to society by engaging in civic related activities.

Each of the coaches interviewed discussed what they wanted the student-athletes to gain from their sports programs, and it was evident that the coaches wanted much more for their teams than a traditional team “win.” They wanted each member of their teams to gain an understanding of what it means to be a civically engaged individual. Although the activities and the student-athletes access to civic-related efforts looked different for each team, all of the coaches emphasized a need for the student-athletes to see the “big” picture --- that participation in sports can offer more than just competition and winning. They seemed to understand their influential roles with their teams, the need to inspire, and the need for the students to find larger meaning in their activities. Avolio & Bass (2004) indicate that inspirational motivation occurs when the leader’s acts inspire followers to produce a sense of meaning in their work.

Transformational leadership is collaborative. It has been acknowledged that one single entity cannot make massive change; however, collectively, multiple team members working together can have greater success when solving problems (Sun & Anderson, 2012). This study demonstrated that New Jersey public high school coaches with high transformational leadership traits believed that they supported civic mindedness and service towards their communities. Transformational leaders such as coaches can influence another’s commitment and their actions towards the collective good of others (Fu et al., 2010). They can influence and aid in the civic development in these student-

athletes as they grow and make choices particularly if they purposefully create and support projects related to civic mindedness.

Representing the Community

Transformative leadership theory questions both justice and democracy. It evaluates unbalanced practices and offers hope for high individual achievement while increasing shared positive outcomes for others (Shields, 2011). Coaches in this study made many connections regarding the importance of representing the communities of their teams, their schools, and the world. They specifically discussed instances of encouraging and inspiring their teams to understand a larger vision and the importance of meaningful representation. They made symbolic references that included uniforms and mascots. Campos (2020) argues that leaders use symbols and tug on the heart strings of followers to motivate them within the organization, which encourages individuals to operate in a specific manner that complements the overall interests of the organization. Each student-athlete wears a uniform that represents their schools and communities and the symbolic uniform according to the coaches creates an official expectation on how to behave and act that demonstrates good citizenship. The coaches described a social responsibility in which they assist the students in setting values that will compliment and improve the communities in which they live and this reflects current research (Wray-Lake et al., 2016). These values are believed to be forming over adolescence (Flanagan, 2003) and the coaches in this study connected their leadership with their beliefs in civics to assist in developing these values in their charges. Transitions to high school can present risks related to academics, self-esteem, and mental health (Rudolph et al., 2001). Volunteering and assisting in one's community give student-athletes the ability to take

responsibility for themselves and others and take an active role in improving their communities (Younis & Yates, 1997). The coaches reported that when the students participated in such activities it was important that they symbolize their teams by honoring their uniforms and overarching school values.

Through various transformational leadership experiences, the coaches in this study discussed that the relationships they build with their teams that models trust, inspiration, and empowerment. The very same components of transformational leadership style are also used to describe beliefs and values associated with civic mindedness (Westheimer & Kahane, 2004). Transformational leadership can be directly linked to civic mindedness in the community because it is driven by improving organizational processes in the attempt to produce better follower outcomes (Wong et al., 2013). When coaches are able to use transformational leadership with their student-athletes, the student-athletes are learning indirectly how to behave in the larger society which may reinforce students' willingness and readiness to give back and represent their schools and communities in a positive way. Transformational leadership has the ability to drive change. Coaches in theory aim to change their teams for the better. This study contributes to the body of literature by acknowledging that when New Jersey public high school coaches demonstrate the importance of representing the community in a positive manner, they are essentially using their leadership style to directly influence the thinking of their student-athletes by connecting them to civics issues in relation to what their responsibilities are, or one day be, in society.

Wanting Better than They Had

In this study, the coaches described both negative and positive experiences that they themselves had while participating in sports growing up. Each coach interviewed in this study noted that they wanted better experiences for their student-athletes, and, any compared their own leadership style to that of the coaches they had. The coaches described specific instances and experiences different than what they aspire to offer their student-athletes. Collectively, all reported that they all wanted to see their student-athletes grow and do better and be better than they themselves. Through civic experiences the coaches stated they assisted the student-athletes in learner-centered teaching situations. The coaches clearly explained they wanted to expose their teams to situations that would allow them to grow and gain more socially from their athletic programs than they received as children. These experiences support a learning environment where learning takes place because individual and groups such as sports teams apply their current knowledge to new experiences and expand on their individual learning (Hinchliffe, 2011). When student-athletes engage with their teams in coach directed civic events, their overall experience may generate new learning applicable on and off the field and court. According to Brackenbury (2012), the connections made through learner-center teaching can last for many years after the experience occurs, which is why it may be essential for coaches to instill the importance of these practices if they would like to play a role in the future development of student-athletes as they grow and move through their sports programs and into the larger world. Because it is likely that young people who participate in positive childhood experiences are more likely to have positive outcomes in adulthood (Cowden, 2019), the civic minded experiences that the

