

LIFE OF PURPOSE: EXPLORING THE ROLE AN ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT
PLAYS IN SHAPING THE MORAL COURAGE OF STUDENT ATHLETES

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ABSTRACT

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This qualitative study explores how an athletic code of conduct shaped the moral courage of student athletes in a Midwestern University. This study examined how eight student athletes, in a Division III institution, were motivated to engage in positive behaviors. It sought to understand how this selective group of student athletes perceived the three key concepts spelled out in the athletic code of conduct – sportsmanship, respect for others, and integrity – and how they were empowered to engage in acts of moral courage when on the field.

Case study research design was used in general while giving special focus to portraiture. The concept of voice in portraiture was emphasized by preserving and listening to the student athletes' responses while simultaneously listening for stories. The present study also focused on highlighting the positive aspects of a social system, i.e., athletics, and extracting the element of goodness unlike current research in the field. The conceptual framework of the two constructs – understanding the importance of the athletic code of conduct and how this code shapes the student athletes' moral courage – is examined here by analyzing verbal and non-verbal interview responses of the participants and observations while being on-site. Participants' reflective journals were used implicitly to understand the lives of these student athletes. Data revealed emergent themes which responded to the five research questions.

Findings indicated that one of the most important factors that enabled and empowered them to act with moral courage was their personal values. When personal values aligned with those of an athletic code of conduct, it was only natural to stand up and do the right thing. Student athletes in this present study unanimously believed that the values of such athletic codes of conduct should be integrated into their lives through intentional education, application and

reflection throughout their careers as student athletes. Senior student athletes had a more sophisticated sense of moral reasoning when compared to younger student athletes. This finding supports Kohlberg's (1969) Theory of Moral Development where the level of moral reasoning becomes more complex and complicated with age and lived experiences. Coaches were credited for being both disseminators and advocates of the values of the athletic code of conduct. However, results also revealed that it was difficult to establish if the athletic code of conduct as a document had a direct influence on the moral courage of the participants.

Themes generated from these data resulted in a number of recommendations for policy and practice in the realm of college athletics, as well as suggestions for future research. One such policy change was to investigate alternative models, both curricular and co-curricular, so that incoming freshmen are intentionally taught the values of the athletic code of conduct. Future research is needed to understand the influences of such codes of conduct on the moral courage of student athletes from different demographics such as first-generation college students, full scholarship athletes or those from varying socio-economic statuses.

To my mother for reading all my drafts and cheering me on;

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background of the Problem	2
Rationale.....	7
Purpose of the Study	8
Research Questions	10
Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks	10
Significance of the Study	15
Definition of Terms.....	16
Limitations.....	18
Delimitations.....	18
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW	20
History of Intercollegiate Athletics.....	20
National Collegiate Athletic Association.....	22
The Student Athlete... ..	25
Codes of Conduct and the Organization.....	29
Codes as Ethical Infrastructures.....	31
Codes of Conduct in Intercollegiate Athletics	35
Moral Development.....	37
Chickering’s Psychosocial Model of Student Development.....	38
Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Development.....	40
Rest’s Theory of Cognitive Moral Development.....	43

Moral Development and the Student Athlete.....	46
Moral Courage	50
Summary.....	53
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY	55
Research Design.....	55
Rationale for Case Study Research	55
Rationale for Portraiture	56
Portraiture.....	58
Voices in Portraiture	59
Participants.....	61
Data Sources.....	62
Painting the Portraits.....	63
Trustworthiness.....	67
Assumptions and Limitations.....	67
Role of the Researcher.....	68
Conclusion.....	69
CHAPTER IV. RESULTS.....	70
Participant Portraits.....	70
Toby.....	71
Salli.....	73
Daisy.....	75
Colleen.....	76
Mandy	77

Finn.....	79
Donald.....	81
George	82
Summary of Participants' Background.....	84
Being a Student Athlete.....	86
Influence of Sport.....	86
Influence of Environment.....	89
Importance of Values.....	90
Understanding the Code.....	92
Reasons for the Code in Athletics.....	93
Code is No Stranger.....	94
The MU Athletic Code of Conduct.....	95
Sportsmanship.....	96
Respect for Others.....	98
Integrity.....	99
Role of the Code in Value System.....	101
Moral Courage.....	103
Understanding Moral Courage.....	104
Ability to Stand Up for Oneself.....	104
Do the Right Thing.....	106
Empowered to Act with Moral Courage.....	108
Acting with Moral Courage.....	111
The Athletic Environment.....	116

The Athletic Code and Moral Courage.....	120
Code and Sense of Morality.....	120
The Code as a Guide.....	124
Summary of Findings.....	127
CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	137
Discussion.....	138
Importance of an Athletic Code of Conduct.....	138
Foundation for Strong Ethical Culture.....	139
Salient and Familiar Virtues.....	140
Shared Responsibility and Consequences.....	142
Code of Conduct Revisited.....	144
Athletic Code of Conduct and Acting with Moral Courage.....	145
Congruence between Values and Behaviors.....	145
Internal Moral Compass.....	147
Other Relevant Findings.....	148
“Man-in-the-Mirror” Phenomenon.....	148
In Relation to Society.....	150
Implications for Practice	150
Implications for Future Research.....	154
Conclusion.....	156
REFERENCES.....	156
APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	177
APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT FORM.....	180

APPENDIX C. HSRB APPROVAL	183
APPENDIX D. EMAIL OUTREACH.....	185
APPENDIX E. CODE OF CONDUCT	186
APPENDIX F. NEWS ARTICLE	187

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development	13
2	The Four Component Model of Morality	14
3	Chickering's Psychosocial Model of Student Development.....	39
4	Background Information on Participants	85
5	Summary of Findings.....	129

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Moral development has long been considered one of the important outcomes of a liberal education (Rest & Narvaez, 1991). Historically, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 laid the foundation for public education with the statement, “Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged” (The Northwest Territory As Organized Under the Ordinance of 1787, n.d.). One of the tenets of the Morrill Act (1862) was that all universities should act with moral and intellectual integrity. More recently, the 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965, Title VIII, Part K. Sec. 863(b) state that “Congress should support and encourage character building initiatives in schools across America and urge colleges and universities to affirm that the development of character is one of the primary goals of higher education”.

Colleges and universities have rigorously adopted the 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965 and reflected these efforts of creating an ethical organizational identity in the creation of their vision, mission and value statements (“School Mission Statements: Where is Your School Going?,” n.d.). Bok (1976) believed that colleges had the responsibility to contribute in any way they could to the moral development of students. A 1987 longitudinal study Deemer, as cited in Rest and Narvaez (1991), found that the college experience provided the general intellectual stimulation that caused students to overhaul and rethink the basic ways in which they made moral judgments. Intercollegiate athletics is one such college experience where students have the opportunities to learn and grow on a college campus.

In 1991, the Knight Commission reported that “at their best, which is most of the time, intercollegiate athletics provide millions of people – athletes, undergraduates, alumni and the

general public – with great pleasure, the spectacle of extraordinary effort and physical grace, the excitement of an outcome in doubt, and a shared unifying experience” (Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 1991, Introduction, para. 1). The student-athlete plays one of the most important roles in intercollegiate athletics. Not only do they bring pride to an institution, student athletes also engage in negative activities such as hazing, sexual impropriety and aggression (Beller & Stoll, 1992; Lumpkin & Cuneen, 2001) that bring shame. Although student athletes are often held to a higher standard, and like other students are young adults, they are also at a point in their lives when curiosity is encouraged and mistakes should be tolerated as part of the learning experience (Duderstadt, 2000).

Background of the Problem

Many Americans believe that sport builds character and teaches positive values such as teamwork, ethical conduct, and self-discipline (Rudd, 1998). Participation in American sport has been strongly perceived as a vehicle for character development: social and moral (Sage, 1998; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). It is perceived and assumed that athletics is a conducive environment for moral development. However, research has suggested that this is a fallacy. Several researchers have also argued that sport does not build character (Beller & Stoll, 1992; 1995; Rudd, Stoll & Beller, 1997; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). In fact, studies have shown that the duration of time spent in competitive sport is proportional to the decline of moral values and ethical behaviors (Beller & Stoll, 1992, 1995; Lumpkin, Stoll, & Beller, 1999; Stoll, Beller, Cole, & Burwell, 1995). Rudd and Stoll (2004) argued that sport may build social character but there is little evidence to suggest that sport builds moral character.

