Moral Reasoning of Collegiate Athletes and Intramural Sport Athletes: An Investigation of the Influence of Religiosity, Gender, and Type of Sport Played

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

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2013

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of religiosity, gender, and type of sport played (individual or team sport) on levels of moral reasoning for intercollegiate athletes and undergraduate students who are involved in intramural sports. Moral reasoning for this research was defined through the insight and application of Kohlberg’s (1983) moral development theory. The sport specific measurement instrument utilized for this study was also grounded in Kant’s (1968) deontological ethical framework, which focuses on moral reasoning from a duty and obligation perspective. This research is important as a means for better understanding the reasoning behind why some unethical behavior occurs in sport, since scholars believe that moral reasoning is a good predictor of actual ethical behavior (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009).

Research questions were formulated to compare the level of moral reasoning (dependent variable) among intercollegiate and intramural sport athletes on the independent variables of gender, type of sport played, and personal religiosity. Study participants (N= 213) from a large, Midwestern university were administered the Hahm-Beller Values Choice Inventory (HBVCI), which consists of 16 moral dilemma items common to sport (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). Additionally, respondents answered 7 questions related to their personal religiosity via the Religiosity Measures Questionnaire (RMQ) that was developed by Rohrbaugh and Jesser (1975).
Once data were collected statistical tests such as an independent samples $t$-test, simple linear regression and multiple regression analysis were run to help determine the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable.

The results of this study indicated that female athletes morally reason at a higher level than male athletes, and that individual sport athletes morally reason at a higher level than team sport athletes. Also, it was found that neither gender nor type of sport played moderated the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning; however, it was determined that a negative correlation existed between personal religiosity and moral reasoning for this sample of athletes.

As this study further tested variables related to moral reasoning in the sport context, it is recommended that sport managers such as coaches and athletic administrators design and implement moral development educational programs for athletes at the collegiate level. Since moral reasoning is believed to be a predictor of ethical behavior, it is imperative that sport leaders continue to find ways to develop higher levels of moral reasoning among the athletes entrusted to their care.
Dedication

Dedicated to the joy of my life, my son,

Vincenzo Emmanuel Lyons
Acknowledgments

I have been blessed to receive genuine and loving support throughout my academic career and would not have even dreamed of, let alone been able to, pursue and complete my Ph.D. Most recently, I have been the beneficiary of friendship, wisdom, and guidance from the faculty members in Sport Management and Sociology at The Ohio State University. I am deeply indebted and would like to first thank my advisor, Dr. Brian Turner, for accepting me as his doctoral student and helping me map out these past three years of study and preparation. I am honored to call him a friend and a cherished mentor. I also wish to thank Dr. Donna Pastore for her friendship and mentoring throughout this Ph.D. program, including her graciousness in trying to help me publish my work and treating me to lunches at the Faculty Club. Thanks also to the legendary Dr. Packianathan Chelladurai for enduring my 20+ page weekly papers in the four theory/seminar classes I was blessed to take with him. Finally, I must thank Dr. Korie Edwards from the Department of Sociology for her insight and effort spent being part of my candidacy and dissertation committees.

I would sincerely like to thank professors Dr. Mark Powell, Dr. Wally Taylor, Dr. Brad Binau, and President Mark Ramseth from Trinity Lutheran Seminary, whose support, encouragement, recommendations, and belief in me helped carry me from darkness back into the light through the Gospel. Additionally, I would like to thank the
congregations and their members that I served in faithful ministry during the 1990’s, including First Lutheran in Troy, OH, Trinity Lutheran in Circleville, OH, and Trinity Lutheran in Marysville, OH. You all supported me in my development as a leader, teacher, public speaker, and general servant of the Lord. A special thanks to my former home congregation St. John Windfall Lutheran and its retired pastor, Don Pletcher. Your prayers and financial support aided me throughout my entire Master’s Degree program and I am incredibly grateful for those years of sacrifice you made on my behalf.

I was very blessed to have an outstanding undergraduate advisor here at Ohio State and would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Jamie Cano, who always seemed to have more confidence in me than I had in myself. I know he wanted me to be the Pope one day, but for now I an excellent classroom educator because of him.

Thanks be to God for the good people of Cardington, OH, especially all of my former teachers, coaches, and pastors. Their love and support helped turn an overweight and under confident boy into an intelligent and charismatic man who trusts in his ability and calling to positively lead people. A truly heartfelt thanks to Mr. Neil Swonger, my high school FFA advisor and agricultural science teacher of four years. He was a father and mentor for me when I desperately needed both, and I would not be the man I am today if it were not for the investment he made in me when I was a freshman in high school. I share this Ph.D. with you Neil, and with my other beloved teachers at Cardington, including your wife Misty Swonger, and the late Joyce Landon who called me her “Vinny” and always held me in such high esteem in front of my peers.
None of this would have been possible without the original love of my life, my mom, Karen, whose decision to unconditionally love and support me each day has made my life more bearable and extremely fruitful. You always told me how proud you are of me and you never cast unrealistic expectations upon me as a child, yet always found ways to inspire and encourage me to seek God’s will and a higher calling in life. Thanks Mom for all that you have done and all that you continue to be for our entire family. Also, I would like to thank my sister Jennifer, my cousin Larry, my aunts Lori & Stacy, and my deceased uncle Mike for being there to listen to me and for believing that I was destined for great things in this life. It is an honor to share this accomplishment with you. In your own unique ways you have all showed me “with God all things are possible.”

Most importantly, I would like to thank my wife Pauletta for supporting me and finding ways to love and forgive me through thick and thin over the past 11 years. It was not an easy decision to forgo a good life and significant income as a high school teacher and coach to return to graduate school, but you never questioned my decision to pursue a Ph.D. These past three years you have been an excellent mother to our son and your hard work has eased the burden of me worrying about important day-to-day family business. I hope that this Ph.D. leads to a richer and more fulfilling life for you and for our son. I hope you and Vincenzo know how much I love and care about you. Without a doubt, this Ph.D. is a Lyons family honor to be forever cherished.
Vita

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sport has become so prevalent and important in American culture today that to
discount its influence would be a mistake. Eitzen and Sage (2009) went so far as to say
that sport plays an important role in imparting significant values on both those that
participate, as well as on those that follow. Although debatable exactly which ethics are
imparted through sport, scholars believe that many values found in the sporting arena can
be thought of as either positive or negative in nature, such as prioritizing sportsmanship
and fair play in youth sports or over emphasizing the corporate aspect of collegiate and
professional sport (Simon, 2010). To this end, Simon (2010) thought that most people’s
adoption of a relativistic attitude has led to a general rejection of ethical and moral
discourse in much of the Western world today, especially as it pertains to discussing
behavior that might be perceived as unethical. However, when considering some of the
recent ethical issues in popular sport, such as former Ohio State head football coach Jim
Tressel withholding critical information from the National Collegiate Athletic
Association (NCAA), coaches and athletic administrators at Penn State University
enabling the systematic abuse of children to occur, and the rampant use of banned
performance enhancing substances by cyclist Lance Armstrong, it is apparent that some behaviors lack sound moral judgment. Thus, instead of simply forgoing inquiry into the moral and ethical character of sport out of fear of relativistic exclusion from rationality, this research proposed an in-depth analysis into the process of moral reasoning by athletes. This type of moral reasoning analysis is necessary as a means for potentially predicting unethical behavior in the future (University of Idaho Center for ETHICS*, 2009), as the thought process and motivation of athletes are illuminated through a careful quantitative research design.

The earliest scholarly definitions for moral reasoning originated during the first half of the 20th century in the field of psychology, as an extension of Piaget’s stages of cognitive and moral development in children (Piaget, 1997) and dealt with a child’s mental ability to know the difference between “right” and “wrong” once of a particular age. More recently, psychologists who study moral reasoning have become fascinated with trying to comprehend how children respond to moral dilemmas at various stages of their development, as famously outlined by Kohlberg (1980). Tod and Hodge (2001) utilized Kohlberg’s work in their own research within sport and have defined moral reasoning as “representing the cognitive process that an individual goes through in order to reach a moral decision based on her or his perceptions of reality” (p. 308). Moral reasoning, then, for the purposes of this paper is understood as a function of cognitive reasoning that may be unique to each person and is a process that is influenced and erected by those other than self.
Ethics and Moral Reasoning in Sport

The vast majority of extant literature related to moral issues in sport deals specifically with what Morgan (2007) called “the depressingly sorry moral state in which sports presently find themselves” (p. xi). As such, academic interest in the ethics of sport over the past 50 years has been mostly concerned with articulating the various moral pitfalls in sport germane to concepts such as sportsmanship (Keating, 1964), fair play (Butcher & Schneider, 1998), winning (Dixon, 1999), intentional rules violations (Fraleigh, 2003), doping (Hoberman, 1995; Simon, 1984), genetic enhancement (Tamburrini, 2002), gender and sexual equality (English, 1978; Francis, 1995), race/ethnicity (Valentine, 1999), violence (Simon, 1991), exploitation of student athletes (Wertheimer, 1996), and disability rights of athletes (Silvers & Wasserman, 1998).

Within each one of these categories scholars have written about the various moral issues that exist at the participatory, leadership, and organizational levels. For example, Francis (1995) believed that Title IX and affirmative action at the collegiate level is a moral issue as long as schools have disproportionate representation of female athletes and sport programs, which includes non-biased selection criteria for females in coaching as well as athletic administration positions. Other scholars think moral issues exist in sport on a more carnal level, where intentional and legal blows to the head in boxing lead to long-term brain damage, and thus should be prohibited on ethical grounds of a person’s paternalistic right to be protected from harm (Dixon, 1999).

Virtually all of the moral issues in sport written about in the scholarly literature view ethics from a consequential or deontological position that focuses on examining and
evaluating moral concepts at any level from either an outcome or duty-based perspective. In the most basic sense, then, the consequential or utilitarianistic position of ethics judges the morality of a behavior or decision based on discerning what brings about the most common good (Hartman & DesJardins, 2010; McNamee & Parry, 1998; Morgan, 2007), while the deontological position of ethics evaluates morality based on whether or not a person or group of people are obeying their duties and obligations (Holowchak, 2005; Kant, 1996). Therefore, a simple example of the difference between the two might be seen in the sporting context, where a coach acts against his or her personal moral duty of not breaking a promise to an individual player in order to bring about the best consequence for the team (Morgan, 2007). However, these two moral perspectives are not always opposed to one another, particularly when considering recent issues related to the rights of disabled athletes. Double, lower leg amputee South African runner Oscar Pistorius was given an equal opportunity (consequential common good) to compete in the 2012 summer Olympics against other able-bodied athletes after the sport’s governing body stated it was their duty to conduct tests that were aimed at determining whether or not Pistorius would gain a competitive advantage due to his prosthetic legs (Wolpe, 2012). Thus, the decision to allow a disabled athlete to compete alongside of non-disabled athletes was arrived at only after considering the duty and obligations of the sport organization and the probable outcome or consequence of such a decision.

Beyond identifying and discussing various actions, behaviors, or decisions in sport as being ethical or unethical, scholars are interested in the moral reasoning of athletes and coaches that appear to influence the actions, behavior, and/or decisions that
are in question. In fact, a 2006 qualitative study by Long, Pantaleon, Bruant, and d’Arripe-Loneuville revealed that elite male teenage athletes regularly engage in moral disengagement (a term used by Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli in 1996) as they compete in sport, at least due in part to the ego-centered competitive sport context. Long et al. believed this was noteworthy because these athletes appeared to morally reason at a level suggesting a cognitive ability to distinguish between actions that are “right” or “wrong.” Furthermore, the athletes that were interviewed for this research indicated that they would use morally sound values and virtues to alternately “justify both following and transgressing rules, by giving different meanings to the same value according to what must be justified” (Long et al., p. 344). Thus, within the realm of the Long et al. study, if an action or behavior was to be justified for why the elite male athlete would engage in an immoral manner, then he might support his behavior or actions on the grounds that he was sticking up for his teammate. Of possible greater importance, is that some of the male athletes reported that their own unethical behavior was no different than the behavior they had seen modeled by others in similar circumstances (even if they knew the behavior was immoral). Similar results were found by Tod and Hodge (2001), who noted in their qualitative study that athletes who possessed a high level of ego in their goal orientation demonstrated less mature levels of moral reasoning, possibly due in part to a “win at all cost” mentality in competitive sporting environments. Also, their data indicated that the athletes interviewed believed their personal moral reasoning was influenced by their coaches, friends, and teammates. When considered alongside of the Long et al. (2006) research, the Tod and Hodge data
suggests a relationship between an athlete’s moral reasoning and whom they learn from in terms of modeled and/or perceived expected behavior. Therefore, further research in sport is needed to fully understand the influences on athlete moral reasoning, especially in terms of illuminating what athletes might be learning from others in the sport specific domain.

Quantitative research into moral reasoning in sport has primarily been conducted the past several decades using a measurement instrument created by researchers at the University of Idaho Center for ETHICS* (2009). The Hahm-Beller Values Choice Inventory (HBVCI) was designed to assess moral reasoning in the sport domain by asking those being surveyed to respond to moral dilemmas common in sport, and the HBVCI claims to be the only sport specific scale for measuring moral reasoning in scholarly circulation today (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). In general, the various scholars that have administered the HBVCI to athlete populations have found that male athletes in team sports score significantly lower in moral reasoning than individual sport athletes (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). Additionally, the HBVCI has revealed in various studies that the longer a person (male or female) participates in sport, including at higher levels of competition, the more eroded their moral reasoning becomes (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). The research for this paper utilized the HBVCI in exploring the moral reasoning of a collegiate athlete population compared to an undergraduate intramural athlete population on a large, Midwestern university campus. Special attention was also paid to similarities or
differences that may exist between males and females, as well as those who participated in team sports versus individual sports.

Deontology

*Deontology* is a word of Greek origin that literally translated means “duty” or “obligation” (Beauchamp, 1991). One of the first issues, then, that results from this definition involves individual and social discernment of moral duty and obligation to whom. It appears as though a person can receive their moral duties and obligations from a variety of sources, including God/Higher Power, personal intuition, or rational logic (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2003). Still others believe that certain moral duties and obligations such as parents protecting their children are to be obeyed because they are naturally to be followed (Beauchamp, 1991). In this study, participants were evaluated on deontic reasoning that was specific to whether or not the person was following their duty and obligation to play fair and practice good sportsmanship, regardless of who or what gave this moral edict.

Deontological ethical theory, unlike consequentialism, is not interested in finding the common good or the most happiness that might result from a person’s behavior. Instead, deontology is an ethical position that was primarily articulated by the 18th century philosopher, Kant, who thought that the “right” or “wrong” of an action is based on obeying one’s duty (Kant, 1968). Additionally, the deontological perspective focuses on the internal features of our moral actions and behaviors (Morgan, 2007), which include a prescription for acting in accord with documented duties regardless of the consequence (Hartman & DesJardins, 2010). As such, the Kantian deontological frame
of reference contends that the decision-maker must take both himself and his cultural perspective out of the equation when deciding what his or her duty is regarding some specific behavior or individual action (Simon, 2007). For instance, a school’s athletic coach that is responsible for enforcing academic eligibility of players would be acting according to deontological ethics in deciding that an athlete can not participate in a season or game because of poor grades. Furthermore, this coach’s actions in this case would demonstrate a high level of deontological moral reasoning since the coach was acting based on obeying duty, regardless of any possible negative consequences to the team or athletic community.

Scholars in sport today think that deontological ethics should be argued from a normative position that recommends behaving in ways that honor one’s moral duty and responsibility, irrespective of the consequence of the noted behavior (Holowchak, 2005). Since deontological ethics is inherently concerned with moral behavior (Morgan, 2007) based on following duties and obligations, Holowchak (2005) believed that any action in sport that deprives a human of dignity or moral worth (internally or externally) ought to be reprehensible (i.e., treating competitors as you would want to be treated), specifically in terms of commitment to fair play and displays of good sportsmanship. Hence, in light of deontological ethical theory, there are expected and “well-established moral standards” related to fair play and sportsmanship that those who participate in sport ought to obey (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2003, p. 67). The scholars who created and established the moral reasoning instrument being used in this study have pre-determined that honesty,
responsibility and justice ought to be obeyed as deontological moral standards in sport (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

This research was designed to explore and describe the level of moral reasoning present in the competitive sport context for a population of intercollegiate athletes and a population of non-intercollegiate intramural sport athletes. To accomplish this intent, the following were specific purposes of this research: a.) to describe and analyze the level of moral reasoning for intercollegiate athletes and their intramural sport athlete peers; and b.) to explore relationships among the independent variables (gender, personal religiosity, and type of sport played) and a dependent variable (moral reasoning) within each group for the population of athletes. This was accomplished by first considering the intragroup relationships among independent variables and the dependent variable for intercollegiate athletes, then by a description of how these relationships were similar with the intramural sport athletes. To attain these goals intercollegiate athletes and intramural sport athletes completed the HBVCI instrument that was developed by Hahm, Beller, and Stoll (1989) which “asks how an individual reasons morally about commonly occurring issues or dilemmas in sport such as retaliation, drug use, personal responsibilities for actions, fairness to teammates and competitors, and the intentional foul” (Beller & Stoll, 1995, p. 355). Once the data was collected student scores from the population of athletes were analyzed to account for similarities and differences that exist for the level of moral reasoning relevant to gender, personal religiosity, and type of sport played. Ultimately, the data was used to compare levels of moral reasoning between intercollegiate athletes
and intramural sport athletes to better understand how several independent variables interact together to influence athletes’ level of moral reasoning.

To accomplish the second goal, three primary variables (personal religiosity, gender, team or individual sport participant) were analyzed in an attempt to discern how these variables either individually or collectively might be related to the outcomes of moral reasoning scores on the HBVCI. These variables were selected for analysis due to their use in previous research studies in sport and many disciplines, such as accounting and nursing. This study’s use of personal religiosity as an independent variable represented a first research attempt at considering religiosity as an influencing variable of moral reasoning among athletes. For this research, personal religiosity was assessed using the Religiosity Measure (RMQ) instrument that was developed by Rohrbaugh and Jessor (1975) for use with high school and college students (Hill & Wood, 1999). The RMQ utilizes two-item subscales that yield an easy to complete and age appropriate eight-item multiple-choice instrument geared toward assessing “the personal religious orientation of the individual” (Hill & Wood, p. 308). Additionally, students were asked on their questionnaire to indicate their gender and if they participate in a team or individual sport at the intercollegiate or intramural sport level.