participants have created may indeed impact and influence their students later in life. Transformational leaders look to motivate the members of an organization to improve them in all aspects in which they engage (Khattak et. al., 2020). The coaches wanted generational improvement. This study contributes to the literature confirming that coaches as potential transformational leaders may play a critical role in improving individuals and organizations (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005) by detailing the ways they hope to engage student-athletes to look beyond self-interest for the betterment of the group or organization and society. The coaches, like transformational leadership itself, illustrate that leaders are “at the forefront promoting improvement for others” (Campos, 2020).

Exposure to Civic Events and Equity

The coaches in this study highlighted over and over again the importance of civic participation and the lack of opportunities that student-athletes have if they do not engage in these opportunities with their sports teams. Research shows that student-athletes have less time available to participate in service-related initiatives (Hoffman et. al., 2015), which is why in this study it is important to point out that each coach interviewed offered service-related opportunities for their student-athletes to participate in under their direction. Student-athletes that participate in civic minded activities gain a deeper understanding of the world around them and are more willing to collaborate with people from different backgrounds and gain an awareness of other people around them (Geier & Hasager, 2020). High school sport participation can affect attitudes toward minority groups and heighten the concerns that student-athletes, especially females, have in regard to the treatment of minorities from a social justice lens (Denham, 2020).

Transformational leadership characteristics embody the need to put others first and focus on the good of the organization rather than an individual and generate a consensus that everyone belongs. The coaches clearly articulated that the use of transformational leadership-type skills and the introduction to civic related responsibilities can impact developmental outcomes for members of their organizations while increasing awareness related to social justice. The coaches with self-reported transformational leadership traits all emphasized the need to focus on social issues. As Shields & Hesbol (2020) write, “Transformative leaders strive for justice and democracy.” Leaders then must be dedicated to producing and supporting the formation and continuation of equitable systems to allow people to have a way to participate in the collaborative efforts toward reaching common goals (Collins et al., 2019).

As discussed in the interviews, many of the participant coaches, after initial modeling experiences, witnessed student-athletes engaging in civic roles without direction after new events took place. Transformational leaders understand that change can happen when you empower a group. Exposing student-athletes to civics may be essential as society’s way of solving problems is changing, governing bodies operate differently than ever before, and public problems are getting bigger (Kopell, 2010) which in return increases the expectation that larger groups of people must work together to resolve these issues (Leighninger & Bradley, 2006). As a result, all stakeholders in an organization are tasked with the responsibility to act. This study contributes to the literature confirming that public high school coaches might be wise to offer access to civic related activities as sports play a role in the larger development of high school student-athletes’ sense of social justice and democracy. The participant coaches’ lived

realities revealed that they, like examples of transformational leadership in the research, value inclusivity and equity (Brown, 2006; Rivera-McCuthen, 2014; Shields, 2010).

Limitations

The results of this study showed that the participants self-reported and detailed certain traits and behaviors of transformational leadership practices. What is less clear in this study is how their employing districts may or may not have had an impact on these. Other limitations in this study include a limited research sample and selection, the lack of previous published research on athletic coach leadership and civic mindedness, and potential bias conflict issues stemming from the self-reporting process of the LPI.

Another limitation is that the socioeconomic, race, and gender data of the participants were not explored. Of the fifteen interviewed participants, eleven coaches were from GH and I District Factor Groups. Only one coach represented A, B, and CD groupings. However, these data were not investigated in the current study. It must be noted that the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic may have limited study participation.

An important limitation in this study is the sample selection. Only coaches with high transformational leadership according to the Leadership Practices Inventory were pursued regarding self-reports of their perceived impact on student-athlete civic mindedness. In the future, research based on student-athlete civic mindedness from all coaches' perspectives, regardless of leadership style, could increase the sample size and impact the themes that are collected and the reliability of findings.

Another limitation to note includes the lack of previous studies related to civic mindedness and transformational leadership traits in relation to athletic coaches.