Several studies have demonstrated that athletics does not lend positively to the moral development of student athletes (Bredemeier & Shields, 1986b; Lumpkin, Beller, & Stoll, 1999;

Stoll, Beller, Cole, & Burwell, 1995). According to Lumpkin and Cuneen (2001), sports is replete with individuals who seemingly have lost a sense of the value of human life, respect for others, and fair play. One of the many landmark studies by Lumpkin, Stoll and Beller in 1999 observed 10,000 student athletes ranging from ninth grade to collegiate level. They found that athletes scored lower on moral development than their non-athlete peers, male athletes performed worse than their female counterparts in moral development and moral reasoning scores declined steadily for student athletes from ninth grade through university age unlike the non-athletes. According to Crawford, Greenwell and Sherrick (2008), institutions have been plagued by lapses in judgment by student athletes with regard to questionable conduct in a variety of areas such as hazing, sexual impropriety, gambling, sportsmanship and improper contact with agents. Almost all, if not many, of these behaviors exude moral choice. Thus, it is apt to question whether sport provides the opportunities and resources for student athletes to grow morally.

In 1991 and 2001, the Knight Commission issued a major call for national reform and found that despite some positive changes, the overall state of intercollegiate athletics was worsening (Greenwell, Grube, Jordan, & Mahony, 2004). Moreover, the Knight Commission cautioned institutions of higher education of the heightened instances where NCAA violations were becoming part of their culture instead of being the exception. The 1991 report stated that:

But at their worst, big-time collegiate athletics appear to have lost their bearings. With increasing frequency they threaten to overwhelm universities in whose name they were established and to undermine the integrity of one of our fundamental national institutions: higher education. (Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 1991, Introduction para. 2)

Integrity of intercollegiate athletics is a matter of great importance and concern to higher education (Duderstadt, 2000). Scandals ranging from NCAA violations to falsified results have fueled criticism of America's universities (Kelley & Chang, 2007). Today's college students have grown up in a society where the line between right and wrong has been blurred and where unethical behavior of high-profile individuals is expected (Cano & Sams, 2010). There is a greater concern about the moral and ethical conduct of those in leadership (Jordan, Greenwell, Geist, Pastore, & Mahony, 2004). In November 2011, Pennsylvania State University became a prime example where lapses of judgment in morality and instances of ethical delinquency tarnished its educational mission. As an institution, it indulged and participated as well as empowered its institutional role models to engage in immoral and unlawful activities. Pennsylvania State University was embroiled in a child abuse scandal that launched its athletics program and staff into a type of limelight that showcased disintegrating ethics and absence of moral courage (Moore, 2011).

In a letter from the NCAA to President Erickson of Pennsylvania State University, NCAA President Mark A. Emmert articulated that:

Under Article 2.4, the NCAA Constitution mandates that intercollegiate athletics promote character development of participants, to enhance the integrity of higher education and to promote civility in society, student-athletes, coaches, and all others associated with these athletics programs and events should adhere to fundamental values such as respect, fairness, civility, honesty and responsibility. These values should be manifested not only in athletics participation, but also in the broad spectrum of activities affecting athletics program. These principles are bedrock to the foundation of intercollegiate athletics.... (p. 2)

This was an instance where the leadership faltered in staying true to the moral ideals of athletics. Although it had been reported that student athletes were not involved as witnesses, it is important to understand how a student athlete would negotiate his or her role if and when confronted with such moral dilemmas. This fits well with the present study since the focus is primarily on how student athletes engaged in acts of moral courage thereby excluding administrators and faculty. Student athletes are told that they are ambassadors for their universities and are held accountable for their behavior and actions (Duderstadt, 2000). Intercollegiate athletics are highly visible entities where the behaviors and actions of coaches and student athletes come under public scrutiny unlike other members of an institution. In fact, “this is not to suggest that student athletes are held to higher standards of behavior because in some cases behavior is tolerated...cover-ups are common but their flaws, when exposed, certainly receive far greater public attention” (Duderstadt, p. 216).

The need for improved ethical behavior has been an issue in intercollegiate athletics since its early days. In 1905, following a call by President Theodore Roosevelt to eliminate the high numbers of deaths and injuries common to college football, the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States was formed with thirty-five colleges and universities as founding members (Smith, 1999). In 1906, this organization changed its name to National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) with a continued mission to protect young people from the dangerous and exploitive athletic practices of the time. During its early years, the NCAA assumed the role of promoting ethical sporting behavior and athletic departments were recognized as units of instruction within the institution. Although the role of the NCAA has diversified to include marketing, promotion, membership, rules enforcement, and administration of national championships, its founding principles of ensuring dignity, promoting ethical sports

behavior and high purpose of education are salient characteristics (“College Athletics-The National Collegiate Athletic Association,” n.d.). As entities of a university, athletic departments became visible representatives of higher education and represented the same ideals that are facilitated throughout an institution (Bates, n.d.). The most important rationale for intercollegiate athletics is the belief that “athletic competition can and should play an important role in the university’s central mission of education” (Duderstadt, 2000, p. 18).

Organizations such as athletic departments and programs are typically defined by their vision and mission statements as well as their traditions, norms, values and set of beliefs. Greenwell, Grube, Jordan and Mahony (2004) were keen to highlight that it was imperative for institutions to find ways to “increase ethical behavior among those involved in intercollegiate athletic programs” and the creation of athletic codes of conduct was one of several ways in which intercollegiate athletics attempted to remedy to problem (p. 124). The NCAA has been an integral part of this process. Ethical organizations have often gained visibility when there are lapses in ethical behaviors as in the relatively recent cases of ENRON, WorldCom and Pennsylvania State University. Pennsylvania State University’s scandal provides an opportunity to pause and explore how an athletic code of conduct shapes the student athletes’ ethical right to exercise and engage in acts of moral courage on and off the field as members of a campus community (see Appendix F).

If the expectation of society is that college is the learning environment for students to grow morally, and become responsible and contributing citizens, then the onus is on the institutions of higher learning to provide the opportunities and resources for these young minds to blossom. Duderstadt (2000) states that:

If college athletic programs are to survive and succeed, universities must take steps to protect the integrity of their programs...universities must recognize that intercollegiate athletics is a peripheral activity of the university. The basis for integrity is remarkably simple. It is determined by the relationship – and the relevance – of the college sports to the educational mission of the university and to the education of the student. (p. 229-230)

Thus, it is vital to explore how the moral obligation of the NCAA and academic institution influences and grooms the student athlete. Student athletes represent the voices, act as ambassadors and are seen as a symbol of an institution and its athletic department. The manner in which the student athlete carries himself or herself is very fundamental to the institution's mission and values. The interaction between the student athlete's performance and the institution's athletic code of conduct are integrated seamlessly. Any unethical behavior of the student athlete questions the core fundamentals of the institution's values and code of conduct.

Rationale

The intercollegiate environment has been extensively studied in the areas of motivation (Hardy, 2006; Weinstein, DeHaan, & Ryan, 2010), aggression (Donahue, Rip, & Vallerand, 2009; Smith & Stewart, 2003), pro-social behavior (Eldar, 2008; Peek, Picou, Alston, & Curry, 1979) and substance abuse (Edmunson, Clifford, Serrins, & Wiley, 1994) amongst student athletes. Scholars have also shown excessive interest in sportspersonship (Beller, 2002; Dunn & Dunn, 1999; Stoll & Beller, 2000; Stornes, 2001) and athletic aggression (Chandler, Johnson, & Carroll, 1999; Chantal, Robin, Vernat, & Bernache-Assollant, 2005; Koss & Gaines, 1993).

Division III institutions pride themselves in keeping the promise of providing student-athletes the “opportunity to discover valuable lessons in teamwork, discipline, perseverance and leadership, which in turn make student athletes better students and responsible citizens” (“What

Division III Has To Offer,” 2011). This mission complements well with the moral development life cycle of all college students. Several studies have determined that becoming more congruous in integrity is one of several developmental tasks of college students (Kohlberg, 1984; Pascarella & Terrenzini, 1991; Rest & Narvaez, 1994). Over the past 20 years, most studies have focused on the moral reasoning of student athletes (Bredemeier & Shields, 2001; Stoll & Beller, 1998). However, moral courage amongst student athletes has not been explored within the context of trying to understand how successfully organizational entities such as Division III athletic programs keep this promise. There has been limited research (Beller, Stoll, Burwell, & Cole, 1995; Stoll, Beller, Cole, & Burwell, 1995) on how student athletes develop their moral courage and what artifacts or infrastructures influence this type of moral growth.