Research Questions

Previous scholarship regarding moral reasoning among athletes has indicated that male athletes tend to morally reason at significantly lower levels than female athletes (Bredemeier & Shields, 1986). In fact, the various populations that have been assessed with the HBVCI instrument specifically created for the sport milieu have consistently
yielded this finding of significant differences in moral reasoning between genders (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). Therefore, the first research question addressed the issue of what role gender might play in influencing moral reasoning:

*Research question 1:* Do male intercollegiate and intramural sport athletes reason at a lower moral level than female intercollegiate and intramural sport athletes?

Additionally, since previous studies using the HBVCI and other moral reasoning instruments have indicated that team sport athletes score at a lower level on moral reasoning than individual sport athletes (Brendemeier & Shields, 1986; University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009) it was reasonable to think that similar results might exist for the participants in this study. Thus, research questions two addressed the issue of what influence being an individual or team sport athlete might have on moral reasoning scores:

*Research question 2:* Do team sport athletes, regardless of gender, score at a lower level of moral reasoning than individual sport athletes?

Research studies using the HBVCI in athlete populations have shown declining levels of moral reasoning among competitive female athletes who participate in team sports (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). Also, research by Beller, Stoll, and Hansen (2003) indicated that female team sport athletes who compete longer at high levels of competition have shown a steady decline in moral reasoning scores. The same results have not been reflected among male team sport athletes, who have consistently scored at low levels of moral reasoning. Therefore, research questions three and four addressed the
issue of what influence level of competition might have on moral reasoning scores of female and male team sport athletes.

*Research question 3:* Do intercollegiate female team sport athletes score at a lower level of moral reasoning than female team intramural sport athletes who participate in recreational team sports?

*Research question 4:* Do intercollegiate male team sport athletes score at a lower level of moral reasoning than male team intramural sport athletes who participate in recreational team sports?

Finally, previous studies outside of sport have noted that personal religiosity influences moral reasoning (Clark & Dawson, 1996; Keller et al., 2007) and that females usually reason at a higher moral level than a males (Keller et al., 2007; Walker, 1984). Hence, the fifth, sixth, and seventh research questions addressed the issue of what role personal religiosity might assume in influencing an athlete’s moral reasoning:

*Research question 5:* What is the relationship between level of moral reasoning and personal religiosity for athletes?

*Research question 6:* Does gender moderate the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning?

*Research question 7:* Does type of sport played moderate the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning?

Research Limitations

The data obtained from this research was only indicative of the thoughts and perceptions of those who participated in the study and may not be generalized to any
wider population, since random sampling was not utilized in the research design (Ary, 2010). Additionally, the delimitation that exists in this study involved those being surveyed in this research. Demographic factors such as race and ethnicity as possible influencers of moral reasoning levels were not considered as key independent variables in this design because of a perceived lack of diversity among potential respondents.

Importance of the Study

Scholars believe that an athlete’s level of moral reasoning is considered to be a good predictor of whether or not that person will actually engage in unethical behavior in the sporting arena (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). In their summary on the teachings of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, Galbraith and Jones (1976) assert that moral reasoning is directly related to observable behavior. As such, sport management scholars need to take seriously the potential practical implications of comprehending the process of moral reasoning among athletes, since managing how athletes behave is a critical function of coaches and athletic directors. In order to accomplish this, scholars must conduct research that measures moral reasoning in the sport context. Further, this type of research must consider the various influences on the process of athlete moral reasoning as a means for figuring out ways to stimulate higher ethical conduct among athletes.

Some scholars who follow the lead of Piaget and Kohlberg think that most, if not all of morality, depends on the level of respect that a person holds for the rules of any aspect of life (Duska & Whelan, 1975). This is particularly relevant in the sport context, which is partially defined by a myriad of constitutive rules that govern game play.
Athletes must often negotiate whether or not to follow explicitly stated rules or to act in what they believe to be a justifiable fashion based on some other non-explicitly stated rule. To this end, sport scholars have completed studies on athlete moral reasoning that indicated many sport participants choose to defend their teammates in certain situations, even if their behavior is a violation of the stated rules of the game (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). Therefore, the current study was an important step toward illuminating levels of moral reasoning among division I collegiate athletes of both genders who compete in individual and team sports.

This research was also important as it relates to better understanding how best to possibly teach moral and ethical development among athletes. In fact, sport scholars would further argue that comprehending athletes’ moral reasoning as a plausible predictor of realized role-modeled behavior has the ability to serve as a roadmap for practitioners wishing to teach ethical behavior in and through sport (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). In this regard, Drewe (1999) noted this type of research “has significant implications in that teachers and coaches can facilitate the development of the critical thinking skills and dispositions required in moral reasoning if they were aware of where their athletes were in need of guidance” (p. 117).

Finally this research was significant because it is believed to be the first sport specific study among current athletes to consider the influence of personal religiosity on level of moral reasoning. Since the vast majority of published research using the HBVCI has considered influencing variables such as gender, type of sport played, and length of time playing sport, it was necessary to consider other possible influencing factors on
athletes’ level of moral reasoning. Furthermore, the extant HBVCI-based sport studies have only compared athletes to non-athletes on levels of moral reasoning. Therefore, it was deemed important to compare athletes to other athletes given differences in level of competitiveness (intercollegiate versus intramural). As such, this study examined not only differences in level of athlete moral reasoning between genders, but intragroup comparisons for each gender by their level of completion.

Constitutive Definitions of Key Terms

The following are constitutive definitions for concepts and constructs that are mentioned throughout this research:

1. Morality is defined by Kohlberg (1969) “as a general or global cognitive system undergoing a series of transformations in development characterized by progressive differentiations and integrations of social knowledge” (Kohlberg cited in Passini, 2010, p. 437), which relate to behavior and actions that are “congruent with cultural moral norms” (Bandura, 1991 cited in Duda, 2000, p. 257).

2. Moral reasoning is defined as a cognitively learned thought process that takes into consideration the effect of a person’s past and present experiences, which include modeled behavior by influential others such as parents, peers, teachers, and clergy (Beller and Stoll, 1995) that are utilized in “reaching decisions that have moral implications” (Heilbrun & Georges, 1990, p. 183).
3. Religiosity is the extent to which a person identifies with a particular religion, such as how he or she practices the faith of that religion by attending worship, reading scripture, or praying (Johnson et al., 2008). Additionally, religiosity may be defined by the level of salience of a person’s religion in regards to the influence of personal faith in their day-to-day activities and perceptions (Berry et al., 2011).

4. An individual sport is a physical activity that is characterized by a lack of need for high levels of interaction among team members, i.e., tennis, wrestling, golf, and bowling (Donnelly, Carron, & Chelladurai, 1978). These scholars also noted that participation in an individual sport also does not require the cooperation and ability of others in order to achieve individually stated goals for athletic success.

5. A team sport is a group-based physical activity that necessitates a high level of cohesion and cooperation among members in order to accomplish athletic objectives, i.e., football, soccer, baseball, and basketball (Donnelly et al., 1978). Furthermore, a team sport consists of individuals that share a collective identity with finely tuned methods for communicating with one another (Barker, Rossi, & Puhse, 2010).

Summary

This study aimed to describe the level of moral reasoning present among a convenient sample of college athletes and intramural sport athletes, which provided insight into the cognitive thought process of individuals in this group. Since moral
reasoning is believed to be a potential predictor of actual demonstrated moral or immoral behavior of athletes, the results of this research are useful to scholars and practitioners alike. As scholars assess moral reasoning among athletes, coaches and athletic administrators are able to use this knowledge to further understand how and why athletes respond to moral dilemmas in such a variety of ways.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter aimed to outline in detail the foundational academic literature upon which this study was founded. As such, insights from the past century of psychological and sociological research into moral reasoning will be discussed, including how the topic has been approached in the sport literature.

Introduction to the History of Moral Reasoning

Although the history of the academic study of morality dates back to the time of Greek philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates, the measurable psychological construct of moral reasoning that focuses on a person’s cognitive processes is only about 70 years old (Haidt, 2008). Generally, most psychologists believe that Piaget has been the most influential non-religious or non-philosophical researcher to specifically address the concept of moral reasoning through his theory of cognitive development (Haidt, 2008) that emphasized an orderly, step-by-step cognitive progression through various stages of development that a child passes through in the first decade of his or her life (Siegal & Franis, 1982). The cognitive stages posited by Piaget were thought to be responsible for moral development as an individual passes from an egocentric view and
focus of the world to a more mature view (typically during adolescence) that is capable of exercising intelligence-based rational logic and problem solving as the individual interacts with the world beyond and outside of him or herself (Siegal & Francis, 1982). Therefore, a person cannot consider the thoughts and feelings of others, or the potential consequences of their actions, until he or she has passed into Piaget’s concrete operational cognitive stage, whereby the purely egocentric perspective is replaced by the ability to place them into the role of another (Siegal & Francis, 1982). For Piaget, then, the ability to think about morality and possibly act in morally acceptable or unacceptable ways rests within the individual’s cognitive wherewithal at the final stage of development that allows for an understanding of discriminate choice among possible behaviors and potential outcomes for a certain line of reasoning and subsequent actions (Blasi, 1980).

However, before further discussing Piaget’s stages of cognitive moral development and their application to sport, it is necessary to examine other research regarding Piaget and another noteworthy moral reasoning scholar, Lawrence Kohlberg. Kohlberg’s research was geared toward expanding upon Piaget’s initial construction of the stages of cognitive development. As such, the literature reviewed in this section discussed how Piaget’s thinking and research were influence by the works of Durkheim, a prominent early sociologist who theorized about moral education that partially results from the influence of religion in a person’s life. Additionally, the 15-18 year long research study on moral reasoning conducted by Kohlberg will be illuminated and analyzed, paying special attention to the various insights that are applicable today in the sport-specific context.
Piaget and Moral Reasoning

Some scholars believe that Piaget was the most influential developmental psychologist who studied moral reasoning (Rich & DeVitis, 1985) because his research focused on “people’s patterns of reasoning about moral decisions rather than on people’s behavior” (Duska & Whelan, 1975, p. 3). Piaget’s essential view of moral development and moral reasoning patterns were rooted in his insistence that an individual’s moral reasoning can and usually does develop “through a series of cognitive reorganizations called stages”, where each stage can be recognized by its “shape, pattern and organization” (Duska & Whelan, pp. 6-7). It is important, then, in any discussion of Piaget, to begin with a summary of his proposed stages of moral development, which scholars believe progress “hand in hand” with his posited stages of general cognitive development. The following is a detailed description of Piaget’s stages of moral development that he posited in the early 20th century based on his first hand psychology research with male youth, ages 5-13, from middle class backgrounds who were observed playing a game of marbles via a “clinical interview technique whereby the interviewer presents problems to the child, sees how he responds, and probes the limits of his knowledge” (Rich & DeVitis, pp. 46-52):

1. **Pre-moral judgment**- Piaget believed this stage includes children from birth up until about five years old, and is characterized by a complete lack of ability to morally reason due to an absence of cognitive maturity. Piaget noted that children at this age were simply too young to understand rules, which makes it
impossible for them to morally reason about a situation or circumstance that might present a moral dilemma with alternative choices.

2. *Heteronomous morality or moral realism*- Piaget posited that children from ages five to approximately nine belonged to this stage that is characterized by moral judgment grounded in obeying standard rules of right and wrong that have been authoritatively given from parents, teachers, and other adults. Children in this stage likely obey rules simply because the rules exist and have been given to them by someone they are supposed to listen to. As a result, children are probably morally reasoning based on their cognitive understanding of what the consequences might be if they disobeyed. Thus, this stage of moral development is absent of a cognitive ability to question the intention of being morally disobedient since the child is fixated on potential negative consequences.

3. *Autonomous morality or a morality of equity and cooperation*- Piaget thought that children beginning anywhere from ages seven to nine years old (overlapping with the previous stage depending on the particular child in question) are able to develop a more subjective sense of autonomy and reciprocity. During this stage children pay special attention to the social experience, including peer interaction, which becomes an important vehicle for understanding issues of morality. Piaget also observed that children in this stage begin to evolve an internal sense of moral reasoning that allows for an evaluation of actions and behaviors based on the intent, rather than focusing
on consequences of those actions and behaviors. Furthermore, he noted that children in this stage recognize rules as good/bad or right/wrong relative to the particular situation that is presented to them.

Piaget’s third stage of moral development mentioned above is particularly interesting for this study because it introduces the notion that morality has a social component, even while recognizing the function that internal cognitive maturation plays for a child developing a sense of moral reasoning. For Piaget, then, a child’s social interaction with others indicated the critical and influential role that others play in the development of moral reasoning. Piaget appeared to be suggesting that a person’s internal moral compass might be partially programmed from witnessing the behavior and actions of others. When a young person observes the modeled behavior of others, he or she at the third stage of moral development has the ability to internally process the possible motivations and intentions of others for acting certain ways in various situations, including contexts of moral dilemmas. Duska and Whelan (1975) summarize this idea well when they noted that Piaget’s moral development “is not a process of imprinting rules and virtues but a process involving transformation of cognitive structures”, that is “dependent on cognitive development and the stimulation of the social environment” (p. 7).

Piaget’s theory of moral development was influenced by the works of the noted sociologist, Durkheim, who believed that authority figures are responsible for shaping a child’s sense of morality (Piaget, 1965). In regard to differentiating between his second and third stages of moral development discussed above, Piaget expanded upon
Durkheim’s (1961) socially minded concepts of moral constraint and moral cooperation. Thus, Piaget theorized that a child first develops (usually in the second stage of development outlined above) a morality of constraint that is characterized by the following of duties and obligations (Piaget, 1965), which have been directly communicated from parents and other role models to the child. Additionally, the morally constrained child accepts from a role model any number of specific edicts that are supposed to be followed regardless of the circumstances, with an understanding that “right is what conforms with these commands; wrong is what fails to do so” (Piaget, p. 335). On the other hand, a child in the third stage of moral development will likely consider the intent and objective responsibility involved in the behavior or situational dilemma when reasoning through the morality of what the child is experiencing. Piaget also thought that a child in this stage of moral development begins to “develop a spirit of cooperation in regards to respecting others as a means of promoting social solidarity, despite internal drives that might desire an autonomous conscience” (p. 335).

Additionally, it appears that Piaget agreed with Durkheim’s idea that this evolutionary process of an individual child moving from constrained to cooperative morality is paralleled, if not modeled, throughout society. To this end, Piaget noted that in any good society there ought to be an established morality that exists between a child’s obedience to “adults in general” as it pertains to following certain commands out of respect for elders who help maintain social solidarity (p. 336).

Ultimately, from his social study of Durkheim’s research on moral education, Piaget appeared concerned with connecting how a person’s social interactions with
others, particularly in the handing down of rules from elders to younger generations, influences the development of cognitive moral reasoning. To this end, Duska and Whelan (1975) noted that for Piaget, “all morality consists of a system of rules, and the essence of all morality is to be sought for in the respect which the individual acquires for those rules” (p. 8). These scholars believe this leads to questions about how the cognitive recognition for knowledge and respect of rules might act as a restraint to immoral behavior. Furthermore, it also appears that Piaget was interested in exploring how the cognitive moral knowledge of and respect for rules affects the lived experience of following or not following the rules.

To find answers to these questions about a child’s knowledge of and respect for rules, he designed an experiment within the context of a game of marbles that was aimed at observing children of various ages. Specifically, Piaget selected the game of marbles because of its simplistic rules that would have been known to the children of numerous ages that he was studying, which would allow him to grasp the children’s’ cognitive orientations toward the knowledge of and obeying of rules (Duska & Whelan, 1975). Piaget observed that younger children simply played for the psychomotor pleasure of the game with a total lack of or limited knowledge of the rules of the game, while kids around the age of seven or eight began to emphasize or repeat the rules as sacred codes that must be followed because they have been given to them by authoritative figures (some children even mentioned that the rules of marbles must be obeyed because God is the one who established them). Older children, however, stated that the rules of playing marbles must be obeyed in part because winning the game only has meaning if the given
rules are followed. If fact, some of these older children didn’t appear to know all of the
rules, yet insisted on following them due to social influences of their interaction with
those they played the game with.

Some of the older and more cognitively mature children, through cooperative
play, reason that the rules of playing marbles are the result of mutual consent more than a
strict edict handed down by those in authoritative position (p. 11). It is at this last stage
of moral reasoning development that Piaget believed children realize a desire to
cooperate with others in following agreed upon rules that might be non-sacred enough to
be cooperatively altered if those playing are in agreement. Therefore, this type of
relativistic attitude could result in either a desire to change the rules, or possibly in an
attempt to justify reasoning that opposes or circumvents the established rules (at least in
terms of whatever unique context is being considered).

Of utmost importance to the present research is Piaget’s notion that older, more
cognitively mature children are capable of a type of moral reasoning that allows for
socially cooperative behavior to established rules. However, the respect for the rules and
respect for others (including the rule giver) might not always automatically lead to a
following of the rules. This is especially relevant to moral reasoning in the context of
popular sport today, which although not observed as Piaget did through the lens of
children twelve and under playing marbles, is useful as a guide for further
comprehending how and why some athletes obey the rules and other athletes do not.
Furthermore, Piaget’s study of children playing marbles did involve game play that
consisted of rules that governed the activity, including those that determined the winner.
Since most popular sport today is played within a competitive social context, Piaget’s insights were applied to this research study.

Kohlberg and Moral Reasoning

On the heels of the ground-breaking work in the area of moral development by Piaget, Kohlberg began a nearly two decade process of gathering his own data related to moral reasoning beyond just its development in young children (Rich & DeVitis, 1985). The focus of Kohlberg’s research, similar to Piaget’s, related to the solving of moral dilemmas that were presented to those in his study. However, unlike Piaget, Kohlberg wanted to test and retest how the same person at different ages would deal with the moral dilemma that was given to them, while paying particular attention to the reasoning used (Galbraith & Jones, 1976). To accomplish this, Kohlberg chose a population of 50 males in the United States that ranged in age from ten to twenty eight and presented them with real life moral dilemmas, including a situation where an individual must choose whether or not to steal a pharmaceutical drug he can’t afford in order to save a loved one’s life (Duska & Whelan, 1975). This selected group represented an attempt to “overcome the deficiencies of Piaget’s research by using a much larger sample that is more broadly based socially and is composed of equal proportions of popular and socially isolated children” (Rich & DeVitis, p. 87). Kohlberg interviewed each individual in this group every 3 years for an 18 year period, which led to his preliminary identification of numerous “generally distinguishable orientations or perspectives” of moral development (Duska & Whelan, p. 42). He also noted that each individual interviewed sequentially passed through the exact same stages of moral development, although the rate of
development differed from person to person (Rich & DeVitis, 1985). Furthermore, Kohlberg found that not all of those in his study actually reached the highest level of moral reasoning over the interviewing time span (Duska & Whelan, 1975).