Researchers use literature to set up the framework of their study. With limited research on sports coaching and civic mindedness at the high school level, this presented challenges for me to establish a foundation for my study. The literature review regarding transformational leadership in general, however, greatly assisted me in connecting my findings and in contributing to the overall body of knowledge.

Another limitation included the conflict of biases as each participant in the study self-reported on the survey tool. As with self-reporting instrument results in general, the participants could have answered the survey questions based on personal beliefs and cultural experiences. This may have affected the outcome of the research. Sometimes participants may have answered the survey questions based on what they believed the researcher wanted to hear rather than with honest answers (Kreitchmann, et al., 2019). Future similar studies may look to ask parents/guardians, students, and supervisors to report their perceptions of coaching staff utilizing a more triangulated approach with an instrument such as the LPI 360.

Finally, the lack of experience that I have as a researcher and my ability to navigate complex quantitative and qualitative analyses as a new researcher in the field may affect the findings and discussions in the research. For example, a more detailed future statistical examination of the data could result in additional findings related to the survey instrument responses.

Implications

Policy

As a result of this study, some policy recommendations should be considered. In light of New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signing P.L. 2021, c.185 into law very recently, New Jersey boards of education might consider extending policy and legal information related to civics education to both teachers and extra-curricular coaches and advisors. This new law states that schools must offer expanded courses of study in civics. Educational institutions across the state of New Jersey are now required to offer civic education puts emphasis on how individuals should be knowledgeable and committed to their communities while appreciating their individual roles in each of the communities in which they reside (Van Rooij, 2020). This is an important consideration because coaches want their students-athletes to build character and demonstrate honesty, integrity, hard work, and self-discipline (Westheimer & Kahane, 2004), which embodies civic related tenets. Individuals argue should service learning and civic responsibility be mandatory it could change the potential lifelong outcomes as they relate to continuing civic related work (Chan, et. al., 2017) and impact students' intrinsic motivation to participate in the future. To further this aim, districts may want to consider having all coaching staff carefully review the existing N.J.S.I.A.A. policy regarding good citizenship. They may also want to consider inviting N.J.S.I.A.A. personnel into their districts to provide thorough training regarding the same.

Practice

The social benefits to be gained from participation in high school sports can impact student-athletes beyond high school. Lopez and Moore (2006) suggest that sports participation leads to a positive civic result. They found that student-athletes were more likely to volunteer in the community, register to vote, vote regularly, and watch the news. Based on the results from this study, coaches with high transformational leadership traits described various practices and activities that are related to the development of civic mindedness that may offer benefits that extend beyond their immediate time with their teams. According to Gagne & Medsker (1996), learning is a long-lasting behavior that can be caused by training. Perhaps directly and indirectly, the coaches in this study are training their student-athletes for their future both in the sports realm and life. Therefore, it is recommended that coaches engage in practices that assist them in identifying their leadership styles and evaluate how other styles might benefit the good of the organization. Districts would be wise to include extra-curricular coaches in all related professional development endeavors regarding civics. It is further recommended that the overarching civics goals of school districts be clearly communicated to all coaching staff, and consideration should be given by athletic directors to include knowledge of their districts' goals regarding civic mindedness as part of their hiring, onboarding, and ongoing professional development practices.

Future Research

According to the findings in this study, coaches that identified with high transformational leadership traits may well have the ability to contribute to the civic mindedness of the athletes that they coach. This can be potentially accomplished via

participation in civic related activities. However, it is unclear of the exact level of impact that such civic minded activities affect each individual student-athlete. It is recommended that future research involve exploring other types of coaching leadership styles and their impact on civic mindedness. Additionally, based on the findings of this study coaches most frequently used the practice of “Encouraging the Heart” which demonstrated their desire to connect with student-athletes on a personalized level to best meet individualized needs. However, the study did not primarily focus on specific ways that coaches “Encourage the Heart” of their student-athletes. While the coaches were able to clearly identify that “Encourage the Heart” is a favored approach to coaching, the study did not compare Kouzes and Posner’s subdomain trait responses to one another regarding under which conditions a coach would utilize different styles when working with student-athletes. Future statistical research is suggested to explore responses in a more in-depth manner. Additionally, future researchers may elect to explore whether or not there are statistically significant differences between male and female coach participants in replicated studies. Finally, additional triangulated research could be conducted related to this study that specifically involves students, parents/guardians, and administrators utilizing the LPI 360 instrument to further examine the coaches’ responses.