Codes of conducts are sometimes known as ethical infrastructures. Within intercollegiate athletics, a popular strategy to encourage ethical decision-making and behavior has been to create codes of conduct (Greenwell, Grube, Jordan, & Mahony, 2004). Greenwell et al. (2004) posited that governing bodies in intercollegiate athletics have developed codes of conduct to influence the behavior of administrators, coaches, athletes, and fans. Regardless, unethical behavior continues to prevail in college sports despite the existence of such ethical infrastructures. According to Greenwell et al. (2004), despite this importance, very few studies have been conducted to understand how student athletes feel about their codes of conduct and what they believe is their moral responsibility. Research focusing on the learning outcomes or the impact of codes of conduct remains limited and inconclusive. What is missing in the literature is an understanding of the role of such ethical infrastructures and how they influence the moral actions and behaviors of student athletes. This study presented an opportunity to understand how and what propels student athletes to make choices when faced with moral

dilemmas This study also seeks to enrich the literature and fill this gap as it is essential to comprehend how this environmental phenomenon influences the moral development of this future generation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the role an athletic code of conduct plays in shaping the moral courage of student athletes in a private Midwestern University. In the present study, moral courage is defined as an individual's ability to explore a course of action based on one's ethical values, and follow through with a decision as to the right course of action regardless of the possible consequences when faced with an ethical dilemma (Murray, 2010).

The Midwestern University selected for this study believes that it is a "community of learning that promotes and nurtures intellectual, personal and professional development, leading to a life of purpose with distinction" ("Mission Statement," 2003). Founded in the mid-1800s, it is a small, private, Division III, religiously-affiliated institution that prides itself for academic excellence, diversity and valuing the quest for purpose, integrity and spiritual growth as well as developing the strength of character. In accordance with King and Mayhew (2010), moral development is a desired collegiate outcome. The mission statement and institutional goals are woven into the realms of academia and co-curricular activities such as athletics. The athletic department's mission statement and code of conduct echo the institutional values and beliefs and further upholds NCAA values of sportsmanship, integrity and respect for others (see Appendix C). Almost half of the core values of the NCAA highlight the importance of sportsmanship, integrity, inclusivity, respect and citizenship.

The intent was for three student athletes from each academic cohort (sophomore, junior and senior) to be randomly selected to participate in this qualitative study. Freshmen were excluded as they would have had little interaction with the athletic code of ethics of the institution within their first semester on campus. An email was sent out to the student athletes so that they could express their interest in participating in the study. A total of only eight participants chose to participate in the present study. Three seniors, one junior and four sophomores involved in wrestling, softball, basketball, and running track. Gender representation was achieved with four men and four women.

The present study used case study in general with a particular focus on portraiture as a qualitative research design tool in order to gain richer and deeper insight by preserving the authentic voice of the participant. Portraiture is rooted in the tradition of ethnography and seeks to provide a fuller understanding of the participants (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Interviews with each student athlete provided the rich and colorful data necessary to answer the research questions created portraits, which allowed the reader to empathize with and understand the unknown worlds of the participants. Furthermore, portraiture enabled the researcher's voice to become "more evident and visible than in any other research form" (p. 13) as I became entwined in the conversations with the participants. Finally, the most important element of portraiture that was befitting was the emphasis on "goodness" (p.8). This research design offered the ideal methodology for the present study that seeks to interweave the participants' stories and their experiences by focusing on the positive moral behaviors of student athletes and the influence that an institutional document has on such outcomes.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following five research questions:

1. To what extent do student athletes perceive or understand their university's athletic code of conduct?
2. What does this perception and understanding mean to the student athlete?
3. How do student athletes define moral courage and to what extent do they believe that they act on moral courage?
4. In what ways are there opportunities or lack thereof for student athletes to act with moral courage?
5. In what ways is the athletic environment supportive of acts of moral courage?

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

This study is grounded in Chickering's (1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993) Psychosocial Model of Student Development also known as the Theory of Identity Development, Lawrence Kohlberg's (1969) Theory of Cognitive Moral Development, and James Rest's (1979) Four Component Model of Morality. The fundamental characteristics that guided this study were Chickering's seventh vector, which addresses developing integrity; Kohlberg's fifth and six stages, which refer to the social contract orientation and the universal ethical principle orientation; as well as Rest's final component: moral courage. These three theoretical frameworks overlapped seamlessly to highlight the primary crux of this study: moral courage.

Central to the present study was the connection between integrity and moral courage. Integrity is viewed as a virtue essential for living a life of purpose where student athletes are empowered to act with moral courage. Cox, La Caze and Levine (2013) described integrity as one of the most important and also perhaps the most puzzling virtue. Sometimes the term "integrity" is used synonymously with "moral" while at other times acting morally is distinguished from acting with integrity. Cox et al. (2013) proposed that the pursuit of integrity

involved taking into account one's changing values, convictions, commitments, desires, knowledge, beliefs over time – an examined life. Such a life would include emotions of self-assessment such as regret, remorse, guilt, and shame. Halfon (1987) described integrity in terms of a person's dedication to the pursuit of a moral life and their intellectual responsibility in seeking to understand the demands of such a life. According to Cloud (2009), a person with integrity had the ability to pull everything together and make it all happen no matter how challenging the circumstances. Likewise, Rest (1986) described moral courage as more than having simple honest intent – a person with moral courage must have sufficient perseverance, ego strength, and implementation skills to be able to follow through on his/her intention to behave morally, to withstand fatigue and flagging will, to overcome obstacles. For the purposes of the present study, integrity is defined as the virtue necessary for acting with moral courage. Calhoun (1995) described this succinctly where persons of integrity do not just act consistently with their endorsements, they stand for something: they stand up for their best judgment within a community of people trying to discover what in life is worth doing.

For the purposes of the present study, Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seventh vector, developing integrity, is the focus. The goal for this vector is for the students to develop congruence between their moral thoughts and actions. Developing integrity is the final vector in Chickering's Theory of Identity Development and it consists of three different stages: humanizing values, personalizing values and developing congruence (Chickering & Reisser, p. 51). Humanizing values refers to an act of balancing self-interests with the interests of others while personalizing values translates to the efforts that an individual experiences in confirming one's beliefs and values while respecting the opinions of others. Finally, developing congruence "occurs when an individual's behavior becomes consistent with the values and beliefs they hold"

(Chickering & Reisser, p. 51). Chickering and Reisser (1993) believed that postsecondary students began to move away from dogmatic beliefs that they may have grown up with and tended to develop their own set of values at this stage. In essence, developing integrity surrounds students' recognition that their values and beliefs have implications in their actions (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010).

Kohlberg's (1969) Theory of Cognitive Moral Development, identifies six separate linear stages which are divided into three levels that an individual experiences from childhood to adulthood (Table 1).

Table 1

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Levels	Stages
Pre-conventional Morality	Stage 1: Punishment-Obedience Orientation Stage 2: Instrumental Relativist Orientation
Conventional Morality	Stage 3: Good Boy-Nice Girl Orientation Stage 4: Law and Order Orientation
Post-Conventional Morality	Stage 5: Social Contract Orientation Stage 6: Universal Ethical Principle Orientation

Being a linear progression, Kohlberg argued that an individual's moral development progresses from the pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional levels in a sequential format (Kohlberg, 1976). Kohlberg also suggested that the movement through these levels depends on an individual's experiences with conflicts or dilemmas. Although it could be deduced that the progression through the levels and stages coincide with age, this only holds true to a certain extent. Individuals who attained stage five or six often experienced moral dilemmas that provided the impetus for higher moral courage (Hannah, Avolio, & May, 2011). Kohlberg

(1981) asserted that “an action is not moral unless it is generated by both moral reasoning and motives” (p. 36). He believed that individual moral actions were a function of group norms (Kohlberg, 1981). Therefore, Kohlberg’s theory of moral development anchors this study in exploring how student athletes develop or impede their moral capacities when confronted with dilemmas on or off the field.

James Rest (1979) developed his conceptual framework (Table 2) by extrapolating Kohlberg’s theoretical framework.

Table 2

The Four Component Model of Morality

Components	Behaviors
Moral Sensitivity	Able to interpret particular situation in terms of what actions were possible, who (including oneself) would be affected by each course of action
Moral Judgment	Able to make judgment about which course of action was morally right (or fair or just morally good)
Moral Motivation	Gives priority to moral values above other personal values such that a decision is made to intend to do what is morally right.
Moral Courage/Character	Has sufficient perseverance, ego strength, and implementation skills to be able to follow through on his/her intention to behave morally, to withstand fatigue and flagging will, to overcome obstacles.