Kohlberg’s two-decade study in the mid-20th century revealed, “six developmental stages allotted to three moral levels” (Rich & DeVitis, 1985, p. 88), that he believed was evidence of an individual’s cognitive process moving from “the very concrete toward the more abstract” (Galbraith & Jones, 1976, p. 10). The retesting of individuals every three years in his selected group demonstrated an evolution through the following categories or stages of moral reasoning development (Duska & Whelan, 1975, pp. 45-47; Galbraith & Jones, 1976, pp. 10-14; Rich & DeVitis, 1985, pp. 88-89):

I. **Pre-Conventional Level**

   *Stage 1: The Punishment and Obedience Orientation-* Orientation to punishment, obedience, and physical and material power. Rules are obeyed to avoid the consequence of punishment. Avoidance of punishment and unquestioning deference to power are valued in their own right, not in terms of respect for an underlying moral order supported by punishment and authority.

   *Stage 2: The Instrumental Relativist Orientation-* Naïve instrumental hedonistic orientation. The child conforms in order to obtain rewards. Right action consists of that which instrumentally satisfies one’s own needs and occasionally the needs of others. Human relations are viewed in terms like those of the market place. Elements of fairness, reciprocity,
and equal sharing are present, but they are always interpreted in a physical or pragmatic way. Reciprocity is a matter of “you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours”, not of loyal, gratitude, or justice.

II. *Conventional Level*

*Stage 3: The Interpersonal Concordance of “Good Boy-Nice Girl”*

*Orientation-* Good behavior is that which pleases or helps and is approved by others. There is much conformity to stereotypical images of what is majority or natural behavior. Behavior is frequently judged by intention. “He means well” becomes important for the first time, and a person earns approval by being nice.

*Stage 4: The Law and Order Orientation-* This is orientation toward authority, fixed rules, and the maintenance of the social or religious order. Right behavior consists of doing one’s duty, showing respect for authority, and maintaining the given social order for its own sake.

III. *Post-Conventional, Autonomous, or Principled Level*

*Stage 5: The Social-Contract Legalistic Orientation-* Generally characterized with utilitarian overtones. Right action tends to be defined in terms of general individual rights and in terms of standards that have been critically examined and agreed upon by the whole society. Emphasis is upon equality and mutual obligation within a democratic order. There is an awareness of relativism of personal values and the use of procedural rules in reaching consensus. Special significance given to the legal point
of view, but with an awareness that law can be changed when considering societal utility.

**Stage 6: The Universal Ethical Principle Orientation** - Right is defined by the decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principles appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency. These principles are not concrete like the Ten Commandments, but are more abstract like the Golden Rule.

Kohlberg articulated these six moral development stages that exist at three distinct levels after presenting interviewees with moral dilemmas that were constructed to assess the reasons for choosing a specific course of action. Thus, Kohlberg’s concentration in the study, similar to that of Piaget, was on his subjects’ demonstrated type of cognitive reasoning. This echoed what Duska and Whelan (1975) noted in their discussion of the approach taken by Piaget and Kohlberg, i.e., “studying behavior does not tell much about moral maturity” (p. 43). This point is germane to the current study whose focus is also rooted in the measured reasoning aspect of morality, rather than showing concern for realized behavior. To this end, Kohlberg gave the example of a child and an adult who both choose not to steal an apple. By simply noting that each person made the same decision and behaved the same way in this circumstance, nothing can really be known about why each person didn’t steal the apple. Based simply on the decision not to steal, nothing further can be known about the moral maturity of these two individuals. Therefore, Kohlberg believed that the greatest understanding of a person’s moral
compass might be detected by examining the reasoning used to support a decision or behavior (Duska & Whelan, 1975).

Another important aspect of Kohlberg’s research that was applicable to the current study can be found in the utilization of constructed dilemmas to assess levels or stages of moral maturity among respondents. Kohlberg’s moral dilemmas were more complicated than the marble game play dilemmas first used by Piaget in studying moral reasoning. For instance, Kohlberg presented subjects with the *Heinz* dilemma that involved stealing a drug needed for a loved one to survive cancer. Knowing that there are likely various justifiable arguments for and against stealing the drug in the absence of sufficient financial resources, Kohlberg created a situation where subjects had to provide rational for why they would follow a particular course of action. The moral maturity for Kohlberg, then, was found in the type of reasoning demonstrated by his respondents. He was especially interested in discerning whether or not subjects were able to reason at the most mature moral level, which emphasizes the universal principle of justice and a concern for equality of human rights. At these highest levels of moral reasoning for Kohlberg (stages 5 and 6), we find the influence of Kant, whose earlier deontological ethics called for following a moral course of action derived from duty, regardless of consequence (Duska & Whelan, 1975). Thus, a person choosing to steal the drug to save the life of a loved one would be reasoning at a high level of moral maturity according to Kant and Kohlberg if their reasoning was to obey the universal duty of preserving the life of anyone, not just your loved one.
Kohlberg’s moral dilemmas that were inspired by the writings of Kant are also important to this study because they served as a model for constructing an instrument to measure moral reasoning in the sport milieu (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). The items created for the HBVCI that were used in this research study were the result of the approach and insights obtained by Kohlberg that were described above. Specifically, the HBVCI utilizes individual items that are each presented to respondents in the form of moral dilemmas common to the sport context today. The analysis of subject responses is grounded in Kantian deontology as observed through Kohlberg’s stages of moral maturity. Hence, a subject consistently showing a strong concern for obeying personal moral duties on items throughout the HBVCI will be considered a subject reasoning at a high level of moral maturity (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). This type of scoring inference on the HBVCI is made because the respondent is perceived as having reasoned according to strong obedience of a universal ethical principle orientation (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009).

Furthermore, the scholars who created the HBVCI for the sport-specific context have predetermined which universal ethical principles ought to be obeyed based on personal moral duties and obligations (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009).

Kohlberg’s research method into moral reasoning has been extensively validated by other scholars around the world that have employed his same method and found similar results for assessing moral reasoning (Galbraith & Jones, 1976). The further testing of Kohlberg’s research method has been extended to include populations of women as well as those from non-American cultures. This type of further validation is
essential if the HBVCI is to be used in this study as an accurate assessment of moral reasoning among a population of respondents that includes females and non-Americans. However, it should be noted that some scholars believe that Kohlberg’s methods are potentially biased against women (Rich & DeVitis, 1985). For example, Gilligan (1977) thinks that Kohlberg’s rating system for scoring moral dilemma items is biased against women because traits that have often defined the goodness of women (care and sensitivity to the needs of others) are ones that Kohlberg marks as signs of deficient moral development. Additionally, Kurtines and Grief (1974) are concerned that the theory was formulated and validated by male researchers, which might raise further questions of instrument rater bias and lack of standardization among diverse subject groups.

The other aforementioned longitudinal studies that tested Kohlberg’s moral reasoning stages have revealed some important broad generalizations that are applicable to this current study. First of all, scholars have found that the stages of moral development are cross-cultural, i.e., people of various economic social classes in numerous countries were found to move through the same stages of moral development in the same sequence (Galbraith & Jones, 1976). Religion is an invaluable component involved in these scholars’ understanding of moral reasoning across cultures. In fact, according to Galbraith and Jones (1976), scholars who utilized Kohlberg’s method found no differences in the stages or characteristics of moral development for people from regions that were predominantly Buddhist, Christian, or Muslim. This further highlights why the selection and use of the HBVCI is appropriate as the instrument for measuring
moral reasoning of subjects in this study, who come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and religious heritages.

The second generalization about Kohlberg’s moral development and reasoning research germane to this current study involves a subject’s movement from the conventional level to the post-conventional level of reasoning during the adolescent and early adult years. As Kohlberg had originally noted and other cross-cultural studies have verified, children and adolescents move through the stages of moral development at different rates (Rich & DeVitis, 1985). Although adolescents and early adults typically reach stage four at varying chronological times, they may become frozen at this level (Galbraith & Jones, 1976). To this end, scholars have concluded that less than 20 percent of the adult population ever makes it to the post-conventional level of moral reasoning (Galbraith & Jones, 1976). This point is especially important to the current study, which was interested in discovering whether or not intercollegiate athletes and intramural sport athletes morally reason a high level.

Repeated testing of Kohlberg’s method for comprehending moral reasoning has indicated that behavior is affected by an individual’s level of moral maturity (Galbraith & Jones, 1976). Related to this, scholars have also noted from previous studies that, “mature moral judgment is displayed by individuals who act in genuinely moral ways” (Galbraith & Jones, p. 34). A person who reasons at a higher moral level is capable of engaging in behavior that is reflective of his or her moral maturity (Duska & Whelan, 1975). Therefore, the results of the current study might be viewed as an indication of whether or not the respondents involved in sport will actually behave in morally sound
ways. Predicting whether or not intercollegiate athletes and intramural sport athletes might behave morally is important for leaders who work with these individuals in furthering their moral development and concern for others (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2003). Since sport is an area of society that is called upon to teach and model ethics to young people, it is critical that research assess levels of moral reasoning as a means for better comprehending why athletes behave in certain ways (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009).

Moral Reasoning in Sport

The study of moral reasoning in the sport domain has become increasingly more common in recent decades as scholars are more focused on understanding the relationship between sports participation and the moral erosion of athletes (Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields, & Cooper, 1986). This appears to be due in part to the often easily observable actions in popular sport that involve aggressive tendencies and potentially intentional injurious acts (Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields, & Cooper, 1987). In order to more fully comprehend the relationship between sports participation and morality, scholars began to test athletes against non-athletes on levels of moral reasoning (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). Kohlberg’s methodological work in developmental moral reasoning that utilized moral dilemmas has extensively been employed via the extant measuring instruments that have been used to test athletes against non-athletes. A few of these original studies found that intercollegiate basketball players and other competitive athletes morally reason at a lower level than college students who are not athletes (Bredemeier & Shields, 1984; Hall, 1981). The results of these early studies, regardless
of the instrument used, have been confirmed by the data from numerous other studies that compared moral reasoning among populations of athletes and non-athletes at the high school and collegiate level (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009).

Before the HBVCI was developed in the late 1980’s, sport scholars attempted to measure morality among athlete populations with Haskin’s & Hartman’s (1960) Action-Choice Test (ACT), Rest’s (1979) Defining Issues Test (DIT), or Hall’s (1981) Sport Questionnaire (SQ) (Webb, 2008). These measuring devises included items related to assessing demonstrated sportsmanship, fair play and character in sport. The findings from the administration of these earlier instruments indicated that youth involvement in sport is related to lower levels of moral reasoning (Hall, 1981). Furthermore, other conclusions were drawn from these studies that communicated an increase in moral reasoning with chronological maturity, yet a decrease in moral reasoning as sport participation increases (Bredemeier & Shields, 1986). On a positive note, Beller (1991) determined through the use of a pre-test and post-test (DIT & HBVCI) that was administered before and after a four+ month long course in “moral reasoning in sport”, that athletes could be taught to morally reason at higher levels (Byl & Visker, 1999, pp. 272-273). Despite the insights that were gained from these studies, most of these early instruments proved to be insufficient measurement tools (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009) due to issues related to clearly defining key terms within the moral reasoning construct (Webb, 2008). As a result, scholars have since developed separate measurement tools for gauging character, fair play, and moral reasoning in the sport setting. In fact, Beller and Stoll’s (1989) development of the HBVCI that is being used in
this study was born out of a perceived need for an instrument whose design was focused solely on measuring moral reasoning in the sport milieu.

Since its inception and inaugural use by Beller & Stoll, the HBVCI has been administered to more than 70,000 subjects in at least 45 published and unpublished sport studies (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). Those assessed with the HBVCI include members of the United States military academies, as well as interscholastic and intercollegiate athlete populations. In general these research studies utilizing the HBVCI have found the following results to be significant (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009, para 1-9):

1. The competitive athletic environment is not typically a place where higher levels of moral reasoning occur
2. Male team sport athletes score significantly lower in moral reasoning than individual sport athletes do.
3. Athletes become morally calloused from their competitive sport environment.
4. The longer males and females participate in competitive sport, especially team sport athletes, the lower their moral reasoning scores.
5. Female team sport athletes score significantly lower in moral reasoning than female non-athletes do.
6. Female athlete moral reasoning scores are lowering about every three years.

Collectively these summarized findings from the data of many administrations of the HBVCI helped serve as the starting place in formulating the research questions that were stated for this study in Chapter 1.
Although the HBVCI is grounded in the deontological moral perspective, the scholars responsible for maintaining the database of these 45 research studies believe that lower levels of moral reasoning and demonstrated moral behavior are likely the result of “limited consequences” (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009, para. 1). It is possible, then, that the summarized list of findings above might not be reflected among the same respondents if they were to be assessed with an instrument that judges moral reasoning. Thus, future research on the topic of moral reasoning in sport should consider developing a measuring instrument that is theoretically grounded in consequential ethics.

Gender as an Influence of Moral Reasoning

Aside from discussing the manner by which moral reasoning has largely been assessed and the general conclusions that have been drawn from HBVCI sport-based research, it is also necessary to highlight other essential aspects of moral reasoning present in the literature. For example, numerous scholars think that the issue of gender in the measurement of moral reasoning is especially important to consider in any context, including sport (Bredemeier, 1992; Gill, 2002; Gilligan & Attinucci, 1988; Proios, Athanailidis, Wilinksa, Vasilia, & Unierzyski, 2011). At least one early sport study seeking to understand gender differences in moral reasoning stated that, “men and women do not use consistently different considerations when reasoning about the appropriate course of action in a competitive athletic encounter” (Crown & Heatherington, 1989, p. 286). The results of this 1989 study support what was found by Colby and Damon (1983) and Friedman, Robinson, and Friedman (1987) in other gender-focused moral reasoning sport studies. The only noticeable gender difference in any of
the aforementioned sport studies seems to involve the element of “care” that exists in the non-HBVCI instrument that was used (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2003). For instance, in the Crown and Heatherington (1989) study both genders tested at about the same level of moral reasoning on items related to justice, but showed slight differences on care items within the instrument. Hence, according to some of the earliest literature in sport research there may not be a significant difference in the overall levels of moral reasoning between competitive male and female athletes. Furthermore, the lack of significant difference between genders in overall levels of moral reasoning even appears to extend to athletic coaches and sport administrators (Gillentine, 1996; Malloy, 1991). It should be noted, though, that these earlier sport studies which did not detect much difference in moral reasoning between genders, were research that did not use the HBVCI.

Outside of the sport specific context there exists a body of studies that have been conducted which consider the role of gender in moral reasoning. Often cited research by Gilligan (1977; 1982; & 1986) outlined significant differences in the levels of moral reasoning between males and females (Gilligan & Attinucci, 1988). The chief difference highlighted by these studies has to do with the approach or orientation to morality between men and women. Although this research indicated a noticeable gap between the levels of moral reasoning for adolescent and adult males and females, more recent studies across the globe that have used her methods and ideas suggest otherwise (Comunian & Gielen, 1995; Khaled & Al-Rumaidhi, 2008; Kumru, 2012). In fact, these three cross-cultural studies reveal very little difference, if any, in the moral reasoning scores of the equal numbers of male and female adolescents and young adults who were surveyed in
Italy, Kuwait, Spain, and Turkey. Therefore, current non-sport research studies do not seem to support Gilligan’s well-documented conclusion that significant, measurable differences exist in moral reasoning between males and females.

Another important issue at stake in the research concerning the influence of gender on moral reasoning involves the content of the moral dilemmas that are presented to respondents via measuring instruments (Agerstrom, Moller, & Archer, 2006). Several scholars believe that persons of each gender have preferences for particular types of dilemmas, and that this predisposition might influence moral reasoning more than cognitive ability (Walker, de Vries, & Trevethan, 1987). For instance, Skoe, Cumberland, Eisenberg, Hansen, and Perry (2002) think that due to the socialization process women approach moral dilemmas from a relationship or care standpoint, while men approach the same dilemma from a justice perspective. Thus, moral dilemmas whose content appears to indicate or suggest a caring type of moral response might be interpreted differently by each gender. Agerstrom et al. (2006) summarized this notion by stating that, “the focus on long term relationships in the dilemma may have caused participants to think more about care and less about justice when resolving the conflict (p. 1273). This, then, leads to the conclusion that the development of measuring instruments for moral reasoning ought to make every effort to balance the type and the content of moral dilemma items.

Religiosity as an Influence of Moral Reasoning

Beyond considering gender as a factor influencing moral reasoning, existing literature has also examined the variable of personal religiosity. Although the vast
majority of this type of research has been conducted outside the domain of sport, at least one research study has attempted to describe how personal religiosity is related to moral reasoning among collegiate athletic administrators. This particular study by Timmer (1998) was designed to test how a division III athletic director’s moral reasoning level was correlated to personal religiosity and other independent variables such as athletic experience and level of education. Timmer randomly selected 250 male athletic directors from an NCAA database to participate in his study. One hundred eighteen participated in the study by filling out all portions of the survey questionnaire, which included the HBVCI and a scale of religiosity (Timmer, 1998, cited in Byl & Visker, 1999). Regression analysis showed that personal religiosity and moral reasoning were positive correlated (.177) among these respondents (Timmer, 1998, cited in Byl & Visker, 1999).