Leadership

Considering the role that each coach plays in regard to their high school student sports teams and the findings of this study as they relate to community, ethics, care, and civic events, athletic coaches may definitely play a role in the development of their student-athletes’ sense of civic mindedness. It is critical to continue to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and youth sports. It is recommended

that educational leaders offer continued support to coaches through leadership training on various styles of leadership and how to differentiate appropriateness. It is suggested that coaches be required, under the direction of school leadership, to collaborate on both school- and community-wide projects that can support and foster a civic mind set for students.

Additionally, coaches can task their students with specific leadership responsibilities related to service. For example, team captains can come up with new ideas and assist the coach in directing the team. The experiences that coaches and student leaders require their teams to engage in can set leadership examples for community stakeholders and other students not directly involved in sport. Including stakeholders in this conversation can open new doors and opportunities for the student-athletes. As Lichterman and Eliasoph (2014) argue, civic thinking and skill sets can be conducted in a variety of settings, looking different and open to interpretation, and not only be conducted in a formal civic sector.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore New Jersey public high school coaches regarding leadership style and to examine those with high transformational leadership traits to see how they potentially impact student-athlete civic mindedness. Fifteen public high school coaches from across the state of New Jersey that were identified with high transformational leadership traits according to the Leadership Practices Inventory were invited and agreed to participate in a semi-structured interview that investigated their self-perceived impact on the development of student-athlete civic mindedness. It was

found that the participant coaches in general favor the practice of “Encouraging the Heart.” The coaches in this study understand the importance of celebrating wins both on and off the field. While the data revealed “Encouraging the Heart” as the most frequently reported practice, it did not specifically explore what measures coaches use to deliver their leadership in a way that models “Encouraging the Heart”. My findings are limited as previously described. However, each of the fifteen coaches interviewed was able to significantly recall and share stories and examples of civic minded initiatives that their individual teams had organized or participated in. The coaches articulated why civic mindedness was important and how they hoped they were cultivating it. Many of the coaches related to their student-athletes in a familial manner and impressed upon their athletes the importance of morals and ethics. While the data supported that these coaches self-reported they possess transformational leadership traits, there was not sufficient data to support that the lessons they verbalized that they taught to their student-athletes related to civic mindedness will influence these students later in life.

Education researchers continue to firmly encourage character development (Jeziorski, 1994). Fine (1987) argues that youth sports assist children in the development of understanding the moral world around them and that this can occur when adult’s convey rules about values and behavior. A person with favorable character traits demonstrates kindness, empathy, trustworthiness, and integrity (Lumpkin et al., 2003). These traits can be associated with thinking beyond the self and with a willingness to volunteer and help others (Rotolo, et al., 2019). The coaches with high transformational leadership in this study created bonds, played the role of more than just coach, and understood the value of developing relationships. They understood the importance of developing the whole

person. They expressed that they hoped to influence their student-athletes to one day be civic minded contributors toward society, and they related aspects of community service activities as a means for their students to assist in helping solve real world problems. The inquiry of whether secondary interscholastic athletics have lasting effects on civic-mindedness, however, must be continued in future studies.

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Appendix A

Wiley

WILEY

March 23, 2022

Sarah Sharpe:

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Best wishes for every success with your research project.

Cordially,

Gabriel Sims

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Sarah Sharpe
Coach Leadership Counts and Civic Mindedness Matters
Rowan University

Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about yourself. How did you become a coach?
2. What types of relationships do you develop with students at your school?
3. What does civic mindedness mean to you?
4. So based on that explanation, what role do you see for yourself in developing civic-mindedness in students?
5. What practices or behaviors do you engage in that contributed to this development? Can you tell me a story or provide an example that you believe really captures your engagement?
6. What impacts your choices to include or not include civic mindedness as part of your athletic program?
7. What types of civic-minded activities do your student-athletes participate in under your direction or guidance?
8. In what ways were you inspired to do so? Can you give me an example of something that influenced you to include civic-mindedness in your engagement with students?
9. So we are going to make a bit of a detour here. You rated yourself very high on the LPI, meaning you reported that you frequently engage in transformational leadership practices. How do you see this as part of your work with students?
10. In what ways has your transformational leadership helped you to inspire, enable, and encourage your students to embrace civic-mindedness?
11. Is there something I missed? What other questions should I be asking?