Adapted from Rest (1986)

Rest posited that morality was an intertwined process of four components that worked concurrently and not in a linear manner. Moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation and moral courage made up the Four Component Model of Morality (Rest, 1986). Rest firmly

believed that “behavior is determined by numerous complex factors, and that moral reasoning and judgment only play a small role in explaining moral behavior” (as cited in Doty, 2006, p. 5). Based on this model, Rest affirmed that an individual ought to have the skills to understand with clarity of the problem and its consequences before establishing justifications for a decision involving an ethical dilemma (Klinker & Hackman, 2003). The basic assumption is that the “underlying psychological processes of moral behavior are distinct from each other, although they might interact and influence one another” (Myyry, 2003). He further clarified that the order of the components in the model were logical rather than chronological (Rest, 1986).

The Defining Issues Test (DIT), an instrument designed by Rest (1979) to activate moral schemas and to assess moral judgment, has been used and cited in over 400 published articles (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999). In the present study, the DIT 2 will be used befittingly to guide the researcher when composing the interview questions. The DIT 2 is based on the Four Component Model. The primary goal of the four component model was to have a theory and methodology for studying morality of everyday life, not only reasoning hypothetical dilemmas (Myyry, 2003). These theoretical frameworks will serve as a guide to this study which attempts to comprehend and highlight the consistent moral dilemmas faced by student athletes.

Significance of the Study

In the midst of research and news that have primarily focused on the negative aspects of moral and ethical decision-making in sports (Koss & Gaines, 1993), results from this study seek to amplify and preserve the unique voice and perspective of the student athlete relative to moral courage. Furthermore, administrators and academicians, at both the grassroots and national levels, can gain insight in understanding how to create, embrace, embed and live by a code of

conduct that provides the foundation for an exemplary ethical organization. The moral compass of an institution is determined by the moral courage of its students.

This present study can potentially shed light on the need for a structured ethics course to be part of a student athlete's academic curriculum. In some academic fields, especially in a liberal arts education, there are opportunities for students to enroll in ethics courses. Such ethics course may provide the theoretical and intellectual environment required for student athletes to engage in ethical discourse.

This study also seeks to collect rich and colorful qualitative data by preserving the authentic voices of the student athletes. The uses of portraiture as a research methodology will complement and further enhance the existing quantitative research that is mostly limited to Division I and Division II institutions.

Finally, this study will add to the literature on a national level with respect to the 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965, which mandate that colleges and universities affirm that the development of character is one of the primary goals of higher education.

Definition of Terms

1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965. The 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965, Title VIII, Part K. Sec. 863(b) states that Congress should support and encourage character building initiatives in schools across America and urge colleges and universities to affirm that the development of character is one of the primary goals of higher education.

Code of conduct. A set of conventional principles, values and expectations that are considered binding on any person who is a member of a particular group. In this study, the athletic code of ethics is an amalgamation of the institutional mission statement and the NCAA core values.

DIT. James Rest developed the Defining Issues Test (DIT) in 1979 as an assessment of how adolescents and adults come to understand and interpret moral issues.

DIT 2. The Defining Issues Test 2 (DIT 2), an updated version of the DIT boasts brevity, clarity and greater validity and was developed by James Rest in 1999. It features five sets of dilemmas where each dilemma is followed by twelve issue statements that need to be ranked according to importance. In the present study, the DIT 2 will be used befittingly to guide the researcher when composing the interview questions.

Division III. Colleges and universities determine the level at which they will compete, and new members must petition to join the division they choose. Once division affiliation is determined, members must comply with rules (personnel, amateurism, recruiting, eligibility, benefits, financial aid, and playing and practice seasons) that vary from division to division. The division structure enables each NCAA member institution to choose the level of competition that best fits its mission. The NCAA does not assign membership classification. Division III programs may sponsor one men's and one women's program at the Division I level but cannot offer athletically related financial aid in those sports (NCAA, Mar 19, 2010)

Four Component Model. Component 1 refers to moral sensitivity, component 2 to moral judgment, component 3 to moral motivation and component 4 to moral courage. These components are not traits or characteristics but rather relational processes that are logical not chronological.

Hahm-Beller Values Choice Inventory (HBVCI). Designed by Hahm and Beller to evaluate moral reasoning in sports where participants read twenty-one short common sport scenarios and evaluate each situation based on a five point Likert Scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly

Disagree. The HBVCI is the only inventory specifically focused on sport and developed using moral theory as a guide.

Midwestern University. A pseudonym used to refer to the institution selected for this study.

Moral courage. In this present study, moral courage shall be defined as an individual's ability to "explore a course of action based on one's ethical values, and follow through with a decision as to the right course of action regardless of the possible consequences" (Murray, 2010) when faced with an ethical dilemma.

NCAA. National Collegiate Athletic Association founded in 1906.

Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002. The Enron scandal led to this act which mandated that board of directors must have a set of ethical codes and also corporations must institutionalize ethics in a variety of ways.

Limitations

First, while equal gender representation were maintained, it was difficult to ensure that all sports programs will be represented due to the small sample size. Thus, viable students who might have been potentially valuable voices in the study would be eliminated by virtue of the process of random selection. Second, participants may believe that the responses that they may provide are what the researcher wants to hear and not what is honest and true. Here, the researcher must establish trust early through informal interaction, consent and confidentiality. Finally, findings from this study will not be used to extrapolate overarching generalizations due to the nature of the research design and the small sample size.

Delimitations

Since this study took into account student athletes from a particular institution, there were invariably certain delimitations that are salient. First, the choice of the institution and the small

convenient sample narrowed the scope of the research. Second, the selected theoretical frameworks may lend themselves to creating boundaries on the type of data that is collected.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature. It is divided into three major sections focusing on intercollegiate athletics and the student athlete, codes of conduct, and moral development. The first section of this chapter will describe the history of intercollegiate athletics and the National Collegiate Athletic Association as well as the student athlete. The next section of this chapter will explore literature related to codes of conduct in the corporate and not-for-profit arenas, especially intercollegiate athletics. The third section will highlight Chickering's (1969) Theory of Identity Development as an underlying student development model and the two key theories of moral development. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an exploration of current literature on the moral development, including moral courage, of student athletes in the field of higher education so as to identify the need for research on the role that an athletic code of conduct has on shaping the moral courage of student athletes.

History of Intercollegiate Athletics

Sport has always been an essential part of our civilization. College sports has provided an opportunity for teaching people about character, motivation, endurance, loyalty, and the attainment of one's personal best – all qualities of great value in citizens (Duderstadt, 2000). Duderstadt (2000) articulated that games allowed athletes to test and develop their own ability in competitions with one another. According to Chu (1989), intercollegiate sport has the ability to extract the “potential for greatness, for lifting spirit, for heart” (p. 182).

Rowing and baseball were among the very first intercollegiate sports where competition existed between different colleges (Grant, Leadley & Zygmunt, 2008). In the late 1800s, intramural and intercollegiate sports were organized by students and were independent of colleges. The students “set the rules and arranged for contests with other schools and this approach persisted at most colleges until the early 1900s” (Grant et al., p. 7). The first baseball

game was between student intramural clubs from Minnesota State School of Agriculture and Hamline College.

College football was first introduced as an intercollegiate sport in 1869 where the first competitive game was played between Princeton and Rutgers. Although colleges were slow in adopting this new sport, which was a combination of rugby and soccer in the early years, ongoing changes such as scrimmages, play strategies and first-down rules marked the spread of football to about 250 colleges by the beginning of the twentieth century (A Brief History of College Football, n.d.). The early years of football were plagued with serious injuries and brutality because of the “absence of adequate protective padding and what seems to have been the individually optional use of insubstantial helmets” (Crowley, 2006, p. 3). Rules such as the number of officials increased from one to three governing the sport were changed to decrease the rate of injury and death on the field.

The death of 18 students and 143 seriously injured coupled with and another young man dying during the 1905 football game between Union College and New York University (NYU), provoked Henry MacCracken, the Chancellor of NYU to put an end to the brutality (Grant, Leadley, & Zygmunt, 2008). Representatives from 30 other universities were invited to reform or end the sport and the decision from the initial thirteen delegates was to form a rules committee. Simultaneously in 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt became so concerned that he called upon the leaders of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton to take the lead in restoring ethical conduct (Duderstadt, 2000). In 1906, both of these initiatives led to the “formation of the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS), which later transformed itself into the National Collegiate Athletic Association in 1910” (Grant et al., p. 19).