This study demonstrated that as an athletic directors level of personal religiosity increased there was an increase in level of moral reasoning. This means that personal religiosity for this group of athletic administrators “can be considered a significant predictor of moral reasoning in sport” (p. 280). Timmer also believed that his results generally contradicted what other sport scholars had found in earlier studies, namely, that higher moral reasoning levels don’t always correlate with higher levels of religiosity (Byl & Visker, 1999). In fact, he cited a study by Sapp and Jones (1986) that reported personal religiosity and moral reasoning being completely independent of one another (Byl & Visker, 1999).
The lack of congruence in results from Timmer and earlier scholars who studied these same variables might be the result of using different measurement tools. For example, Timmer used the HBVCI to measure moral reasoning in his study, while his data was compared to scholars who utilized the Defining Issues Test (Byl & Visker, 1999). Additionally, Timmer utilized a different measuring instrument for personal religiosity than the other scholars that he used to compare his results with (Byl & Visker, 1999). Perhaps Timmer’s results were different from earlier studies because many of these comparative studies were not in the sport context, and even the studies that were conducted in the sport domain did not use a sport specific measuring instrument such as the HBVCI. In the end, though, Timmer concluded that the positive correlation among variables of interest might simply have been the result of higher cognitive abilities in a population of well-educated administrators (Byl & Visker). The most obvious limitation to Timmer’s study relates to the population of athletic administrators that he used, which were only males. The same type of research needs to be conducted among a population of female administrators too, in order to assess the correlation between personal religiosity and moral reasoning levels.

Other than this particular research by Timmer with athletic administrators, there doesn’t appear to be any published studies in the sport domain that weight the influence of personal religiosity in an individual’s process of moral reasoning. Furthermore, the religious variable was only considered among sport administrators, not among current athletes. Thus, the current study attempts to bridge this gap that exists in current sport
research by illuminating the relationship between these two variables for a population of athletes.

The non-sport literature that has examined the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning is influenced by Kohlberg’s insistence that religiousness and moral reasoning are unrelated (Glover, 1997). However, as Glover (1997) pointed out studies conducted by Sapp and Gladding (1989) and Wahrman (1981) indicate that Kohlberg’s assertion of unrelatedness is a fallacy. Thus, Glover (1997) set out to further test whether or not religiousness and moral reasoning are related. Glover (1997) compared members of religious groups across the conservative-moderate-liberal spectrum and found that the relationship among religiousness and moral reasoning was moderated by what type of religious groups these individuals belonged to. According to Richards and Davison (1992) the issue at stake is whether or not the persons being studied are morally reasoning based on following divine law or based on perceptions of social justice. The most positive statistical correlation from the Glover (1997) study, then, existed between those who identified as religiously liberal and those who reasoned at a higher moral level. This suggests that the way in which moral reasoning is measured (justice-centered or duty-centered) might have a strong effect when considering the role personal religiosity in the research presented in this paper.

Sport and Religion

Academic scholarship seems to indicate that throughout much of human civilization and history there has been an intimate connection between sport and religion (Eitzen & Sage, 2009; Scarborough & Wilcox, 1991; Taube, 1993; Znidar, 2011). For
example, the ancient Greeks placed an altar and a chapel in the center of their gymnasium (Eitzen & Sage, 2009), while other ancient peoples such as the Mayans and Aztecs competed in sport and athletic rituals in part to determine who would win the favor of their gods (Scarborough & Wilcox, 1991; Taube, 1993). Yet another scholar believed that historically there have been African wrestlers and many Olympic track champions who successfully competed in an attempt to please tribal deities (Drees, 1968). Even the conservative centuries of the Middle Ages that were known for separating the Sabbath from any physical activity often contained Sunday times set aside for athletic and sport festivals that were held on seasonal and liturgical holidays in order to honor the saints. An illustration of such sports was seen in “palio” horse races and peasant games of “rugged football” that took place on holy days and became the norm across many European countries (Carter, 1984; Pope & Nauright, 2010). Therefore, the examples above serve as an illustration of the current and historical nexus that intertwines the worlds of religion and sport.

Several other scholars begin their discussion on the relationship between sport and religion by describing characteristics of religion that are mirrored in sport, such as the presence and veneration of saints or exemplars (Knute Rockne or Vince Lombardi in football) “who personified the sporting ideal during their earthly lives” (Prebish, 1993, p. 58), or the pageantry and global appeal of mass sporting events such as the Olympics and the Super Bowl that occur regularly as a jubilant celebration not unlike annual religious festivals and holidays (Hoffman, 1992). Other writers have noted that sport and religion “have been made in the image of each other”, since both contain well known myth and
are sustained by repeated rituals intended to reward perseverance, patience, and faith (Baker, 2007, p. 2), and each thrives on the notion that there is a constant battle going on between “good” and “evil”, “us” against “them”, in a fight for victory till the end (Higgs & Braswell, 2004). Quite simply, the similarities among sport and religion are numerous and usually easy to observe (Magdalinski & Chandler, 2002). Thus, many sport scholars in recent decades have written extensively on the similarities between sport and religion. However, sport scholars today (as the current study proposes) need to continue to investigate not just the similarities between sport and religion, but also what role religion plays in sport and why.

Another major focus of scholars on the topic of religion and sport involves a discussion of how religion and sport use each other to accomplish organizational goals and objectives (Eitzen & Sage, 2009). For example, religious organizations such as Athletes in Action (AIA), Campus Crusade for Christ (CCFC), and The Promise Keepers (TPK) utilize the sport medium in evangelizing to athletes and coaches, with the ultimate goal of gaining religious faith commitment from members that will spawn into “witnessing” about their faith to others both inside and outside of the formal organization (Eitzen & Sage, p. 177). These scholars also noted that AIA, CCFC, and TPK skillfully capitalize on the popularity and reach of athletes in sport today, to such an extent that the athletes are often highly effective in gaining religious converts in a manner of religious witnessing that “has become rather common in sports in the past two decades” (p. 177). Likewise, sport organizations, teams, and leaders frequently employ religious behavior such as formal prayer (even in public schools where such behavior is prohibited) in order
to motivate players and instill focus on athletes as they prepare to engage in physical competition (p. 183). These same sport organizations and teams may also offer special promotional “family nights” that cater to members of a particular religion or denomination (i.e., “Catholic Family Night” was a ticket promotion held by the Columbus Clippers minor league baseball team in May of 2012; www.sjmsfa.com, 4-17-12). The point of course is that religion and sport have found ways to satisfy some of their most primary needs by applying the effective use of the other in a wide variety of situations and context.

In the absence of quantitative studies examining the relationship between sport and religion, scholars have repeatedly focused on observable characteristics within religion that they believe play a role and are found in sport (Braswell, 2004; Eitzen & Sage, 2009; Higgs & Braswell, 2004; Prebish, 1993). The following is a list of several ways that these scholars believe sport mimics religion, including examples of how religion plays important roles in sport: 1. The presence of gods or saints that are venerated by its members, such as in sport with figures like Jim Thorpe, Vince Lombardi, or Knute Rockne, and in religion with figures like Jesus, Mohammed, or Buddha; 2. The presence of leadership positions such as priests and clergy in sport who direct, manage, and coach teams and athletic organizations at all levels; 3. The existence of churches, temples, mosques, and synagogues in the form of revered sport houses of worship such as Yankee Stadium, The Boston Garden, or Ohio Stadium; 4. Proverbs that are ubiquitous in sport such as “play like a champion today”, “no pain no gain”, or “TEAM- together everyone achieves more”; 5. Religious prayers are common in a wide variety of situations
and contexts, and are offered by players, coaches, and other sport leaders; 6. Sport teams and organizations utilize religious leaders and religion-based themes to draw people to sporting events and to help clean up locker room behavior (Eitzen & Sage, 2009; Higgs & Braswell, 2004; and Prebish, 1993). Each one of these examples helps to provide a better understanding of the role that religion plays in sport, and will serve as a launching point for further discussion on the topic.

The Role of Transcendent Sport Figures—It may be argued that religion is present in sport due to the presence of transcendent figures who not only were supremely athletically gifted, but who also possessed something in their persona or character that left an indelible and long-lasting mark within the hearts and minds of fans. As such, these sport figures often serve as the object of fans’ devotional attention, not unlike the devotional attachment that religious observers experience with current congregational leaders or past exemplars of the faith. Lovinger (2002) called this devotional attention “sport hero worship” and defined it as, “the process of giving mortal man a higher god-like status”, because an athlete can throw a ball as if it were a thunderbolt from the hand of a god (pp. 209-210). Sport coaches too (Vince Lombardi, John Wooden, etc.) can take on this larger than life persona among followers of a team or sport, such that these individuals are sometimes labeled as “living legends.” In both of these scenarios of sport hero worship, where player or coach veneration occurs by fans, there is the sense among scholars that these figures present traits and ambitions about the kind of person that the fan “would like to become” (Ball & Loy, pp. 431-432). It’s almost as if, then, that a sport fan who is also a Christian might want to simultaneously “be like Mike” (1992 Gatorade
commercial tag line featuring Michael Jordan), as well as “be more Christ-like.” Thus, a type of religious role modeling occurs in sport, where fans and followers of sport heroes are inspired to display the same kinds of values as those displayed by the object of fan adoration.

The lure of some these legendary sport icons is further cemented into the devotional consciousness of sport fans from one generation to the next partially due to folklore surrounding these individuals. Sport leaders and athletes are famous for using well-known quotations that sound like they could have come from a saint, holy person, the Bible or another sacred text. For millions of people, these well-known quotations from the lips of sport gods may be just as familiar, if not more familiar, than words from actual religious deity or saints themselves, i.e., “Winning isn’t everything, its the only thing!”- Vince Lombardi vs. “Finish the race”- Paul of the Bible’s New Testament. Why might this be the case? In his book, *The All American Addiction*, (Gerdy, 2002) noted that the global economy of sport is more pervasive than at any point in history. A sport fan has 24/7 TV programming and worldwide internet access to reinforce and recycle the fan’s focus of veneration on athletes and coaches in previous and past contexts (pp. 87-94). An Ohio State Buckeyes football fan can relive past glories and famed moments of gridiron legends such as Howard “Hapalong” Cassady or Wayne “Woody” Hayes thanks to media forms specially dedicated to keeping the “spirit” of icons like these “alive.” Additionally, the seasonal traditions and rituals within any sport organization afford opportunities for fan revelry and reverence in past saintly triumphs and legend. Consider here the “ring of honor” or “hall of fame” that sport organizations at college and
professional levels possess (individual team or league wide) that allow devoted fans to worship in the presence of a like-minded community of believers. Sport organizers and leaders know very well that religious people are very familiar with these rings of honors and halls of fame because most houses of worship are full of pictures, images, and symbols that serve the same inspirational purpose in follower’s minds.

To state that sport fans are deeply committed and attached to their heroes is an understatement. The worship displayed by American sport fans toward legendary prophets and saints of sport has led some scholars to conclude that many individuals practice sport hero worship of venerated gods in such a way as to actually invest more of themselves in this direction than a married man psychologically invests toward his own family or career (Putnam, 1999). Gerdy (2002) also wrote that fan worship of widely held sport saints and sport icons is so “pure” that this type of devotional behavior “embodies the American way, showcasing champions and providing us with winners to worship and emulate” (p. 23). This type of passionate worship and commitment by sport fans is strengthened today thanks to the non-stop images and stories of sport heroes and athletic glories that never pass from the various media formats that constantly “witness” to sport saint greatness.

*Sport Leaders Serving the Role of Religious Clergy*—the transmission of religious faith and religious organizational dogma is dependent on well-trained and charismatic leadership. As such, formal religious institutions are able to exist around the globe because there are highly motivated individuals who serve as local, regional, and national ecclesiastical leaders for churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples. These leaders are
usually people who had positive experiences in their youth with organized religion, and who often developed healthy relationships with local clergy as part of their formative years (many clergy are also born into a family of clergymen). Although the clergy of the world’s dominant religions can hold different titles (priest, pastor, rabbi, reverend, venerable), these “called” leaders are all primarily concerned with teaching the faith and dogma of their religious tradition, in addition to publicly exercising the liturgical duties of their office. Simply put, ecclesiastical leadership is responsible for organizing and managing every aspect of religious life at all levels for any religious institution.

The popularity or “success” of any particular religious institution or individual parish is often the result of how the clerical leader is perceived by members of the leader’s own religious community, and may even be the result of perceptions in the wider non-religious community. Effective religious leaders are able to simultaneously attract new followers or converts to the faith, while catering to the needs of current members. On any given day a religious leader may be asked to perform a variety of tasks that relate to issues ranging from balancing the church budget, to providing pastoral care for the sick or suffering in the congregation, to dealing with political issues within the parish. Thus, quality ecclesiastical leadership is dependent on the passion and ability of a skilled individual to carry out a wide assortment of tasks that may not be the same from one week to the next. The willingness and alertness to be flexible and adaptable in any situation or context will often define whether or not a clergy person is considered successful in their current position of leadership.
The clergy of the athletic and sporting world are coaches and managers who guide and direct the day-to-day activities of individual and team athletes in just about any sport activity. Without these leaders the well-oiled machine of modern sport would not be possible, since these individuals teach the ins and outs of sport to young athletes all over the world. Additionally, these sport managers help to grow the popularity of a particular sport or an individual team through the use of techniques that are employed in religious organizational dynamics, such as using the charm and charisma of a leader to draw people into the team or organization. But, before addressing those issues further it is important to note that athletic coaching in general has a long documented heritage that extends back into early Greek culture (Harris, 1964), which included specialized coaching for young athletes (Forbes, 1929). The first Olympics and other such athletic contests were planned, organized, and executed by experienced and knowledgeable leaders who learned much of what they used in sport by observing religious leadership (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994).

Today’s specialized sport leader may carry various titles (coach, athletic director, commissioner, etc.) and perform seemingly unrelated tasks such as running practice, ordering equipment, or leading a marketing meeting. Even individual leaders holding the same title may perform different duties on a daily basis, i.e., Pop Warner football coaches spend a lot of time in practice teaching kids basics such as how to get into a three-point stance, while professional football coaches spend most of their practice time on the strategical installation of X’s and O’s. But, regardless of their individual professional moniker, sport leaders usually function within an organization that is well-structured and
political in nature. These leaders may refer to the team, institution, or organization as “my program”, which for the leader often means high levels of autonomy and independent decision-making on important matters. This point is illustrated well in the book, *Sport and Social Order*, when Ball (1975) noted that, “there is typically no direct or continuous supervision over the day-to-day methods which the coach uses to minister to his athletes, although there is a great deal of bureaucratic structure and routine in terms of the organizational system” (p. 429). Thus, similar to a religious cleric, a sport team leader may perform a wide variety of work responsibilities during a long, hard work day, yet may do so without much direct supervision from one hour or one location to the next. It seems, then, that the sport team or sport organization has also learned to be very trusting of its’ highest leaders, a role that is likely couched in the similar phenomenon that occurs in the particular religious settings for the individuals involved in the sport organization.

Further, some well-known sport team and sport organizational leaders have been referred to in religious terms, especially as it pertains to the how and why of their individual success. For example, the modern architect of today’s wildly successful National Football League, Pete Rozelle, has been described as a man who made clergy of all denominations shorten the length of their Sunday sermons in order to accommodate the kickoff times of early Sunday afternoon football games (Lovinger, 2002). Other highly respected sport leaders were known for mixing their passion of religion and sport together into an amalgamation that seemed to only enhance the perception of their leadership success. For example, former Dallas Cowboys Head Football Coach, Tom
Landry, was known for teaching Bible study in church on Sunday mornings, which sometimes led to him being late for football games. Players, fans, and the media seemed to think that this behavior made Landry a more respectable and moral sport team leader.

More recently, football coaches such as Tony Dungy (NFL Super Bowl Champion) and Jim Tressel (NCAA BCS National Champion) have used their personal Christian religion and spirituality, as well as their affiliation with religious sport organizations such as Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Athletes in Action, to guide their leadership style in building relationships with players, management, and fans, that emphasizes valuing the development of the whole athlete through discipline and acts of graciousness that extend far beyond the playing field. These coaches have been seen praying with players at mid-field after the game and speak openly to athletes and the media about the role that their own religion plays in their sport life and career. Therefore, religion serves an important role in sport that directly relates to leadership development and leadership style, especially among some of the most successful and respected sport managers in the world.

*Sport Stadia and Arenas in the Role of Religious Houses of Worship*- organized religion utilizes hand crafted houses of worship in the form of cathedrals, mosques, temples, and synagogues, where in many cases no expense is spared in creating as much physical splendor as possible. In each of these places the followers of the faith assemble on a regular basis to join together in prayer, ritual, liturgy, and communion with their God/gods and one another. These houses of worship are often made with the finest physical materials available and can take long periods of time to build, which all requires
a tremendous financial and emotional investment on behalf of those sponsoring, supporting, and paying for the building process. For many religious devotees the house of worship is both the spiritual and physical center of their faith, i.e., the house of worship is where an individual’s religious faith is often born, nurtured, and fulfilled through events such as baptism, confirmation, marriage, and funeral/burial. Additionally, the religious house of worship literally serves as a visible indicator to the rest of the larger community and society that this particular location is a place of God/gods that is to always be respected and revered by members and non-members alike. Finally, spectacular and extraordinary houses of worship in particular geographic locations serve as a pinnacle journey or pilgrimage destination for people in their lifetime of faith, so much so that believers may make it their life’s goal to visit and pray in these historic places, i.e. The Kabba in Mecca, Saudi Arabia or St. Peter’s Basilica in Italy.

Sport has its congregations of fans that are “true believers” in a sport, team, athlete, or coach (Eitzen & Sage, 2009). These groups of fans regularly gather together in famous sport houses of worship such as college football’s “The Big House” in Ann Arbor, Michigan, professional tennis’ center grass court at Wimbledon in London, England, and professional auto racing’s “Brickyard” in Indianapolis, Indiana. During sporting contests many people who fancy themselves as passionate devotees will engage in similar behaviors that occur in religious houses of worship, i.e., fans of sport will participate in community chants/cheers/songs such as Ohio State’s “O-H-I-O” or post-game reprise of “Carmen Ohio.” From a historical perspective there are even battles between certain teams each season in certain stadia locations that capture the attention of
the entire nation, not just the attention of sport fans, i.e., the always nationally televised Army vs. Navy college football game each year that is played in Philadelphia, the halfway point between the two service academies (Higgs, 1995). Also, the stadia that function as sport houses of worship may sometimes actually contain religious iconography that gives testimony to the school, team or venue’s religious foundation (Notre Dame Stadium’s “Touchdown Jesus”). Ultimately, though, it is the regular gathering of athletes, coaches, and fans in sport houses of worship each week around the world that helps unite people of common interests and similar values at least in terms of passionately following sport in its many forms. Thus, it’s unmistakable that religious houses of worship for fellowship serve nearly the same role that stadia and arenas serve in sport, namely, that people who attend games and contest in these highly ornamented physical spaces are inclined to compare the space and gathering to something they experience or have experienced in their own religious life.