National Collegiate Athletic Association

Competitive intercollegiate sports were not introduced to universities and colleges until the nineteenth century where the first popular sport was boat racing. In the late 1880s, football became the most popular and lucrative sport. It also became more aggressive with serious injuries and fatalities (Watt & Moore III, 2002). The NCAA was formed out of this need to protect and regulate. In 1907, at the Third Annual Convention, Professor Clarence Waldo of Washington University (Missouri) asserted that the NCAA's executive committee's task was to "promote among the students honesty, chivalry, genial good fellowship and the fine manners of the ideal gentleman" (Crowley, 2006, p. 17). The notion of amateurism gained momentum when the 1911 Convention decided that intercollegiate athletics should be organized and controlled as an educational force for the whole student body and not just the talented. Play was "nature's method of education", and accordingly, colleges had to ensure that every student had a "full, normal play life" (Crowley, p. 19). The primary purpose as implied in the NCAA's original constitution was to develop character within student athletes.

Although the initial coordinated efforts in 1906 saw a membership of six universities, there were 97 member institutions by 1912. As membership increased, the drift between skeptics and advocates of intercollegiate athletics grew. Crowley (2006) describes Professor Robert Corwin of Yale, as one of the critics, who lamented that intercollegiate football and athletics was "an insidious malady which threatens the well-being of the body scholastic" (p. 22). At the 1916 NCAA Convention, Professor George Johnson of Harvard defended intercollegiate athletics as "an expression of loyalty, an endeavor to maintain and exalt the dignity and honor of the college" and as a program brings "prestige to alma mater" (Crowley, p. 22). Whether compelled by proponents or the opponents of intercollegiate athletics, a code of ethics was adopted in 1916

by the Football Rules Committee. This initial code of ethics defined the role of an amateur athlete as one who participated in sports only for pleasure and the physical, mental, moral, and social benefits directly derived from such participation (Lazaroff, 2007).

Football became a popular national sport in the early 1920s and the press and film industry seized this popularity to create the myth of the football hero and beloved coach (Duderstadt, 2000). At the same time, faculty within the academy, were fearful that the ideals of academia were destined to be marred by corruption and scandals. In 1926 the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching was commissioned to study the status of American College Athletics. After three years, the study based on visits to 105 American campuses, 18 secondary schools and some Canadian schools found that “commercialism and a negligent attitude toward the educational opportunity for which a college exists” (Crowley, 2006, p. 26) and that commercialization of college football was impacting academic institutions by “demoralizing and corrupting the system” (Duderstadt, 2000, p. 72).

The 1930s were plagued by an increase in gambling scandals as the press gave extended coverage to athletic conferences. Once again the NCAA convened in 1948 and adopted the “Principles for the Conduct of Intercollegiate Athletics” also known as the “Sanity Codes”, which were created to bring order and sanity back to college sports (Zimbalist, 1999). The Sanity Codes restricted financial aid to student-athletes by requiring them to comply with the same rules as other students. These codes acted as a compliance mechanism and violations resulted in institutions losing their NCAA memberships. Zimbalist (1999) explains that:

The 1940s Sanity Code marks the beginning of the NCAA behaving as an effective cartel. In this instance, colleges are colluding to set rules that limit the price they have to

pay for their inputs (mainly the “student-athletes”), something that colleges could not do if they openly competed with each other for the best athletes. (p. 10)

Although the Sanity Codes died a premature death within two years of conception, they laid the foundation for the NCAA to have greater oversight on member institutions. In 1952, the NCAA first established athletic conferences’ code of conduct as a response to the inappropriate behaviors above-mentioned. This approved new code was used to provide standardized guidelines for expected behaviors of the athletic constituents such as:

Limits on practice seasons and numbers of games; postseason competition; curriculum matters and academic progress; financial assistance; eligibility; and adherence to the rules, among others. Included was a call to member institutions, echoing down the corridors of decades past, to ‘enlist the support of true lovers of wholesome athletics...to reduce undesirable recruiting’. (Crowley, 2006, p. 36)

The NCAA continued to make marked decisions on creating reforms and rules regarding student athletes during the 1970s and 1980s. Several landmark policies at this time addressed the “persistent concerns about the role of intercollegiate athletics in postsecondary education and the conflicting demands faced by student athletes” (Watt & Moore III, 2002, p. 9). June 23, 1972 marked another extraordinary milestone in athletics when President Richard Nixon signed Title IX into law as part of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX proclaimed that no one, on the basis of sex, should be excluded from participating, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (About the NCAA, 2012). Although the original law did not mention sports or athletes, it secured the entry into athletics for women. Prior to this new law, the “primary physical activities for girls were cheerleading and square-dancing” (“Before Title IX”, n.d.), Title IX enabled girls and

women to participate and benefit from being a part of a fraternity that was exclusively for men. In 1991, the NCAA decreed another landmark decision in the attempts to create opportunities for student athletes to be more integrated into the general student body. The mandate required that student athletes made up no more than 49 percent of a residence hall population. According to Leach and Conners (1984), student athletes reported feeling isolated from the rest of the student population.

At present, according to NCAA regulations, universities and colleges are categorized into three divisions based on their school size and athletic program offerings. According to the NCAA website, there are 1,066 active member schools – 340 in Division I, 290 in Division II and 436 in Division III. Each division has its own rules governing personnel, amateurism, recruiting, eligibility, benefits, financial aid, and playing and practice seasons – consistent with the overall governing principles of the Association. Every program affiliates its core program with one of the three divisions (About the NCAA, 2012). Today, much of the NCAA’s moral authority – indeed much of the justification for its existence – is vested in its claim to protect what it calls the “student athlete” (Branch, 2011). Its current mission “...is to govern competition in a fair, equitable, and sportsmanlike manner, and to integrate intercollegiate athletics into higher education so that the educational experience of the student athlete is paramount” and one of its core values is a commitment to “the highest levels of integrity and sportsmanship” (NCAA, 2011).

The Student Athlete

The NCAA promises that student athletes will have the “opportunity to discover valuable lessons in teamwork, discipline, perseverance and leadership, which in turn make student athletes better students and responsible citizens” (“What Division III Has To Offer,” para. 7). For

fifty years, the NCAA has used the term “student athlete” to describe the young men and women who are athletes at its member schools (Byers & Hammer, 1995). The term “student athlete” was coined by the NCAA as an attempt to avoid having to pay workman’s compensation to injured players. In the 1950s, a football player, Ray Dennison, died from a head injury while playing football for the Fort Lewis A&M Aggies. His widow filed for workmen’s-compensation death benefits. The Colorado Supreme Court’s decision was that he was not eligible for benefits but more importantly, it stated that the college was “not in the football business” (Branch, 2011). Walter Byers, director of the NCAA, decreed that all future NCAA publications would refer to the college athlete as “student athlete” (Duderstadt, 2000). Although the term “student athlete” conjures images of amateurism, it has been left ambiguous. According to Branch (2011):

College players were not students at play (which might understate their athletic obligations), nor were they just athletes in college (which might imply they were professionals). That they were high-performance athletes meant they could be forgiven for not meeting the academic standards of their peers; that they were students meant they did not have to be compensated, ever, for anything more than the cost of their studies.
(n.p.)

Unlike non-athletes, student athletes are constantly balancing their commitments of participating in the daily student routine while also fulfilling the “obligations to the coach, the team, and the rules and regulations of the NCAA” (Watt and Moore III, p. 1). This includes the challenges of achieving academic success and also meeting the obligations to the coach, the team and abiding by the rules of the NCAA. The academic philosophy as prescribed by the NCAA is as follows:

A commitment to academics and student-athlete success in the classroom is a vital part of the NCAA's mission to integrate athletics into the fabric of higher education. The NCAA pledges to help student-athletes achieve their academic goals as well as their athletics goals...Student athletes are integrated on campus and treated like all other members of the general student-body, keeping them focused on being a student first. (About the NCAA, 2012)

Division III athletics aims at providing a holistic collegiate experience that includes “rigorous academics, competitive athletics, and an opportunity to pursue a multitude of other co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities” (“What Division III Has To Offer,” 2011). The 2011-2012 Guide for the College-Bound Student athlete describes Division III colleges and universities as institutions that:

Develop student-athlete potential through a holistic educational approach that includes rigorous academics, competitive athletics and opportunity to pursue many interests and passions. Student-athletes are responsible for their own paths and are provided with many opportunities to develop within a comprehensive educational experience. Division III minimizes the conflicts between athletics and academics through shorter playing and practicing seasons, a lower number of contests, no redshirting or out-of-season organized activities, and a focus on regional in-season and conference play. (p. 7)

According to Walt and Moore (2002), most Division II and III institutions pride themselves on their ability to integrate the student athlete, and athletics in general, into the college environment. In comparison, Division I student athletes are less likely to be fully integrated into the “traditional college experiences because of the demands of athletic participation, including high benefits and costs of win-loss records, and of media attention and

scrutiny” (Walt & Moore III, 2002, p. 12). Division III student athletes are characterized as exceptional students who understand that the most important reason for college is to earn a degree. These students are great athletes “who are capable of playing at Division II and possibly Division I schools but would rather play the sport than be benched” (Lunt, n.d.). They are recruited from high school for their skills and these student athletes understand that early morning practices, rigorous academic demands, competitions, meetings and late night conditioning are part and parcel of being a Division III student athlete.

According to the NCAA, Division III student athletes are allowed to be involved in athletics for 20 hours per week and that such a student athlete is student first and then athlete. With an absence of scholarships and monetary incentives, student athletes in Division III are truly involved due to their own volition and sincere commitment to be a part of the team. Two ambitious and comprehensive studies were conducted in 1994 and 2007 by the NCAA on student-athlete experiences surveyed more than 8,000 former student athletes who entered college in 1994 and the other surveyed more than 20,000 current student athletes. Results showed that although student athletes seemed to be as engaged academically as their non-athlete counterparts, student athletes also committed extraordinary amounts of time to their athletic pursuits.

Student athletes are hardworking people who go into a program with an outcome in mind and who get organized and see their participation in athletics as a chance to be successful in something they want to do. They are involved in not only athletics but also in other extra-curricular activities such as clubs and student organizations. They strongly believe in taking “advantage of the many opportunities available to them, both within and beyond athletics, so that they may develop their full potential as students, athletes, and citizens” (Being a Division III

Student-Athletes, n.d.). A Division III student athlete is “truly exceptional in both parts of the endeavor – as a student and an athlete” according to Justin Lunt, the head men’s basketball coach at the University of Puget Sound (What it means to be a Division III athlete, n.d.).

Watt and Moore III (2002) described student athletes as individuals who not only face challenges that other students face but also other challenges that add “an unexpected complex layer to student life” (p. 1). Stoll and Beller (2000) portrayed the student athlete as an actor whose role was not only that of a team player and a star but also a character agent – one who displayed virtues such as courage, perseverance, loyalty and self-sacrifice. Student athletes are perceived as moral agents despite being in highly volatile situations on the field where they are constantly bombarded with the varied components of play: the risk, the trials, the thrill of necessity, the need for strategy, defeat, victory, and pain (Early, 1998). As a result, they have also been accused of engaging in unethical behaviors repeatedly, such as violence, the use of prohibited drugs, assaults, intentional injury of opponents, violation of rules and abusive language (Kavussanu, Seal & Phillips, 2006).

Wang, Chia & Chang (2013) proclaimed that such unethical behaviors have “violated the essence of sport, sport ethics and sportsmanship and turned ‘fair competition’ into a mere slogan” (p. 2361). The occurrences of such behaviors led to increased pressure on administrators to encourage positive ethical behavior. The establishment of codes of conduct by intercollegiate conferences became a desirable outcome of this greater concern about moral and ethical misconduct (Jordan, Greenwell, Geist, Pastore & Mahony, 2004).

Codes of Conduct and the Organization

Codes of conduct, sometimes referred to as codes of ethics, have a strong foothold in the business arena. According to White and Montgomery (1980), corporate misconduct in businesses

such as illegal and questionable payments at home and abroad and falsification of corporate books and records brought to the foreground unethical practices in business. Examples of unethical activity within large corporations such as Enron and WorldCom have plagued the news and the stock markets and such reports have damaged the confidence in our corporations and shattered our faith in our leaders (Desplaces, Melchar, Beauvais, & Bosco, 2007; Tenbrunsel, Smith-Crowe, & Umphress, 2003). In light of these events in the business world, most organizations began to establish “ethical structures that included codes of conduct, value-based mission statements, ethical ombudsmen, and ethical training as strategies to reinforce ethical principles” (Tenbrunsel et al., p. 286).

The Sarbanes-Oxley Act, also known as the Public Company Accounting Reform and Investor Protection Act, named for its sponsors, Senator Paul S. Sarbanes of Maryland and Representative Michael Oxley of Ohio, was a response to Enron’s filing for bankruptcy in 2001. The key purpose of this act was to keep investors protected from corporate accounting fraud. Initially codes of conduct were drawn up as reactionary efforts against unethical behaviors that would negatively affect an organization’s profits. White and Montgomery (1980) suggest that complying with federal laws and avoiding conflicts of interest were common themes as well. Early analytical studies conducted on the content of such codes revealed that emphasis was placed on avoiding illegal activities and employee misconduct rather than motivating employees to embrace and create an environment or organizational culture of trust, integrity and responsibility. Snell and Herndon (2000) agree that early codes of conduct acted as a self-defense mechanism for large corporations.

Codes as Ethical Infrastructures

Codes of conduct are documents ranging in length from one paragraph to more than fifty pages, which “state the major philosophical principles and articulate the values embraced by an organization” (Stevens, 2009, p. 14). They typically contain open guidelines describing the desirable behavior and restrictive language prohibiting other behaviors such as bribery and conflicts of interest (Nijhof, Cludts, Fisher, & Laan, 2003). Codes can be used as strategic documents or as superficial “window dressing” in an organization. Norms, values, guiding principles and organizational culture are established. Stevens (2009) posits that codes of conduct are visionary and transformational as they often provide guidance in difficult circumstances. Such codes are adhered to as a form of respect and commitment an organization can establish to “ensure a strong ethical climate” (Stevens, p. 14). Organizational leadership and its constituents readily embrace, create and maintain successful ethical organizations when codes are embedded in the tapestry of an organization.

Corporations have been establishing codes of conduct throughout this century, so the concept is not a new one (Baumhart, 1968). However, the topic has received more attention since the 1970s. Increased organizational governance and accountability appear to be a national trend (Rezaee, Elmore & Szendi, 2001). Although it is suggested that an important role for codes of conduct is to influence decision making, there is little research into the impact of codes of conduct on decisions (Lere & Gaumnitz, 2003). Organizations, personal beliefs, and the ethical dilemmas of society as a whole have an impact upon the effectiveness of any code of conduct (Molander, 1987). Codes of conduct act as surrogate indicators of management’s commitment to ethical behavior (Desplaces, Melchar, Beauvais, & Bosco, 2007).

There is a growing belief that organizations are social actors responsible for the ethical and unethical behaviors of their employees (Victor & Cullen, 1988; Weaver, 2006). The sheer ability of ethical codes to influence behavior directly or indirectly is an interesting phenomenon. It is difficult to establish if the rise in moral and ethical behaviors in an organization is the result of a sound set of codes of conduct. In several noteworthy cases, the impact of a code has been dramatic:

For instance, in the late 1990s, Lockheed Martin's ethics program prompted a virtual 180-degree turnaround in employee behavior and attitudes over a four-year period.

Johnson & Johnson credits its Credo with helping it preserve its reputation and regain public trust after the Tylenol crises of the mid-1980s. During that period, "company managers and employees made countless decisions that were inspired by the philosophy embodied in the *Credo*. (www.ethics.org/LRNImpactofcodesofconduct.pdf)

In most organizations, the effects of having an inspiring code of conduct are subtle although equally meaningful. The results are often conflicting or difficult to ascertain as illustrated by the following research.

A study conducted by Schwartz (2001) examined the relationship between corporate codes and behavior. Fifty-seven employees, including managers, employees and ethical officers, were interviewed from four large Canadian corporations. Results from this study showed that few participants could give examples of situations in which they behaved differently because of a code of conduct. Participants knew what was right and wrong behavior without the code, felt that the code was logical and reflected common sense and most participants believed that they had never faced an ethical dilemma. Schwartz (2001) found that it is only on rare occasions that codes directly influence behavior. Often behavior is displayed positively based on common sense

and the established norms. These studies suggest that codes of conduct apparently do not have a major observable impact on decisions made and many respondents do not believe that they do.