Just as religious devotees spend countless resources in constructing and maintaining their physical houses of worship, so too do schools, cities, and organizations exhaust precious economic assets in building sport stadia and arenas in cities around the world (Tunnicliffe, 2001). A quick review of recent sport stadia construction projects reveals that at least three professional houses of worship (Wembley Stadium for soccer in England, Yankee Stadium and New Meadowlands Stadium for baseball and football in New York City) cost several billion dollars to completely construct. Regardless of where all of the funds come from to finance these sport stadia, there is an overwhelming sense that these physical spaces are indeed considered sacred by millions of people, which for
many leads to the general feeling that these sport houses of worship are worth the expense (Bisson, 2007). Further, these lavish sport stadia are a constant visible reminder to the general public that whatever takes place on these fields of play must be divine, considering the incredible expense invested that resulted in such aesthetic beauty and enormous heaven reaching size of these stadia. Thus, sport leaders have likely concluded that their greatest chance for success in marketing and selling their product is to build grand physical spaces that remind fans and spectators of spectacular religious structures that successfully draw many people together on a regular basis for a common purpose.

The Role of Religious Proverbs in Sport - Religion frequently makes use of proverbs- short passages or statements that are perceived as revealing a truth for the common good- in order to direct the lives of faith for believers. Familiar Bible passages turned into sayings such as, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you (The Golden Rule)”, are so common place in peoples’ consciousness that just about everyone on earth regardless of religious affiliation recognizes the value of living by this proverb. After imploring his followers to always love God above all people, places and things, Jesus of Nazareth commanded believers to “love your neighbor as yourself.” The type of love that this holy man spoke of based on the Greek word recorded in this proverb designated that love in the form of respect, good will, and benevolence be shown to others. Who could argue with the positive global value of such proverbial thinking? No wonder, then, that these types of ubiquitous quotes have essentially become part of the prescribed fabric for normative appropriate and desirable conduct in the daily living of human relationships.
Sport scholars also believe that living by the proverbial “Golden Rule” is a good idea for developing, instilling, and practicing ethics in sport, which is to say that fair play in sport is predicated on the notion that a sport participant should treat others the way they would want to be treated. If athletes are taught to behave according to the “Golden Rule” through the words and actions of sport leaders than the ethicality of appropriate sporting behavior will never be questioned (Morgan, 2007; Simon, 2010). Thus, the use of religious proverbs such as the “Golden Rule” and “Play Like a Champion Today” help provide the ethical guidelines for desired behavior in sport. In applying proverbs from religion, sport is stating that religion serves as a vital role in establishing appropriate conduct for participants and coaches, and may even extend to desired behavior of fans and spectators.

The use of sport and athletic proverbs appear to have been in use since the earliest recorded competitions of ancient Greece (Yiannakis, 1997). Some scholars have researched the connection between proverbs such as, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy”, and peoples’ planning and execution of physical activity and sporting events, concluding that the presence and use of wise sayings often serves as a positive and easy to remember truth in peoples’ lives as they participate in any given recreational activity (Shallcrass et. al, 1980). The saying “No Pain, No Gain” is a common proverb used in sport today that is supposed to be a constant reminder to athletes that success can only come from hard work, especially difficult physical training and dietary discipline. This saying is particularly useful in Western sport culture because of the influence of the Christian religion, whose most basic theology involves the notion that Jesus had to fast
and physically suffer pain and anguish in order to fulfill God’s divine plan for humanity. In this case, religion is serving a motivational role in sport, namely, to inspire people toward great improvements and accomplishments as individuals and as teams through self-inflicted physical discomfort and sacrifice.

The Role of Religious Prayer in Sport- Prayer is one of the most common religious practices in sport today (Leonard, 1998). As such, religion provides tools such as personal and group prayer that serve an important function in helping people cope with stress, including stresses that are related to either uncontrolled or unpredictable situations facing a person or persons in daily life (Eitzen & Sage, 2009). The uncertainty of outcomes in sport provide the potential psychological anguish and mental exertion that may be experienced by sport participants, coaches, and even fans. Therefore, sport leaders and participants frequently use religious prayer to “deal with the stress that results from not knowing what is going to happen during sport activity and competition” (Eitzen & Sage, p. 182). Even after contests are completed, it is common today to observe players and coaches from opposing teams (especially in football) gather at mid-field and kneel in prayer together. This type of religious action in sport seems to indicate that participants realize bigger picture issues that are more important than who wins or loses a competition, such as giving thanks for the ability to play and recognizing that your opponent is a brother or sister in the messiness of life.

Scholars have also noted that religious prayer is often utilized in sport as a means for asking God or a supernatural force to keep players safe from physical injury or harm during the activity or competition (Prebish, 1993). Eitzen and Sage (2009) called this
role of religious prayer in sport an important ritual that millions of coaches and players believe will lead to “protection in competition” (p. 182). When injuries due occur in the middle of sport contests players from both teams can often be seen kneeling in prayer for the wounded athlete. Also, the religious prayers for protection that occur in sport settings are believed to impart psychological comfort and confidence to those who participate in the prayers for safety and protection, i.e., the ritual of prayer provides a sense of stress relief that a player or coach might have regarding the possibility of getting injured in the sport activity (Prebish, 1993). Furthermore, it is not uncommon to witness those in attendance at a sport event, large or small, (especially inter-scholastic youth sport) be led in a prayer for protection and safety by an athlete, coach, or sport administrator before the activity commences (Czech, 2004).

Sport organization teams from Major League Baseball and the National Football League (more than 50 total) are known to hold Sunday chapel prayer services (Czech, 2004), whether home or away, for the purpose of strengthening team unity and a social bond of “we feeling” (Eitzen & Sage, 2009). In fact, organizers and leaders of weekend sport events in NASCAR and professional golf also sponsor prayer services for the participants in these activities (Eitzen & Sage, 2009). Therefore, it can be inferred that sport utilizes religious prayer in these chapel services as a key role in the social and group bonding/cohesiveness experience of sport participants in a wide variety of settings. To this end, Eitzen and Sage (2009) noted that the use of prayer is important in sport social contexts because it reminds players and coaches of a social ritual that they have practiced
in other areas and situations of daily life. Furthermore, these prayers services might be a time and place where certain ethical standards are communicated to participants.

Although there’s very little empirical research on the actual use of prayer by sport coaches and athletes (Eitzen & Sage, 2009), at least one team of researchers has examined prayer in sport. In their article titled, *The Experience of Christian Prayer in Sport: An Existential Phenomenological Investigation*, Czech et al. (2004) interviewed nine self-identified Christian NCAA Division I athletes (four males and five females) from five different sports and found that four major themes existed for reasons and motivations that these athletes pray, i.e., performance related prayers, prayer routine before, during, and after games, prayers of thankfulness, and prayers for acceptance of God’s will. As the results of this empirical investigation demonstrate, sport athletes pray for different reasons at different times, and even more interesting, a few of the athletes stated that their regular use of ritualized prayer was just as important to them as their physical preparation to participate in sport (Czech et al., 2004). Ultimately, these scholars believe that the athletes interviewed pray because it gives the sport participants a sense that they have “some control over what happens to them on the playing field” (p. 9).

*The Role of Religion in Marketing Sport & Cleaning Up Athletes’ Images*-
The pervasiveness and ubiquity of sport around the world is undeniable (Sage, 1979), especially when considering that the total revenue of the United States sport industry was recently estimated to be over $400 billion a year (Eitzen & Sage, 2009). The advent of the Internet and the expansion of viewing opportunities for sporting events have strengthened the global reach and interest in sport. Despite large television contracts that
benefit professional leagues (NFL, NBA, and MLB) and their teams, collegiate governing organizations (NCAA), and collegiate conferences and their teams (Big Ten Network & Long Horn Network), it is still critical for teams and organizations to find ways to sell tickets to their games and events because according to sport management professor, Dr. Brian Turner, of the Ohio State University, “ticket sales are the lifeblood of the sport organization” (personal communication, October 11, 2010). Hence, many sport teams and sport organizations have used religion-based theme events (Catholic Family Night at the Columbus Clippers or Chick-fil-A Christian Concert following the Lakewood BlueClaws game) to market their product in hopes of increasing ticket sales and attendance at their playing field or ballpark (Baker, 2007).

In his book, *Playing With God: Religion and Modern Sport*, Baker (2007) noted that sport organizations have partnered with religious leaders for at least the past 60+ years in developing revival type events after sporting contests, particularly in well-known physical venues such as Yankee Stadium, Madison Square Garden, Boston Garden, Wembley Stadium in London, and the Los Angeles Coliseum. Evangelical Christian preacher Billy Graham and his conservative religious organization was the dominant driving force in these co-marketing relationships between sport organizations and religious groups for the latter half of the 20th century that were geared toward filling the stands and winning souls for Christ (Baker, 2007). As such, it became common practice for sport teams to host “crusade nights”, which led to an increase in ticket sales for many sporting events, while opening the locker room door for groups such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Athletes in Action to speak to players and coaches about issues of
religious faith (Baker, 2007). Aside from increasing ticket sales for the sport organization, Baker believes that the presence of religious leaders and religious organizations in the stadia and locker rooms resulted in a dramatic overhaul of “the off color stories and jokes” and “drinking and carrying on” that went on among players of professional sport (pp. 202-203). Therefore, in this regard, the role of religion in sport served as a cleansing mechanism and moral development tool for social behavioral control of athletes (Hoffman, 1992). This is an important role of religion in sport because athletes might also positively influence fans whose appropriate ethical behavior can be seen on and off the field.

Sport teams using religious leaders and hosting religion-based theme nights proved to be excellent marketing that extends beyond just selling more tickets to a game (Hoffman, 1992). Since many of these post-ballgame religious events featured the preaching of well-respected religious leaders such as Billy Graham and were broadcast on television, the sport team or franchise hosting the event enjoyed prolonged exposure to an even wider audience than would normally tune in to watch a game (Hoffman, 1992). Additionally, Prebish (1984) noted that the television audience watching the religious “crusade” event would likely think that the team sponsoring the event was aligning itself with a proven winner (in the case of Billy Graham), which would reflect positively for the general marketing strategy of the sport organization (Prebish, 1984, cited in Hoffman, 1992, pp. 44-45). Thus, it can be argued that sport organizations found a way to improve their brand image by associating themselves with well-respected religious leaders and religious events that were perceived in favorable light by thousands of viewers and
consumers (Gounaris & Stahakopoulos, 2004). In this sense, religion is playing a critical role in the marketing process and strategy of a sport team and organization, which has the potential of paying dividends in the short run and in years to come (Baker, 2007).

Additional Thoughts About Why Religion Plays an Important Role in Sport- As was mentioned previously in this paper, the earliest recorded sport events in ancient Greece contained strong religious undertones and imagery. Athletes competed in physical spaces that contained a religious altar and their activities were often performed in order to please their gods. Additionally, half of the duration of each early Olympic games was dedicated to “religious processions, chants, burnt offerings and prayers” (Pope & Nauright, 2010, p. 216). The middle ages witnessed special sport activity on holy days and annual religious festivals that were marked by recreational sport activities, in addition to the development of tennis sport from the hands of an Italian monk (Pope & Nauright, 2010). Modern sport began to flourish once religious leaders and religious organizational bodies declared the activities to be lawful, and as such, led to the support and refinement of organized sports such as cricket, golf, boxing, and football (Pope & Nauright, 2010). The late 19th and early 20th century saw sport participation and physical recreation reach all segments of European and North American society when religious organizations such as the YMCA/YWCA and CYO began sponsoring sport leagues that appealed to the masses regardless of social class (Pope & Nauright, 2010). Hence, the advent and progression of sport throughout history has been intimately shaped by religious influence in a multitude of ways, including the notion that sport activity was required to win the favor of God/gods to the idea that healthy physical recreation could
bring people into a closer relationship with God. Therefore, this role that religion has played in the development and transmission of sport throughout history is absolutely essential to our understanding of how and why sport exists the way that it does in its’ present forms.

The widespread popularity of sport participation and sport consumption today is also partially due to the influence of religious colleges and universities that promoted sport and established rivalries with regional and national appeal (Pope & Nauright, 2010). For example, Catholic universities and colleges across the country (Boston College, Notre Dame, and Santa Clara) aggressively sponsored sport programs such as football in the early 1900’s, which complimented rugby and rowing sport programs that were popular among Ivy League schools such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton (Pope & Nauright, 2010). Once religious based colleges and universities began openly promoting and sponsoring sport public high schools and colleges/universities started their own sport teams (Pope & Nauright, 2010). This meant that in a period of a few decades sport was soon considered to be an important component of the moral and physical educational experience. Thus, the role that religion has played in the development and acceptance of sport as an essential element in the educational process provides critical insight into how and why sport is considered to be important across the country and around the world today.

Finally, census data have shown that the majority of Americans consider themselves to be religious or at least they identify with a particular religion or denomination (Eitzen & Sage, 2009). Likewise, studies have shown that the majority of
Americans profess to regularly participate in a particular sport or physical activity, or at least participate in the consumption of sport (Eitzen & Sage, 2009). Given this data, it stands to reason that there is some interaction and relationship between those that identify themselves as religious and those that participate in sport, such that it can be concluded that millions of North Americans participate in both religion and sport. Hence, the religious person who participates in sport as a player or coach is likely to transfer or carry over their religious practices, behaviors, and morals into the sporting arena. This will be especially true if the person’s religious practices and morals have proven helpful in other life situations that may be similar to those experienced in sport (Eitzen & Sage, 2009).

Quantitative Studies in Sport and Religion- the vast majority of extant research on sport and religion is observation or qualitative in nature (Smith, 2010). Yamane, Mellies, and Black summarized this point well by stating that, “unfortunately, there is a scarcity of good data to use in systematically investigating the connection between religion and sport in the lives of individuals” (Smith, 2010, p. 90). Despite this, there have been a few quantitative studies conducted that have utilized statistical methods to better understand the relationship between sport and religion. For example, Yamane and Blake (2008) employed multiple regression statistical models that “controlled for several other variables” in their research on the relationship between sport and religion (Smith, 2010, p. 90). These scholars found that “college athletes are less religious than college students in general” (Smith, 2010, p. 90), which calls into question the actual religiousness of athletes who can frequently be observed, “wearing religious symbols or making religious gestures” (Smith, 2010, p. 91). The exception to this conclusion in the Yamane and
Blake data set was present among those athletes that identified as evangelical protestant Christians. This group of athlete respondents was considered to be more religious than the non-athletes that were measured in the study (Smith, 2010). This is an important finding relative to the current study that is surveying some intercollegiate athletes who participate in the evangelical organization AIA. Although the present research is measuring the relationship among multiple constructs, a comparison can be made between the evangelical religiosity data of both sampled intercollegiate athlete populations (from 2008 and 2013).
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The purpose of this chapter was to describe in detail the specific design and methodology that was used in this quantitative study, focusing on the following individual sections: 1. population description; 2. research design; 3. data collection and methodology; 4. instrument and operational definitions; and 5. data analysis.

This study constitutes descriptive research in that the primary goal is to describe “characteristics of a population or phenomenon through the use of surveys, interviews, or observations” (Andrew et al., 2011, p. 8). As such, this research utilized a survey format specifically geared toward measuring a population’s level of moral reasoning, including a description of how the population’s level of moral reasoning relates to the population’s personal religiosity and other moderating variables (gender and type of sport, i.e., individual vs. team). Furthermore, since specific research questions were articulated in chapter one of this study, there was also a specified “method of analysis prior to data collection” (Andrew et al., p. 8), which is discussed more in depth later in this chapter.

This study employed the use of quantitative methods, which is an approach to research that is generally interested in the collection of numerical data pertaining to
peoples’ attitudes and perceptions, and is used for specific analysis purposes that are built into the study’s design (Andrew et al., 2011). The quantitative approach utilized in this research was selected due to its usefulness in analyzing the relationship between the aforementioned variables and in “determining the significance of group differences” (Andrew et al., p. 8).

Population Description

In order to assess moral reasoning and its potential influences among athletes, a convenient population of intercollegiate athletes and intramural sport athletes were selected at a large, Midwestern university. A convenience population is often utilized in research when non-probability/non-random sampling is not a viable option, and when a population of respondents is easy to access for descriptive or exploratory studies (Neuman, 2009). The statistical analysis used in this research required a larger number of respondents to achieve higher statistical power since the population selected was non-representative (Neuman, 2009). Therefore, intercollegiate athletes (those who are members of one of the university’s sponsored sport teams) were chosen as the population for this study due to their accessibility and applicability relative to the design and purposes of this study. Student athletes who participate in AIA’s weekly Bible study meetings and students in sport industry courses at the University were asked to participate in the study by completing the questionnaire and then returning it to the researcher during class or meeting time. Those unable to complete the questionnaire during class or meeting time were asked to return their completed survey within 7 to 10 days via campus mail.
Research Design

Quality research is concerned with internal and external validity as it relates to assessing potential threats to the design of the study. Internal validity in survey research is concerned with determining “the amount of internal consistency across survey items” (Harrison, 1997, p. 19), and is dependent upon the adequacy of a measurement instrument as it pertains to the assessment of a specific variable (DeVellis, 2003). In other words, as a collective whole, do the survey items share congruence in the way they measure the construct. Additionally, construct validity, as an essential component of internal validity, is interested in determining whether or not the measures used in the study actually apply to the theoretical perspective of the research (Shadish et al., 2002). On the other hand, external validity is primarily concerned with discerning if the results of the study can be generalized to other subjects in different populations and settings (Ary, 2010). Arguably the biggest threat to external validity in any research involves the selection of the sample or population that will be assessed in the study, paying special attention to the random or non-random selection of participants (Neuman, 2009). If the selection of a population of potential respondents is non-random, then the results of the study cannot reasonably be inferred to represent the thoughts or perceptions of any group of people beyond those that participated in the study (Ary, 2010). Also, external validity may be further threatened due to non-response bias and the possibility of a low response rate, both of which could potentially limit the representativeness of the results to the population of respondents that was non-randomly selected to begin with (Dillman, 2000).
For the present study, the internal validity of the construct measuring instruments have been established by previous published studies that reported a high level of internal consistency based on Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of reliability (Cronbach, 1951) for personal religiosity and moral reasoning. For example, the Religiosity Measures Questionnaire (RMQ) used in this study was earlier determined to have Cronbach’s coefficient alphas greater than .90, which indicated high internal consistency for the instrument (Rohrbaugh & Jessor, 1975). The HBVCI was determined to also have strong reliability and internal validity yielding Cronbach’s alphas from .74 to .88 (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). Further threats to internal validity were addressed by having the primary researcher hand deliver the surveys to study participants at AIA meetings and during lecture times for sport industry courses in order to reduce the possibility that surveys were altered or biased by the participation of other researchers or leaders (Ary, 2010). Finally, internal validity may also be threatened due to the uncontrolled variation of the unique personal experiences and personal emotions of respondents, particularly as these unique individual influences affect the respondent while in the midst of filling out the survey instrument (Ary, 2010).

The most prominent threat to external validity for this research involved the non-random selection of subjects recruited to participate in this study. Since collegiate athletes and intramural sport athletes were selected non-randomly due to their accessibility and applicability to the study parameters, the results of this research may not be representative of any other group of people beyond those who responded to the questionnaire (Neuman, 2009). Other threats to external validity involved the potential
for a Hawthorn effect, which may result in biased or inaccurate data as respondents are aware that they are being studied, and therefore possibly responded to the questionnaire in a manner that they perceived as socially acceptable or non-representative of their actual thoughts, feelings, or perceptions (Ary, 2010). Finally, the unique individual life experiences and histories for the selected population might have influenced the observed relationship among the variables in this study. As Ary et al. (2010) noted, these differences in the studied population may influence the ability to replicate similar data in future studies with another population of respondents.

Data Collection and Methodology

As a means for producing the highest possible response rate among intercollegiate student athletes, this study utilized the insights presented through the research of Barnhill, Czekanski, and Turner (2010), which recommended an in-person distribution of paper and pencil surveys to those being invited to participate in the study. As such, questionnaires were delivered in person to the intercollegiate athletes that were present at AIA meetings. Likewise, in a face-to-face manner, during select class times, sport industry students were invited by the primary researcher to complete the questionnaire.

Before any paper questionnaires were distributed, a meeting was requested to speak with the adult leader of the university’s AIA group in order to ask permission to address their weekly meeting participants, and to explain the purpose and significance of the study. Additionally, sport industry major course instructors were contacted with details about the study and asked if the primary researcher could speak with students during their individual class lecture times. In both cases the primary researcher
encouraged the AIA leader and sport major course instructors to ask for clarification regarding any aspect of the study, including what would happen when the primary researcher spoke with students. Once permission was granted to speak with sport industry major students and AIA members, the primary researcher distributed a white colored, paper copies of the introductory cover letter (Appendix A), a survey questionnaire (Appendix B) and an answer sheet to everyone in attendance. Along with the paper questionnaire, respondents who wished to fill the questionnaire out at another time were given an envelope, which was to be used for safekeeping once the survey was completed. The primary researcher asked the respondents to fill out the questionnaires during class lecture or AIA meeting time. During this meeting time the primary researcher emphasized to students that their participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous.

Instrument and Operational Definitions

Two different constructs (moral reasoning and personal religiosity) were measured using the questionnaire that was distributed to the selected population for this study. The perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes of intercollegiate athletes and students who are enrolled in sport industry courses that either participate in intercollegiate or intramural sports were recorded using the HBVCI and RMQ instruments for moral reasoning and personal religiosity, respectively. Additionally, demographic information relative to each survey participant was gathered as well, including gender, ethnicity, type of sport played (individual vs. team), age, and year in college. Intercollegiate athletes were asked to select the sport they play at the collegiate
level, even if they played multiple sports in high school. Intramural sport athletes were
instructed to select their primary sport of participation that they have played the longest
and dedicated the most time to recreationally. After selecting their primary sport of
participation, each group of respondents was able to select the appropriate box for
individual or team sport. Individual and team sports were listed on the questionnaire as
follows: 1. Individual sports- cross country, fencing, golf, gymnastics, pistol, rifle,
swimming & diving, tennis, track & field, and wrestling; 2. Team sports- baseball,
basketball, field hockey, football, ice hockey, lacrosse, rowing, softball, soccer, spirit
program, synchronized swimming, and volleyball.

In order to measure these two constructs and demographic variables among the
selected population for this study, the following operational definitions and methods were
utilized:

reasoning was selected due to its high and well established reliability from studies over
the past 20+ years, which have yielded internal consistency scores between .74 and .88
(University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). Also, the HBVCI was believed to be
especially useful for this research study since it was created and has been consistently
used to measure moral reasoning within the unique context of sport (Beller & Stoll, 1992;
Beller et al., 1996). Furthermore, this instrument was used for this research due to its
focus on measuring cognitive moral knowledge (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*,
2009), as opposed to other available instruments that report to measure moral reasoning
from an outcome-based, ethical decision making framework that moves beyond the scope
and theoretical perspective of this study. After respondents completed the questionnaire the answer sheets were scored by the primary investigator of this study using the guidelines set forth by the University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*.

The HBVCI measures cognitive moral reasoning of groups of people through the use of 16 items presented in the form of moral dilemmas (read by respondents as vignettes), which are common to sport. The instrument’s moral dilemmas in sport items are geared toward measuring the deontological perspective of respondents, which focuses on moral knowing from a duties and obligation perspective of the person in question/moral agent (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). For example, one item from the HBVCI reads,

   During a volleyball game, player A hit the ball over the net. The ball barely grazed off of player B’s fingers and landed out of bounds. However the referee did not see player B touch the ball. Because the referee is responsible for calling rule violations, player B is not obligated to report the violation.

After reading this dilemma respondents were asked on a 5-point Likert scale to choose an answer that best describes their feelings (SA- strongly agree to SD- strongly disagree). A respondent who selected “strongly agree” would be viewed according to deontological moral theory as someone who was forgoing their personal moral duty of being honest and just, which includes not casting individual responsibility onto others (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009).

As a means for interpreting the results of HBVCI moral dilemma responses, the scholars who designed the instrument (using insights from deontological moral theory)
developed the following definitions for the words honesty, responsibility and justice (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009, para. 17):

a. Honesty is defined as the condition or capacity of being trustworthy or truthful. Honesty, in this sense, is a basic character that society espouses—an ideal of moral development…to be honest in thought, word, or deed. Honesty, therefore, is the code of conduct that takes into consideration lying, cheating, and stealing, and refers to the honest person as one who follows the rules and laws.

b. Responsibility is defined as accounting for one’s actions in the past, present, and future. We are responsible for our acts, if, and only if, we did the act or caused it to occur. A responsible person is morally accountable and capable of rational conduct.

c. Justice is defined as an equity or fairness for treating peers or competitors equally. Justice is the quality of being righteous or of dealing justly with others. It is based in the integrity of doing the right or fair act.

Thus, the HBVCI is interested in measuring how respondents in the sport context regard moral issues and situations related to an individual’s perception of personal honesty, responsibility, and justice. For this study, intercollegiate athletes and intramural sport athletes’ moral reasoning was assessed based on the instrument’s design that defines the construct of cognitive moral reasoning (knowing) in terms of deontological theoretical concepts encompassing honesty, responsibility, and trust (personal communication, Stoll, September 10, 2012).
Internal validity of the HBVCI is believed to be strong, both as the instrument was originally tested and as it has been retested by many studies in sport (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). The validity of the instrument was originally established by a well-respected panel of experts who have published extensively in the fields of sport and deontological ethics. These scholars are members of the Academy of Physical Education and the International Philosophic Society for the Study of Sport (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). Construct validity is also thought to be high as repeated uses of the HBVCI have revealed similar results in different populations of respondents, e.g., non-athletes reason at a higher moral level than athletes (Beller et al., 1992 and Penny & Priest, 1990). Also, the longer an athlete participates at a higher level of competition in sport, the more eroded their level of moral reasoning becomes (Beller & Stoll, 1995).

2. Religiosity- Rohrbaugh and Jessors’s (1975) RMQ for measuring personal religiosity was selected due to its high level of reliability (.90 Cronbach’s coefficient alphas) and because of its brevity (i.e., the instrument contains only seven items and can be completed in just a few minutes). The RMQ is one of more than at least 20 extant instruments available that measure personal religiosity (Hill & Hood, 1999), in addition to consistently being the most reliable and brief questionnaire in use (Hill & Hood, 1999). Additionally, the RMQ was developed to be used with older youth (Rohrbaugh & Jessor, 1975) and has been previously administered at the collegiate level in research completed by Friedberg and Friedberg (1985).
The RMQ consists of seven multiple-choice items and one fill-in-the-blank item, and according to Friedberg and Friedberg (1985) is constructed to assess four domains of religion (ideological, ritual, consequential and experiential). These domains were first proposed by Glock (1959) in order to obtain a composite religiousness score. For example, as a means of assessing the ritual religiosity and experiential domains of an individual respondent, the RMQ asks,

Which of the following best describes your practice of prayer or religious meditation?

a. Prayer is a regular part of my life
b. I usually pray in times of stress or need but rarely at any other time
c. I pray only during formal ceremonies
d. I never pray

During the past year, how often have you experienced a feeling of religious reverence or devotion?

a. Almost daily
b. Frequently
c. Sometimes
d. Rarely
e. Never

Answers of “a” for both items would combine to indicate a high level of personal religious salience for a particular respondent. When all eight items’ responses are combined from the four domains, an overall level of construct religiousness is reported.
by the RMQ on a scale ranging from 0 to 32 (Rohrbaugh & Jessor, 1975). “The maximum score for each of the four subscales is 8” (Rohrbaugh & Jessor, p. 307), where a score of eight indicates the highest level of religiosity for that domain (i.e., ideological, ritual, consequential, or experiential). Therefore, the overall religiosity score on a scale of 0 to 32 when the four domains are combined can be interpreted from lowest level of religiosity (zero) to highest level of religiosity (32).

Strong internal validity from these four domain subscales has been reported as having “an overall average correlation matrix coefficient value of .69” (Hill & Hood, 1999, p. 308). Furthermore, the RMQ is believed to be discriminately valid in that the instrument assesses the individual religious orientation of respondents, and is therefore not the result of the person’s “identification with an external religious network or social structure (Hill & Wood, 1999, p. 308). Construct validity for the RMQ has been consistently reliable in that females are more religious than males among different studies conducted among separate populations in diverse settings such as high school students versus college students (Hill & Wood, 1999).

Finally, the RMQ was chosen to measure the construct of personal religiosity for this research due to the instrument’s lack of focus on any particular religion or denomination. In fact, this study was assessing the attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of collegiate athletes and intramural sport athletes who likely represent many different Christian denominations and world religions within this population. Thus, the language and specific words used in the RMQ are not geared toward assessing the personal religiosity of any particular religion, let alone a specific historic Christian
religious denomination. Additionally, the religious backgrounds and religious beliefs of the intercollegiate and intramural sport athletes that are being assessed in this study were not known to the primary researcher. This is important so that the personal religiosity of AIA members and non-members in this study can equally be assessed using the RMQ.

To examine the validity of the measurement instruments being used in this study, a panel of four experts was consulted, per the recommendation from Ary et al. (2010), in order to make sure that the instruments are measuring what they report to measure. Specifically, face validity was established by the selected panel of experts as a means for determining appropriate use in the population being studied (Ary et al., 2010). Therefore, as sport scholars Gratton and Jones (2004) encourage in validating face validity, a small sample of undergraduate students similar in characteristics to the sample of students in the full study were selected to help with this task. Content validity is concerned with assessing whether or the not the measuring instrument is appropriate for the construct being examined (Ary et al., 2010). This type of validity assessment is performed by a panel of professional experts in the particular field of study (Gratton & Jones, 2004).

The content validity of this measurement instrument was assessed by the same panel of four experts from the fields of sport management, religion, and sociology that was mentioned above. This group of professionals was asked whether or not they thought the instrument measured the most important aspects of moral reasoning and personal religiosity based on their expertise in one or both of these construct areas. Also, this panel of experts was encouraged to consider if any items needed to be deleted or inserted so as to strengthen the validity and effectiveness of the instrument.
For establishing face validity in this study, four current undergraduate students were presented with the proposed measuring instrument and were asked if the directions for filling the questionnaire out was clearly understood. Furthermore, this group of students was asked for their opinions on the appropriateness of the instrument for the research subject matter among the selected population. Finally, these students (who were excluded from the full study) were asked to give feedback on the length of the questionnaire, or regarding anything else they might have questions or concerns about regarding the study.

A pilot study is sometimes used to re-establish the reliability of a measurement instrument being used in a research study (Ary et al., 2010), especially if the instrument is being used in a new setting or context (Singleton & Straits, 2005). Due to the breadth of sport studies that have used the measurement instrument that is employed in this study, no initial pilot study data was collected from a population similar to that which was selected for the full research study.

Data Analysis

Once data was collected from the respondents in this study it was entered into SPSS Macintosh 20 software. Once the descriptive statistics were analyzed, an analysis of the reliability of the construct measuring instruments occurred, as the scores gathered from the HBVCI and RMQ were evaluated for comparison against measures previously utilized by scholars who originally constructed the measurement tools being used to assess moral reasoning and personal religiosity.
The most basic research question of this study involved comparing the level of moral reasoning among intercollegiate athletes and intramural sport athletes for specific nominal categories (male vs. female and individual sport vs. team sport). Thus, in order to compare the data related to the statistical mean scores of moral reasoning for the population of respondents who are intercollegiate athletes versus the population of respondents that are intramural sport athletes, an independent sample t-test was appropriate to use since the two groups are separate from one another and were being measured on one continuous outcome variable from a categorical predictor of either gender or type of sport played (Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012). Independent sample t-tests were used as a means for evaluating the following stated research questions from Chapter 1 of this study:

Research question 1: Do male intercollegiate and intramural sport athletes reason at a lower moral level than female intercollegiate and intramural sport athletes?

Research question 2: Do team sport athletes, regardless of gender, score at a lower level of moral reasoning than individual sport athletes?

Research question 3: Do intercollegiate female team sport athletes score at a lower level of moral reasoning than female team intramural sport athletes who participate in recreational team sports?

Research question 4: Do intercollegiate male team sport athletes score at a lower level of moral reasoning than male team intramural sport athletes who participate in recreational team sports?
The next proposed research question examined the relationship between a continuous independent variable and a continuous dependent variable. Therefore, simple linear regression allows for an evaluation of how one independent variable can help explain or predict the outcome of a dependent variable (Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012) and will be administered as a means for evaluating the following stated research question:

*Research question 5:* What is the relationship between level of moral reasoning and personal religiosity?

The last research questions evaluated involved analyzing the relationship between level of moral reasoning and personal religiosity of athletes, when considering gender and type of sport played as moderating variables. Scholars such as Lomax and Hahs-Vaughn (2012) recommend utilizing multiple regression analysis in order to examine the relationship of two or more predictor variables on an outcome variable. Therefore, the regression analysis for this study tested gender and type of sport played as potential moderators of the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning.

*Research question 6:* Does gender moderate the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning?

*Research question 7:* Does type of sport played moderate the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning?

**Summary**

The methods and design described in this research are aimed at gathering thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of a convenient population of collegiate students that are current varsity athletes or intramural sport athletes in response to a survey.
questionnaire that was selected and hand delivered to respondents for this study. The results of the collected data and their analysis that are noted in this chapter will be further discussed in chapter four of this research.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter includes the results of the data that were collected for this research study. As such, this chapter will present data related to: 1. the demographics of the study sample; 2. the reliability analysis of the measurement instrument used; and 3. moral reasoning and personal religiosity measured scores.

Study Sample

Survey instruments were distributed to a total of 213 intercollegiate and intramural sport athletes on campus at a large, Midwestern university in January of 2013. Of these 213 questionnaires that were distributed, 2 were excluded from the final analysis due to insufficient completeness. Therefore, a final usable sample of 211 surveys was deemed suitable for use (Table 4.1). The 211 usable surveys were comprised of 148 male (70.1%) and 63 female (29.9%) respondents. The distribution of the sample included 106 (50.2%) intercollegiate athletes and 105 (49.8%) intramural sport athletes. Additionally, 43 (21.4%) respondents identified themselves as individual sport athletes and 158 (78.6%) respondents identified themselves as team sport athletes, while 10 respondents did not respond to this question.
Table 4.1

*Demographic characteristics of respondents*

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<tr>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>Respondents (n=211)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Assessing the age and year in school revealed that respondents ranged from 18-34 years of age (83.7% were between the ages of 19-21) with a mean age of 21.08 years.
The students that responded to the study ranged in year in school from 1-5 (92.2% were in their 2nd-4th year in college) with a mean of 3.04 years in school ($SD = .936$). The citizenship of respondents broke down to include 203 (96.2%) Americans and 8 (3.8%) Non-Americans.

Study participants were asked to select from a list (Table 4.2) of religious traditions that they personally practice or most closely identify with. Of the 211 usable surveys, all respondents indicated a religious tradition that they personally practice or most identify with, which included the option to select “none”.

**Table 4.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious tradition of respondents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline Protestant</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical/Non-Denominational</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Other</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since type of sport played (individual or team sport) was a key variable of interest in this study, participants were asked what specific sport they played (Table 4.3).
Table 4.3

*Main sport of respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross country</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field hockey</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice hockey</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacrosse</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rifle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diving</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synchronized swimming</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track &amp; field</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ski</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight lifting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Polo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reliability

Two separate constructs (personal religiosity and moral reasoning) were measured using the survey instrument selected for this study. The 16-item HBVCI for measuring moral reasoning among athletes and the 7-item RMQ for measuring personal religiosity among high school and college students was unaltered from its use in previous studies. Historically, the use of the HBVCI in athlete populations has yielded internal consistency scores between .74 and .88 (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009), while the RMQ has repeatedly yielded alpha levels at .90 and above (Hill & Hood, 1999).

In this study, the RMQ developed by Rohrbaugh and Jessor (1975) had an internal reliability level of ($\alpha = .922$) for the 6 Likert-type items. The seventh item on the RMQ was not included in the measured alpha level due to the open ended, non-scaled nature of the question, “How many times have you attended religious services during the past year?” According to Nunnally (1978), this measured level of reliability is well above the acceptable level of ($\alpha = .70$) for studies that are exploratory in scope and design.