However, other studies have shown that “formal codes of conduct, for example, have been argued by some to produce positive outcomes namely a reduction in unethical behavior (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 1996, as cited in Tenbrunsel, Smith-Crowe, & Umphress, 2003). According to Tenbrunsel et al. (2003), ethical infrastructures consist of “formal and informal systems—each including communication, surveillance, and sanctioning components—as well as the climates that support these systems” (p. 287). Weaver (1993) suggests that although codes of conduct vary in content, they commonly contain a summary of purpose, authority of the code, organizational philosophy and expectations of the members of the organization. For instance, codes of conduct help articulate organizations’ values, build members’ confidence and trust in their organizations. In order to create an ethical climate, the onus is on the organization to prioritize strategies and policies, such as codes of conduct, which often are classified as “formal communication systems that officially communicate ethical values and principles” (Tenbrunsel et al., p. 288).

A 1998 study was conducted by Cleek and Leonard to find out if there was an impact of codes of conduct on decisions made by graduate and undergraduate students. No statistically significant difference was found in the action that the participants chose to take when one group was told that the company had a code of conduct while the other group was given a specific ethical statement from the code.

One thousand financial administrators of colleges and universities were randomly selected to participate in a study to determine the extent to which codes of conduct were used in the institutions and to examine if these codes were followed in a 2001 study conducted by

Rezaee, Elmore and Szendi. They found that a majority of the participants favored a code of conduct. Faculty and students were not involved in the development of the code of conduct. Copies of the code were distributed to all members of the institutions although half of the participants indicated that there was no consensus or vested interest in the preparation of these codes. Clearly, the effectiveness of such codes is dependent on how they are implemented and embraced as part of the inherent culture of an organization.

In a 2007 mixed-methods study, Desplaces, Melchar, Beauvais, and Bosco (2007) attempted to explore the relationship between the presence of strong codes of conduct and student perceptions regarding the ethical climate of the institution. This study aimed to prove that “codes of conduct and a strong ethical climate could promote an atmosphere conducive to student moral development” (p. 77). One of the primary assumptions of this study was that moral action occurred in a social context and therefore situational variables played an important role in shaping moral behaviors. 821 undergraduates and 78 graduate students from three institutions participated. Researchers found no significant differences among students in their assessment of the respective institution’s ethical climate based on the strength of each institution’s code of conduct. Students from two institutions believed that their codes of conduct were significantly stronger than the third institution. This resulted in the perception that their institutions had an ethical culture. Deplaces et al. suggested that “establishing a strong code of conduct and reinforcing it through active practices provided the foundation for a strong ethical culture within an institution” (p. 84).

Molander (1987) suggests that codes are followed for two reasons: the individual subjects himself to ethical standards above and beyond his personal beliefs, or they feel there are provisions for enforcement of such standards. Codes of conduct do not always provide the power

or process for enforcement (Rezaee, Elmore & Szendi, 2001). They must be instituted within the policies of the organization in order to be effective. Otherwise, codes of conduct may be “perceived at best as irrelevant and at worst as hypocritical guides for decision-making and action” (Desplaces, Melchar, Beauvais, & Bosco, 2007, p. 84).

Codes of Conduct in Intercollegiate Athletics

Clark and Batista (2009) asserted that issues of unethical behavior are concerns not only for academic endeavors in higher education, but also for NCAA athletics departments. Very similar to the corporate world, intercollegiate athletics has had a tradition of negligent behaviors and “lapses in judgment by student athletes with regard to questionable conduct in a variety of areas such as hazing, sexual impropriety, gambling, sportsmanship and improper contact with agents” (Crawford, Greenwell, & Sherrick, 2008, p. 1). This rampant culture of deceit, fraud, misconduct and negligence are key indicators of a situation described by Wong (2002) as an ethical deficit. Harrison-Dyer (2011) highlighted that increases in such unethical behavior in intercollegiate athletics and a wide range of ethical dilemmas provided the model framework for the development of a code of conduct that is designed to identify appropriate behaviors expected of administrators, coaches, student-athletes, and others. Constant and consistent referral to a code of conduct allows for it to be incorporated into the culture of the organization so that the code plays a crucial role in deliberations and decision-making. Organizations with an ethical culture consider all ramifications when making decisions instead of only considering the bottom line.

A 2001 study was conducted by Greenwell, Geist, Mahony, Jordan, and Pastore to get a better understanding of the codes of conduct used by intercollegiate athletic conferences in all three NCAA divisions. One of the key goals of the study was to identify what standards and ideals were incorporated into these codes and for which groups they were written. Results from

the study highlighted several emergent themes: ideals of sportsmanship, integrity, healthy environment and compliance with conference rules were reflected in most codes of conduct. Greenwell et al. (2001) also found that these key ideals were imperative consideration areas to be included in an athletic code of conduct. More than half of the codes depicted policies and procedures as well as penalties for violating standards. Codes of conduct examined in this study were primarily written for coaches, administrators and student athletes. In contrast, Greenwell et al. (2001) also found inconsistencies which revealed codes of conduct that mimicked policies and procedures rather than documents that were open for interpretation under various circumstances. In addition, “many of the codes attempted to address too many groups resulting in unclear and ambiguous standards” (Greenwell et al., 2004, p. 126). Nonetheless, Greenwell et al. (2001) concluded that codes of conduct were created to provide guidelines for ethical decision-making by many athletic organizations.

In a 2004 study conducted by Greenwell, Grube, Jordan, and Mahony, student athletes from one NCAA Division I conference were surveyed to find out the extent to which they understood and perceived the implementation of the NCAA code of conduct. A cluster sampling method was used to survey 336 student athletes from public and private institutions with or without a football program. The survey administered ensured that questions posed represented the themes found in codes of ethics and items were worded utilizing language from actual codes (Greenwell et al., 2004). Student athletes’ perceptions of athletic codes of conduct were measured by asking them to rate the importance of each ideal by ranking each statement on a 7-point Likert scale. Identified ideals from the codes were promotion of values, professional conduct of coaches, sportsmanship, healthy environment, welfare of student athletes, compliance with conference rules and equitable treatment. Findings showed that these student athletes scored

the highest means on promotion of values followed by professional conduct of coaches, sportsmanship, healthy environment, welfare of student athletes, and the lowest scores in compliance with conference rules and equitable treatment. One of the strongest findings from this study was that student athletes expressed overwhelmingly that they were more responsible for conduct than their coaches were (Greenwell et al., p. 131). It was also discovered that although student athletes felt strongly about the efficacy of codes of conduct, very few had actually read their conference's code of conduct (Greenwell et al., p. 130). While there is a growing body of research on ethical behavior in sport (Hums, Barr, & Gullion, 1999; Volkwein, 1995) a void of information has existed on codes of conduct used by intercollegiate sport organizations (Greenwell, Grube, Jordan, & Mahony, 2004).

Moral Development

King and Mayhew (2004) have asserted that college mission statements must continue to include a moral dimension such as preparation for citizenship, civic engagement, character development, moral leadership, service to society and responsible participation in a diverse democracy. Kohlberg (1969) and Rest (1979) have argued that it is critical that educators assist students in achieving the highest stage of moral development possible by exposing them to ethical principles and practices in the institutional environment. In the 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965, Congress voted to “support and encourage character building...and urge colleges and universities to affirm the development of character as one of the primary goals of higher education” (Higher Education Act, 1998, p. 246).

In this present study, theoretical concepts from Chickering (1969), Kohlberg (1969) and Rest (1979) will be used as a guide to explore the connection between sports and moral courage. All three theories possess fundamental principles to explore how college students develop

morally. Over the past decade, Chickering's (1969) Theory of Identity Development has been used widely in understanding how college affects student athletes, responding to the needs of student athletes and the influence of student engagement and sports participation on college outcomes (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2002; Gayles & Hu, 2009; Valentine & Taub, 1999).

While Kohlberg's (1969) moral development theory has been described as one of the fundamental frameworks for decision making (Hartung, 2001), Rest's (1979) cognitive moral development theory has been used extensively in understanding the connection between moral development and sports (Shields & Bredemeier, 2001; Wilhelm, 2008).

Chickering's Psychosocial Model of Student Development

"Traditional university-age students are seen as not 'self-authorized' because of the particular stage in their intellectual and moral development" (Roberts & Hai-Jew, 2009, p. 184). It is in college that students venture into an environment where they experience situations which assist them in learning what it means to be a good person and a good citizen. Enhancing the development of students has been a primary role of student affairs practitioners (Torres, Jones & Renn, 2009). Identity development theories provide insight as to how students discover their "abilities, aptitude and objectives" (American Council on Education, 1937, p. 69). Within student affairs, identity is defined as "one's personally held beliefs in relation to other social groups" such as race, religion, sexual orientation and the "ways in which one expresses that relationship" (Torres, Jones & Renn, p. 577).