For this research, the 16-item HBVCI designed by Hahm et al. (1989) resulted in an internal consistency level of ($\alpha = .824$). Based on previous work by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), this alpha level is within the range of acceptable internal consistency and is well suited for formative or exploratory studies.
Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1

The first research question of this study asked if male intercollegiate and intramural sport athletes morally reason at a lower level than female intercollegiate and intramural sport athletes. An independent samples $t$-test was used to detect any significant differences between male and female respondents.

The results of the independent samples $t$-test indicated a statistically significant difference on overall level of moral reasoning between male and female respondents: male ($M = 35.53; SD = 7.72$) and female ($M = 44.74; SD = 7.64$), $t(208) = -7.91, p < 0.01$. These results, then, indicated that females morally reasoned at a higher level than males.

Research Question 2

The second research question of this study asked if team sport athletes, regardless of gender, scored at a lower level of moral reasoning than individual sport athletes. Just as the first research question in this study, this research question can be evaluated by applying an independent samples $t$-test to the collected data. As such, the statistical mean scores of respondents on overall moral reasoning between team sport and individual sport athletes were compared for any statistically significant differences.

The results of the independent samples $t$-test indicated a statistically significant difference on overall level of moral reasoning when considering the type of sport played: individual sport ($M = 41.93; SD = 8.02$) and team sport ($M = 37.36; SD = 8.80$), $t(199) =
3.07, \( p = 0.02 \). The results of this test indicated that individual sport athletes morally reasoned at a higher level than team sport athletes.

*Research Question 3*

The third research question of this study asked if female intercollegiate team sport athletes score at a lower level of moral reasoning than female intramural team sport athletes. Since this question can be answered by comparing the statistical means of overall level of moral reasoning between the two groups of female athletes, an independent samples \( t \)-test was used to evaluate for any statistically significant difference. It should be noted here that the population of female athlete respondents being compared to one another was relatively low (39 varsity and 23 intramural athletes). This smaller number of respondents within the sample might reduce the statistical power of the results (Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012).

The results of the independent samples \( t \)-test indicated no statistically significant difference on overall level of moral reasoning when considering the level of competition: varsity (\( M = 44.10; SD = 6.98 \)) and intramural (\( M = 45.82; SD = 8.70 \)), \( t(60) = .856, p = .395 \). These results indicated that there was not a significant difference in level of moral reasoning between female athletes that participated in intercollegiate athletics and those that participated in intramural athletics.

*Research Question 4*

The fourth research question of this study asked if male intercollegiate team sport athletes score at a lower level of moral reasoning than male intramural sport athletes.
Since this question can be answered by comparing the statistical means of overall level of moral reasoning between the two groups of male athletes, an independent samples \( t \)-test was used to evaluate for any statistically significant difference. For this study, there were 82 male intramural sport athletes and 66 male varsity sport athletes.

The results of the independent samples \( t \)-test indicated no statistically significant difference on overall level of moral reasoning when considering the level of competition: varsity \((M= 36.06; SD= 7.97)\) and intramural \((M= 35.09; SD= 7.54)\), \( t(146)= -.753, p= .453 \). These results demonstrated that there was not a significant difference in level of moral reasoning between male athletes that participated in intercollegiate athletics and those that participated in intramural athletics.

**Research Question 5**

The fifth research question of this study asked what is the relationship between level of moral reasoning and personal religiosity? To test this relationship between variables a simple linear regression analysis was performed. Data revealed for this population of athletes that there was a significant relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning \(( r = -.143, p = .039 )\). However, personal religiosity did not explain a significant proportion of variance in moral reasoning scores, \( R^2 = .020, F(1, 206) = .039, p < .01 \), since only 2\% of variance in moral reasoning can be explained by personal religiosity (Pederson & McEvoy, 2011). Thus, the results may be interpreted as statistically significant, but not of practical significance due to the low percent of variance explained.
Research Question 6

The sixth research question for this study asked if gender moderates the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning. To test for the moderating effect of gender, a multiple regression analysis was performed. In the first step, gender and religiosity were entered as independent variables. In the second step of the regression analysis, the interaction term between gender and personal religiosity did not explain a significant increase in variance in moral reasoning, $\Delta R^2 = .00$, $F$ change (1, 204) = .049, $p = .825$. Thus, gender was not a significant moderator between personal religiosity and moral reasoning.

Research Question 7

The seventh research question for this study asked if type of sport played moderates the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning. To test for the moderating effect of type of sport played, a multiple regression analysis was performed. In the first step, type of sport played and religiosity were entered as independent variables. In the second step of the regression analysis, the interaction term between type of sport played and personal religiosity did not explain a significant increase in variance in moral reasoning, $\Delta R^2 = .005$, $F$ change (1, 195) = 1.029, $p = .312$. Thus, type of sport played was not a significant moderator between personal religiosity and moral reasoning.
Summary

Statistical tests upon the collected data from this population of athletes pointed to at least four key findings: 1. Female athletes morally reasoned at a higher level than their male athlete counterparts; 2. Team sport athletes morally reasoned at a lower level than individual sport athletes; 3. Personal religiosity was correlated with an athletes’ level of moral reasoning, but not in a very practical way (i.e., $R^2 = .02$); and 4. Neither gender nor type of sport played moderated the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Overview

In this chapter there will be a discussion of the findings of this exploratory research study. Of particular relevance to this discussion is an analysis of how the proposed research questions have been answered. Additionally, there will be a discussion of the implications of the study findings, as well as some thoughts about the limitations of this research study. Finally, recommendations will be made about the future direction of research in this area.

Key Findings for the Purpose of the Study

The first purpose of this research study was to describe and analyze the level of moral reasoning for intercollegiate and intramural sport athletes. The data revealed that female athletes ($M= 44.74; SD= 7.64$) and individual sport athletes ($M= 41.93; SD= 8.02$) morally reason at a statistically significant higher level than male athletes ($M= 35.53; SD= 7.72$) and team sport athletes ($M= 37.36; SD= 8.80$), respectively. These results support what previous scholarship has indicated, namely, that male athlete populations that have been assessed with the HBVCI instrument tend to reveal a significantly lower level of moral reasoning than female athletes (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*,
2009). Likewise, previous studies using the HBVCI and other moral reasoning instruments have indicated that team sport athletes score at a lower level on moral reasoning than individual sport athletes (Brendemeier & Shields, 1986; University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009).

The second purpose of this study was to explore relationships among the independent variables (gender, personal religiosity, and type of sport played) and dependent variable (moral reasoning) for the intercollegiate athletes and intramural sport athletes. The data revealed that personal religiosity ($r = -.143, p = .039, R^2 = .02$) was correlated with athletes’ level of moral reasoning, although the amount of variance explained was very low. Additionally, the data indicated that neither gender nor type of sport played moderated the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning.

These results do not seem to support the previous studies by Clark & Dawson (1996) and Keller et al. (2007) that found personal religiosity to be a major influence on level of moral reasoning. However, these same two previous studies that were not in a sport context did note that females tend to morally reason at a higher level than males, which included an interaction test between gender and personal religiosity. Furthermore, previous research in sport has not tested for the moderating effect of gender and type of sport played on the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning.

Gender Differences in Moral Reasoning

The first research question for this study asked if there was a difference in the level of moral reasoning for male athletes versus female athletes. The data indicated via
an independent samples t-test that intercollegiate and intramural female athletes \((M=44.74; SD=7.64)\) morally reason at a significantly higher level than male intercollegiate and intramural athletes \((M=35.53; SD=7.72)\). Based on the deontological theoretical construction of the HBVCI measurement instrument that was used to assess this population, this result means that female athletes are more cognitively aware of moral obligations relative to honesty, responsibility, and justice than are male athletes (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). These results supported what has been found in virtually every previous HBVCI-based sport study, namely, that females morally reasoning at a statistically significant higher level than males. Additionally, the results of this study further dispute the findings of earlier sport studies such as Rest’s (1973) research that found female athletes morally reasoning at a lower level than male athletes. It should be noted, however, that Rest’s study utilized a different instrument (Defining Issues Test) that was more concerned with justice than honesty and responsibility. Furthermore, the Defining Issues Test was geared more toward assessing moral development by having respondents rank different moral dilemmas, as opposed to asking respondents to indicate their level of agreement with each stated moral dilemma the way that the HBVCI does.

One possible explanation for this measured significant gender difference in level of moral reasoning came from the work of Penny and Priest (1990) and Krause and Priest (1999), who found that recruited female athletes morally reason at a much higher level than recruited male athletes. For this study there were \((n=39)\) female intercollegiate athletes and \((n=23)\) female intramural sport athletes, while there were \((n=67)\) male
intercollegiate athletes and \((n=82)\) male intramural sport athletes. Therefore, since 50% of the sample for this study included recruited Division I intercollegiate athletes, it stands to reason that the insights of Penny and Priest (1990) and Krause and Priest (1999) might apply here too. Furthermore, these scholars’ research within collegiate athletics settings also suggested that non-recruited female athletes, such as intramural sport athletes, morally reason at higher level than male intercollege or intramural sport athletes. Their findings might apply to the results of this study as well. It would be interesting, though, in future studies to explore what potential role and impact recruitment might play in an athlete’s level of moral reasoning. A future study might also ask what is the relationship between being recruited and level of moral reasoning, especially when comparing NCAA divisions I, II, and III that all employ different methods of athlete recruitment.

Another possible explanation for the resultant gender differences in level of moral reasoning relates to cognitive orientation and gender stereotyping. Earlier research on the difference between men and women in regards to moral reasoning was conducted by Gilligan (1982), who posited that men show more of an orientation toward justice, while women demonstrate more of an orientation toward care. Gillian partially formulated this opinion based on the research of Chodorow (1974), who hypothesized that important differences in developmental processes for males and females end up encouraging in males and discouraging in females certain aspects of self related to moral reasoning (i.e., achievement behaviors, self/other differentiation, and independence). According to this thinking, then, the cognitive processes of moral judgments are often unique to each gender. Thus, males are more concerned with evaluating the “principles and rules of a
situation” (justice), while females are more focused on assessing the relationship aspects and the potential “responses of others” (Crown & Heatherington, 1989, p. 282). However, as Crown and Heatherington noted, this isn’t always universally true, since their own research with undergraduate psychology students indicated mixed results relative to whether or not a particular gender was following more of a justice or care concern in their moral reasoning processes.

Beyond the mixed results of gender differences in moral reasoning that comes from the research of Chodorow (1974), Gilligan (1982), and Crown and Heatherington (1989) exists the issue of the sample of study subjects that was utilized. None of these scholars sampled athlete populations and even though some of their research involved moral judgments and moral reasoning on topics of competitive sports, the respondents were not athletes. Hence, when comparing the results of their research with the results of the present study, it is difficult to discern whether or not gender differences in moral reasoning of this study were the result of an orientation toward either justice or care/concern. One thing can be concluded for certain, though, and that is when the HBVCI (based on honesty, justice, and responsibility) is used to assess athletes’ moral reasoning, there is a significant difference in level of moral reasoning between males and females. Finally, the results of the current study and other HBVCI-based research might even suggest that females have a stronger orientation towards justice than males.

Moral Reasoning and Type of Sport Played

The second basic research question for this study asked if there was a difference in the level of moral reasoning for athletes based on the type of sport they play.
(individual sport versus team sport). The data indicated via an independent samples $t$-test that individual sport athletes ($M = 41.93; SD = 8.02$) morally reason at a significantly higher level than team sport athletes ($M = 37.36; SD = 8.80$). In other words, based on the duties-driven theoretical perspective of the HBVCI measuring instrument that was used to assess this population, this result means that individual sport athletes are more cognitively aware of moral obligations relative to justice, honesty, and responsibility than are team sport athletes (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). Furthermore, this result reflected the comprehensive data from dozens of HBVCI-based studies with thousands of participants that have consistently found moral reasoning differences between athletes who play individual or team sports (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). In fact, the primary investigator of this research study has not located a single HBVCI-based study that has ever indicated no statistical difference in level of moral reasoning relative to type of sport played (individual or team).

Aside from HBVCI-focused research, at least one study using another measuring instrument exists that resulted in no statistical difference in athletes based on the type of sport the respondents’ played. Proios, Doganis, and Athanailidis (2004) assessed a population of athletes with a mean age of 24.9 with the Defining Issues Test instrument and found no difference in moral reasoning between individual sport and team sport athletes. However, since this was not an HBVCI-centered study, it is difficult to compare the results of the Proios et al. (2004) study with the results of the current research. One reason, though, for the noted difference of results might stem from the Defining Issues Test assessment of moral development compared to the concept of cognitive moral
knowing that is assessed by the HBVCI. Direct comparisons between Proios et al.’s (2004) study and the present study would not be appropriate either since neither one’s research utilized random sampling in their methodology. Additionally, Proios et al.’s (2004) research occurred exclusively among a population of Greek respondents, while the present study’s participants were almost entirely American.

A possible explanation for the difference in moral reasoning between individual sport athletes and team sport athletes that have been assessed via the HBVCI might be due to the unique character of contact and non-contact sports (Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields, & Cooper, 1986). For example, Bredemeier et al. (1986) suggested that contact sports require more aggressive behavior by their nature in order for the athlete to be successful. Thus, a basketball player or wrestler might have a different moral compass than a golfer, gymnast, or swimmer as it relates to reasoning through a sport specific ethical dilemma. To this end, some scholars have noted that individual sports and team sports have completely different moral and ethical climates that they operate from in relation to what is emphasized as important aspects of playing and competing in the sport (Miller & Jarman, 1988).

Finally, differences in the level of moral reasoning for individual and team sport athletes might be the result of what is taught to athletes of a particular sport. For example, golfers are not only taught the constitutive rules that govern the sport (such as the ball must be advanced by use of a club), but are urged to obey ethical norms as well, such as keeping track of the opponent’s score (including signing the opponent’s score card) and not talking while another player is teeing off. Beyond learning formal and
informal rules for the game of golf there is noticeable media influence that insists on playing the game with integrity (i.e., the USGA’s ad campaign which insists on playing the sport the “right” way). Juxtaposed to this golf example is an illustration that can be found in the world of team sports, where athletes often learn from a young age to intentionally break rules of the specific sport (Morgan, 2007). For instance, in baseball it is commonly taught by some coaches and parents that pitchers “ought” to retaliate against a perceived wrong doing from the opposing team by having the pitcher intentionally brush back or hit an opposing batter with a pitched ball. Not only is this type of behavior often taught to new learners of the sport, but it is also considered by some to be an integral component of how baseball is “rightly” played. From a moral and ethical standpoint, then, it is easy to see that some significant differences exist in what might be considered the “right” way to play a particular type of sport (i.e., always attempting to follow the rules versus intentionally breaking the rules).

Moral Reasoning Within Each Gender

The third research question for this study asked if female intercollegiate team sport athletes score at a lower level of moral reasoning than female intramural sport athletes. Similarly, the fourth research question of this study asked if male intercollegiate team sport athletes score at a lower level of moral reasoning than male intramural sport athletes. Both of these questions were evaluated using an independent samples t-test and results showed that there was not a statistical difference of moral reasoning within different levels of competition for each gender. It should be noted per the research of Lomax and Hahs-Vaughn (2012) that the statistical power for the results of the female
athletes might be low since there were only 39 intercollegiate and 23 intramural sport athletes used in this comparison. However, statistical power was less of a concern for the male respondents that contained 66 intercollegiate and 82 intramural sport athletes used for comparison.

Most previous HBVCI-based research has not examined potential intra-gender differences for athletes playing at different levels of competition. There are a few extant studies, though, that found recruited female athletes scoring significantly lower in moral reasoning than non-recruited female athletes (Krause & Priest, 1999; Penny & Priest, 1990). The same statistical significant difference has not been found when comparing male athletes who were recruited with male athletes who were not recruited. Thus, the results of present study potentially lend support to the research of Krause and Priest (1999) and Penny and Priest (1990), although this study did not ask athletes to indicate if they were recruited. Since this research focused on athletes at a large, Midwestern university it can only be assumed that most of the intercollegiate athletes were recruited for the sport that they play at the Division I level. Also, it is possible that some of the intramural sport athletes might have been recruited to play college athletics, but for whatever reason they were intramural athletes when they participated in this study. Hence, an accurate intra-gender comparison of athletes using recruited versus not recruited as a factor for determining statistical intra-gender difference was not possible in this research study.

An intra-gender comparison was necessary because some scholars have found in their research that intramural sport athletes have different motives for participating in
athletics compared to the motives of intercollegiate athletes (Duda, 1988). Additionally, Duda (1988) suggested that even at the same level of competition there might exist differences between and within genders in regards to motivation to play. Therefore, if motivations differ in why an athlete chooses to play or participate in sport, it stands to reason that differences might be present in how athletes of each gender, at each level of competition deal with moral dilemmas (Priest, Krause, and Beach, 1999). This, then, could possibly account for differences in moral reasoning between intramural and intercollegiate athletes of the same gender (even though the present study did not find such differences).

Relationship Between Moral Reasoning and Personal Religiosity

Simple linear regression was used to test the relationship between level of moral reasoning and personal religiosity for this study (research question 5). The data indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between these two variables \((r = - .143, p = .039)\). In practical terms, however, an \(r\) value of -.143 means that a slightly negative relationship exists between moral reasoning and personal religiosity (i.e., as personal religiosity increases, the level of moral reasoning decreases). Although a statistically significant relationship was found between these two variables, it must be also be noted that \(R^2 = .020\), meaning only 2% of variance in level of moral reasoning was explained by personal religiosity. Thus, the relationship might have been statistically significant, but shouldn’t be misunderstood as very meaningful.

Since no known previous research within the sport context has explored the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning, it is necessary to examine
the research from other disciplines that have measured the relationship between these two variables. Most recently, using a sample of undergraduate accounting majors, Elias (2011) found a statistically significant, positive relationship between personal religiosity and level of moral reasoning (he preferred the nomenclature ethical reasoning in his study). Unlike the present study, which used the 7-item RMQ, Elias (2011) utilized a religiosity instrument with only 3 items that he himself admitted might not fully measure one’s total religiousness. Additionally, the instrument he used to measure ethical reasoning was geared toward determining a respondent’s intent to act unethically when presented with auditing specific vignettes (as opposed to the HBVCI asking for a level of agreement with a moral dilemma). Thus, given the differences in measuring instruments used and in the stated study purposes, it is difficult to compare the results of Elias’ research with the present study. It is therefore recommended that future studies consider using the same religiosity measurement instrument in order to more aptly compare the results of studies that seek to examine the relationship between this variable and ethical or moral reasoning.

Other non-sport studies that examined the relationship between personal religiosity and moral or ethical reasoning also found a positive relationship between these two variables. For example, Clark and Dawson (1996) found a positive correlation between personal religiosity and ethical judgments among a convenient sample of undergraduate business students. Likewise, Keller et al. (2007) found among undergraduate and graduate accounting students that personal religiosity is a significant foundational component to making ethical decisions in the workplace (alongside of other
important factors such as gender and level of education). However, similar to the Elias (2011) study, these two research studies by Clark and Dawson (2006) and Keller et al. (2007) were different in intent and measurement than the present sport specific study.

There are likely various explanations for why these non-sport specific studies found a positive relationship between personal religiosity and moral/ethical reasoning, while the present study found a slightly negative relationship among these variables. First of all, the measurement instruments for personal religiosity and moral/ethical reasoning were different for each particular study, so it can be assumed that each study was not measuring these two constructs in the same way. This alone could account for some of the differences in results from one study to the next. Secondly, the present study assessed personal religiosity and moral reasoning among competitive athletic respondents, who by the nature of their competitive situations in sport might be faced with ethical dilemmas unlike those in others settings (Shields & Bredemeier, 2000). The realm of sport is likely an entirely unique culture compared to the world of business or accounting (i.e., approaches to dealing with moral or ethical issues and dilemmas are likely evaluated differently because of the context and potential consequences).

The most likely explanation for the negative relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning in this study might be found by considering who many of the respondents were. At least 65 of the respondents in this research were intercollegiate athletes who participate in AIA. The majority of these particular study participants likely scored at higher levels of personal religiosity due to their affiliation with this campus ministry group. If these same intercollegiate athletes who participated in AIA also scored
at lower levels of moral reasoning (as the data indicated), then it might be possible to conclude that many of these athletes have higher levels of personal religiosity and lower levels of moral reasoning.

**Gender and Type of Sport Played as Moderating Variables**

This research utilized two separate multiple regression tests in order to determine whether or not gender and type of sport played act as moderating variables in the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning (research questions 6 and 7). Moderating variables are qualitative in nature (Baron and Kenny, 1986) and can influence the strength and/or direction of the relationship between independent and dependent variables (Muller, Judd, & Yzerbyt, 2005). The data indicated that the interaction term between gender and personal religiosity did not explain a significant increase in variance in moral reasoning, $\Delta R^2 = .00, F \text{ change (1, 204)} = .049, p = .825$. Hence, it can be concluded that gender was not a significant moderating variable between personal religiosity and moral reasoning. In practical terms this means that gender did not influence the magnitude or direction of the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning for this population of athletes. Likewise, the data also determined that the interaction term between type of sport played and personal religiosity did not explain a significant increase in the variance in moral reasoning, $\Delta R^2 = .005, F \text{ change (1, 195)} = 1.029, p = .312$. Therefore, type of sport played was not a significant moderating variable between personal religiosity and moral reasoning. In other words, type of sport played did not affect the direction and magnitude of the relationship between moral reasoning and personal religiosity for study participants.
No previous research exists that measured the moderating effects of gender or type of sport played in the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning. Thus, the lack of moderating effects for gender and type of sport in this study might serve as an introductory exploratory attempt to better understand how these kinds of nominal categorical variables (gender and type of sport played) can potentially influence the strength or direction of the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables in moral reasoning sport research. Since the results of this study also showed that respondents of each gender and each type of sport played moral reason at statistically significant different levels, it might be worthwhile to run correlation or regression tests just between gender and/or type of sport played with moral reasoning in future research. This type of testing should allow for a better understanding of why gender and type of sport played did not serve as moderators, by further illuminating their relationship with moral reasoning as a primary influencing independent variable.

Practical Implications

Given the win at all cost mentality that permeates throughout the competitive sport world today (Eitzen & Sage, 2009), it is imperative that sport managers such as coaches and athletic administrators find ways to effectively develop higher levels of moral reasoning among athletes. Furthermore, the necessary educational processes that sport administrators utilize to develop higher levels of moral reasoning need to take into consideration the resultant data from this study (i.e., moral and ethical development educational approaches by sport managers at the collegiate level must take into account that female athletes and individual sport athletes already display more maturity in this
cognitive area). To this end, sport scholars have already seen encouraging results with moral development educational programs administered among populations of athletes that participated in moral reasoning course work (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009). These educational programs have occurred at the collegiate level in physical education (Rolider, Cooper, & Houten, 1984) curriculum and during sport summer camps (Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields, & Shewchuk, 1986). It seems appropriate based on these results to consider instituting a similar moral development program for collegiate athletes as part of their overall educational curriculum.

Since moral reasoning is considered to be a predictor of ethical behavior (Galbraith & Jones, 1976) among athletes (University of Idaho Center of ETHICS*, 2009), the results of this study might be interpreted as reason for concern regarding the behavior of male athletes and team sport athletes. At a minimum, based on the calibration of the HBVCI measuring instrument that was used for this research (measuring honesty, responsibility, and justice), college athletes belonging to the aforementioned categories might be especially prone to unethical behavior in the sport arena. Scholars such as Duska and Whelan (1975) believed that low levels of moral reasoning and poor ethical behavior all boils down to a lack of respect a person has for rules in any aspect of life, including sport. Thus, the moral development educational programs for athletes at the collegiate level ought to teach and emphasize the value of honesty, responsibility, and justice within the framework of the rules of the sport.

According to Drewe (1999), measured moral reasoning scores can be used by coaches and athletic administrators to “facilitate the development of the critical thinking
skills and dispositions required in moral reasoning if they were aware of where their athletes were in need of guidance” (p. 117). The results of this study showed that athletes are in need of guidance in not only deepening their sense of honesty, responsibility, and justice, but in better understanding their deontological motives. For instance, several of the items on the HBVCI deal with determining whether or not an athlete blames the breaking of a rule on themselves or on the officials. Therefore, moral development educational programs, as well as the daily leadership and teaching provided by coaches, ought to include some intentional cognitive processing of these types of moral dilemmas with athletes. If teachers, coaches, and athletic administrators do not address these kinds of moral dilemmas with athletes, then sport participants might never be aware of where they are particularly in need of further moral awareness and development.

Future Research

Based on the results of this study, the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning does not appear to be very strong. Hence, it should not be assumed that athletes with high levels of personal religiosity cognitively operate at high levels of moral awareness. In order to determine plausible strong influencers of moral reasoning for intercollegiate athletes and intramural athletes further studies should test other independent variables such as race/ethnicity and length of sport participation. Furthermore, these future studies should include athletes that attend both public and private colleges/universities, at all levels of competition (Division I, II, and III).

A great deal of research exists that examined type of sport played (individual or team) as a key independent variable in determining levels of moral reasoning among
populations of athletes. The convenient sample of athletes in this study included participants from more than 25 sports, which indicated that this kind of research has the ability to assess a wide variety of athletes from many different unique sports in one location. Therefore, it is recommended that future research consider exploring levels of moral reasoning for athletes of each specific sport. This type of research might shed further insight into why the significant difference in levels of moral reasoning exist between individual sport and team sport athletes. Furthermore, scholars might find it fruitful to examine moral reasoning levels among athletes of different sports within the same type of sport played (i.e., comparing separate individual sport athletes such as golfers and gymnasts to one another).

No previous sport studies explored the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning among a population of athletes. For this study, more than a third of respondents identified themselves as Catholic Christians, which raised the question of whether or not there might be a difference in level of moral reasoning for athletes of different religious traditions. And even though the results of this study indicated a relatively weak relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning, future research ought to consider analyzing the relationship between specific religions and denominational traditions in their relationship or influence on athlete moral reasoning.

Research Limitations

The most obvious limitation of this research relates to the convenience sampling that was utilized in the methodology of the study. Convenience sampling limits the generalizability of study findings, so the results of this research cannot be applied to other
athletes in any other time and place. Additionally, the athletes in this study knew that they were being examined as part of a research study, which might have led to a Hawthorne Effect among respondents (i.e., athlete responses might have been influenced due to their awareness that they were being studied).

Although the total number of respondents for this study ($N=213$) was acceptable for obtaining adequate statistical power, the relatively small number of female respondents ($n=62$) might be a concern when interpreting the statistical power of the results related to gender. Also, nearly 75% of study participants were team sport athletes, so caution should be shown in analyzing the results of research questions that involved comparing individual sport athletes with team sport athletes.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to explore and describe the level of moral reasoning present in the competitive sport context for a population of intercollegiate athletes and a population of non-intercollegiate intramural sport athletes. Key variables such as gender, type of sport played, and personal religiosity were examined in their relationship to athletes’ level of moral reasoning. Each of these variables served as the basis for a series of research questions that were answered through statistical testing and analysis.

The data collected from intercollegiate and intramural athletes at a large, Midwestern university revealed that female athletes and individual sport athletes morally reasoned at a higher level than male athletes and team sport athletes, respectively. Additionally, the data indicated that neither gender nor type of sport played moderated
the relationship between personal religiosity and moral reasoning. Finally, it was discovered that there was a negative correlation between personal religiosity and moral reasoning.

Sport mangers such as coaches and athletic administrators are strongly encouraged to develop and implement moral development educational programs for athletes at the collegiate level. Although the results of this study may not be generalized to athletes in other settings and locations, the data from this study can be used as a potential roadmap for helping sport leaders determine what type of moral dilemmas need to be recognized and analyzed by their athletes.
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http://www.dispatch.com
Appendix A: Letter of Consent
Moral Reasoning of Intercollegiate Athletes and Sport Industry Majors

Dear Student,

Due to your participation in Athletes in Action as an intercollegiate-athlete or your status as an intercollegiate or intramural athlete enrolled in a course within the sport industry major, you have been selected to participate in a research study that investigates the relationship between personal religiosity, gender, type of sport played (individual vs. team) and moral reasoning. The questionnaire and scantron will take less than fifteen minutes to complete.

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Please be assured that there is no information included in the survey that will allow us to identify you and that no individual responses will be shared with others. To keep your identity anonymous, please do not fill out any blacked out sections on the instrument. Finally, you are free to withdraw at any time from the study without penalty.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the study, please feel free to send an email to lyons.13@osu.edu or bturner@ehe.osu.edu. For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

By completing this questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in the above described research project. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. Upon completion of the survey please place the completed survey and scantron answer key in the provided envelope and return the envelope to Vincent Lyons when he comes back to the next AIA meeting or class lecture.

Thank you very much for your participation.
Sincerely,

Vincent Lyons
College of Education & Human Ecology
The Ohio State University
305 West 17th Ave.
A220 PAES Building
Columbus, OH 43210
lyons.13@osu.edu
Appendix B: Moral Reasoning in Sport Questionnaire
The following scenarios involve dilemmas with high school and college athletes. Carefully read the scenario and respond in one of five ways: **SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, and SD = Strongly Disagree.** There is no right or wrong answer. Fill in the appropriate bubble with your response.

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<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
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<th>A</th>
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<td>1 - 1. Two rival basketball teams in a well-known conference played a basketball game on team A's court. During the game, team B's star player was consistently heckled whenever she missed a basket, pass, or rebound. In the return game on team B's home court, the home crowd took revenge by heckling team A's players. Such action is fair because both crowds have equal opportunity to heckle players.</td>
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<td>2 - 2. During the double play in baseball, players must tag second base before throwing to first. However, some players deliberately fake the tag, thus delivering a quicker throw to first base. Pretending to tag second base is justified because it is a good strategy. Besides, the umpire's job is to call an illegal play.</td>
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<td>4 - 3. Swimmers are taught to stand completely still just before the gun shot that starts the race. Some coaches teach their swimmers to move their head and upper body slightly which possibly forces an opponent to false start. If swimmer B false starts he will probably stay in the blocks a fraction longer when the race starts. Consequently, swimmer A may have an advantage during the race. Because all competitors have equal opportunity for this strategy, this is an acceptable means for swimmers to increase their advantage.</td>
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<td>5 - 4. Male soccer players are allowed to play the ball with any part of their body except the hands or outstretched arms. A soccer player receives a chest high pass and taps the ball to the ground with his hand. The referee does not see this action and the play continues. Because it is the referee's job to see these actions, the player is not obligated to report the foul.</td>
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<td>6 - 5. A female gymnast with Big Time U tries diligently to be a great athlete, but alas the gods are not with her. The more she works, the more she seems to ail at the most inappropriate times: the big meets. She decides to seek help for her mental shortcomings. She sets monthly appointments with her school's sport psychologist. In six months, the meetings prove fruitful, and she begins to see results.</td>
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<td>8 - 6 Basketball player A skillfully dribbled the ball around her opponents to the basket. Just as she moved toward the basket, she was tripped by player B, causing the basket to be missed. If player A had not been tripped, two points probably would have been made. Player B is charged with a foul and player A must shoot two free throws. Player A missed the two shots from the free throw line. Player B is demonstrating good strategy by forcing player A to shoot two foul shots instead of an easy lay-up.</td>
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<td>10 - 7. Certain basketball teams are coached to run plays that cause the opponents to foul. Players and coaches believe this is clever strategy because the opponents may foul out of the game, giving their team an advantage. Because the coach orders this type of play, the players should follow his directions.</td>
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<td>11 - 8. A highly recruited sprinter from Zimbabwe attends every practice, works diligently, and is highly respected by his peers and coaches. He is a good student, sits in the front of every class, and is an active participant. He is an NCAA finalist and must miss three days of class for the championships. As per university policy, he contacts all of his professors and receives permission to take his final exams at a different time and place.</td>
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15-9 Player A who is the center on an ice hockey team skated the puck down the ice, around several opponents. He had a clear shot at the net as he passed player B. Player B, while pretending to go for the puck, decided to turn at the last second to trip Player A with his stick. Consequently, Player A missed the goal. Because Player A must now attempt a penalty shot instead of an easy goal, this is demonstrating good strategy.

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16-10. During a volleyball game player A hit the ball over the net. The ball barely grazed off player B's fingers and landed out of bounds. However the referee did not see player B touch the ball. Because the referee is responsible for calling rule violations, player B is not obligated to report the violation.

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17-11. A starting linebacker for Big Time U is a good person, is known for his hard work and determination. He is also known as a fierce competitor and is aggressive on every play. The best part about him is that he is a consummate player. He loves the game and the experiences gained from it. He is also known as a good sport. He has won every team award for sportsmanlike conduct. After the big interstate rivalry, he shakes hands with all opposing players and coaches.

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19-12. Football players are not allowed to move beyond the line of scrimmage until the ball is snapped. Some coaches encourage their players to charge across the line of scrimmage a fraction of a second before the ball is snapped. The officials have difficulty seeing the early movement, therefore, the team has an advantage compared to their opponents. Because the strategy is beneficial and the officials must call the infraction, the team's actions are fair.

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20-13. During an intramural basketball game, a student official awarded one free throw instead of two to team A. Team B knew the call was wrong, however chose to remain silent, knowing the call was to their advantage. Because the official's job is to make the proper calls, and it is not a formal game, team B's action was acceptable.

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23-14. The star of the swim team at Big Time U was 21 and had just completed a great collegiate career by winning both of her events at the NCAA Championships. Her parents traveled over 200 miles to support her and cheer her on to victory. After the finals, they take her out to dinner to celebrate. She decides to have a glass of white wine with her fish filet entree.

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24-15. During a youth sport football game, an ineligible pass receiver catches a long touchdown pass and scores. The officials fail to determine that the player was ineligible. Because it is the referee's job to detect the ineligible receiver, the player or the coach does not have to declare an ineligible receiver.

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25-16. Ice hockey is often a violent game. Even though players are often hurt, hitting hard and smashing players into the boards is normal. Player A and B are opponents playing in a championship game. While trying to control the puck, player A smashed player B into the boards. Even though the puck is on the opposite side of the arena, player B, a few minutes later, retaliated by smashing player A into the boards. Because "hitting hard" and "smashing players into the boards" are an inherent part of the game, player B's action was acceptable.
Instructions: The following component of the questionnaire consists of seven multiple-choice items with one fill-in-the-blank item. Please answer the following questions by circling the appropriate letter for the multiple-choice items and providing the most accurate number for the fill-in-the-blank question.

1. How many times have you attended religious services during the past year? _____ times.

2. Which of the following best describes your practice of prayer or religious meditation?
   a. Prayer is a regular part of my life
   b. I usually pray in times of stress or need but rarely at any other time
   c. I pray only during formal ceremonies
   d. I never pray

3. When you have a serious personal problem, how often do you take religious advice or teaching into consideration?
   a. Almost always
   b. Usually
   c. Sometimes
   d. Never

4. How much influence would you say that religion has on the way that you choose to act and the way that you choose to spend your time each day?
   a. No influence
   b. A small influence
   c. Some influence
   d. A fair amount of influence
   e. A large influence

5. Which of the following statements comes closest to your belief about God?
   a. I am sure that God really exists and that He is active in my life
   b. Although I sometimes question His existence, I do believe in God and believe He knows of me as a person
   c. I don’t know if there is a personal God, but I do believe in a higher power of some kind
   d. I don’t know if there is a personal God or a higher power of some kind, and I don’t know if I ever will
   e. I don’t believe in a personal God or in a higher power

6. Which one of the following statements comes closest to your belief about life after death (immortality)?
   a. I believe in a personal life after death, a soul existing as a specific individual spirit
b. I believe in a soul existing after death as a part of a universal spirit

c. I believe in a life after death of some kind, but I really don’t what it would be like

d. I don’t know whether there is any kind of life after death, and I don’t know if I will ever know

e. I don’t believe in any kind of life after death

7. During the past year, how often have you experienced a feeling of religious reverence or devotion?
   a. Almost daily
   b. Frequently
   c. Sometimes
   d. Rarely
   e. Never

In what religious tradition do you personally practice or most identify with:

Catholic Christian

Mainline Protestant Christian (Baptist, Episcopalian, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, etc.)

Evangelical or Non-Denomination Protestant

Christian

Christian (Other)

Judaism

Islam

Buddhist

Hindu

None
Do you have any other thoughts or comments on the topic?

Thank you so much for your participation in this study!