The Psychosocial Model of Student Development developed by Arthur Chickering is one of the most widely used models in the field of student development theories. Chickering (1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993) viewed the central developmental task of the college years to be identity establishment of traditional aged college students (Table 3).

Table 3

Chickering's Psychosocial Model of Student Development

Vector	Components	Focus
Developing Competence	Intelligence, physical and manual and interpersonal	Skill development, accomplish physical and manual tasks effectively and successfully work in group settings
Managing Emotions	Recognizing emotions and impulses and the ability to integrate, express and control	Aggression and sexuality; anxiety, depression, fear, and other positive emotions
Moving through autonomy toward interdependence	Emotional, instrumental and interdependence	Freedom from excessive need for approval; ability to cope with problems without seeking help
Developing mature interpersonal relationships	Increased tolerance, shift in quality of intimate relationships	Relationships have more trust, stability; openness to and respect and appreciation for a diversity of "backgrounds, habits, values and appearance" (Chickering, p. 94);
Establishing identity	Self-exploration and personal growth	Comfort with appearance, gender and sexual orientation, sense of self in relation to one's social and cultural context, self-acceptance and self-esteem, and personal stability and integration
Developing purpose	Developing life plans,	Vocation plans and aspirations, personal and interpersonal interests
Developing integrity	Humanizing values, personalizing values and developing congruence between values and behavior	Shift from a literal belief in the absoluteness of rules to a more relative view

(Modified from Valentine & Taub, 1999)

The process is broken down into seven vectors of development to provide “greater specificity and concreteness” (Chickering, p. x). These seven vectors are as follows: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. The first five vectors are primarily focused during the first two years of college while the last two vectors during the last two years of college (Valentine & Taub, 1999). Although seemingly linear in progression, Torres, Jones & Renn (2009) argue that identity development is “socially constructed and reconstructed” (p. 582). Disequilibrium, a psychological state of mismatch between individual sense making and perceptions of self in context (environment), or life changes that can initiate dissonance perception of self and attainment of possible selves, is often the catalyst for identity reconstruction (Marcia, 2002; Pizzolato, 2003, 2005). In other words, students can explore and revisit vectors at any time depending on the environmental context.

Valentine and Taub (1999) emphasized the need to understand the person, context, and the interactions between the two. The more practitioners “understand how students make meaning of their identities, the better they are able to assist in promoting student learning and development in higher education institutions” (Valentine & Taub, p. 578). Chickering’s research attempted to help student affairs professionals understand how traditional-aged college students navigated and coped with peer and environmental influences.

Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Development

Moral development is an interdisciplinary field which researches moral common sense and personal knowledge. Kohlberg’s (1969, 1981) moral judgment model is based on the cognitive developmental process postulated by Jean Piaget (1964). It suggests that an individual

progresses through a series of stages in the development of moral reasoning capabilities.

Kohlberg's theory has been used extensively to examine moral reasoning abilities of students and professionals (Jones, Massey, & Thorne, 2003). For over half a century, Kohlberg's theory has stimulated research about morality and moral development (Wygant, 1995; Dawson, 2002).

Kohlberg's (1969) theory focuses on moral reasoning and considers it fundamental for ethical behavior.

Kohlberg's (1981, 1984) pioneering work found that even though a person's actions may seem inconsistent to an observer, there often were consistencies in motive and thought. For instance, one might believe that the concept of helping is central to one's personal values and morality. Therefore, if helping in a situation required an individual to lie but under other circumstances this was against the moral compass of this individual, then this said action might seem inconsistent despite a consistent underlying pattern of reasoning (Bredemeier & Shields, 2006). Kohlberg developed this theory by interviewing young males from middle childhood to early adulthood. He analyzed "their spontaneously generated reasoning responses to hypothetical dilemmas and found that ethical reasoning became more sophisticated over time" (Trevino, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006, p. 955). He developed six-stage sequence of moral reasoning development that focused on how people interacted within a society-wide system of cooperation. Kohlberg's theory of moral development essentially addressed the formal stages of ethical development in the cognitive developmental process. Kohlberg focused on ethics in relation to society (i.e., laws, roles, institutions, and general practices) instead of personal, face-to-face relationships that occur in particular, everyday dealings with people—that is, on macro morality instead of micro morality (Rest et al., 1999).

The details of Kohlberg's stages have been challenged and alternative models, such as Gilligan's research on the moral development of women. Bredemeier and Shields (2006) categorized Kohlberg's lasting legacy into three fundamental contributions:

First, Kohlberg opened psychologists to a new appreciation of stable personal characteristics related to moral or ethical decision making. This paved the way for a new appreciation of character. Second, Kohlberg made clear that the moral life is better understood by taking account of motivations and reasons than by focusing on behavior alone. Cognition is a key component of morality: how a person thinks about their ethical responsibilities is an important part of their character. Finally, Kohlberg found that moral or character growth follows a predictable developmental progression. (p.2)

Kohlberg (1969) defined moral competence as "the capacity to make decisions and judgments which are moral (i.e. based on internal principles) and to act in accordance with such judgments" (p. 425). He believed that morality encompassed more than moral reasoning, it also included moral action (Kohlberg, 1981). According to Kohlberg (1981), moral action is "the process by which, people arrive at moral decisions and take action on the basis of these decisions" (p. 35). Individuals respond differently to ethical issues in accordance with their stage of moral reasoning, and those who are at a higher moral stage are more likely to resist the pressure of conforming to the judgments of others (Kohlberg, 1969). Colby and Kohlberg (1987a) asserted that adult moral development was positively influenced by higher education and was a reflection of the educational experience rather than the intelligence quotient.

It was imperative that Gilligan's (1982) Theory of Women's Moral Development was also discussed briefly here as the present study involved four women athletes. Given that Kohlberg's research was exclusively focused on men, Carol Gilligan's research studied how

women developed their understanding of self and responsibility. As they progressed through the three levels and two transition periods, women move from being self-centered to having a wider responsibility for others. The transition from selfishness to responsibility is followed by doing well where trust is placed in the hands of others so that one is socially accepted. The second transition from goodness to truth lends one to question why others' needs are placed before one's own. The last level shows an individual achieve the morality of nonviolence where there is much respect for self and individual needs, but the individual recognizes responsibility and care for others and selects competing choices (Butler, n.d.).

In the field of higher education, Gilligan's (1982) theory of moral development has influenced the realm of student leadership. Students are taught the benefits of the ethics of care and justice so as to be effective leaders. Emotional quotients of students are heightened with the recognition and application of virtues such as relationships, interdependence, objectivity and inclusion, all of which are critical aspects of being effective moral leaders. In the present study, Gilligan's theory served as an underlying philosophy when the ethics of care and justice were identified as catalysts for morally courageous behavior amongst the women participants.

Rest's Theory of Cognitive Moral Development

Unlike Kohlberg's belief that moral development progresses with age and in a linear mode, James Rest's (1979) theory of cognitive moral development recognizes developmental levels as more akin to schemata than to stages. Wilhelm (2008) explains stages as progressively advanced levels in cognitive development, with each successive stage surpassing and usurping the previous, lower-level stage and thus becoming the predominant mode for cognition. However, schema theory relies on conceptual thinking governed by the circumstances that an individual experiences. Cognitive moral development will "increase the number of available

schemata available for use in solving a dilemma while at the same time increasing the level at which each successive schema is developed, but the newer, more advanced schema doesn't necessarily usurp all previous lower-level schemata" (Wilhelm, p. 4). In contrast, Rest's model recognized that moral development was more web-like where a prior schema could be activated (or triggered or elicited) from long-term memory and be utilized to make a decision (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999).

James Rest developed the Four-Component Model of moral development based on Lawrence Kohlberg's theory "that describes ethical development using a stage model in which more or less complete 'ethical systems' are replaced by ones as individuals mature" (Chambers, 2011, p. 23). Wilhelm (2008) suggests that the basic idea behind the four-component model is that four inner psychological processes together give rise to outwardly observable behavior. The four components in Rest's model are Moral Sensitivity, Moral Reasoning/Judgment, Moral Integrity/Motivation and Moral Courage/Character. Although these labels often vary among individual researchers, this conceptual framework and the Defining Issues Test, which is the instrument created by Rest and his colleagues, have been extensively used in studies pertaining to nursing, dental ethics, higher education, character education, and business ethics (Bredemeier, 1984; Chambers, 2011; Kavussanu & Ntoumanis, 2003; King & Mayhew, 2010; Lachman, 2007; Peer & Schlabach, 2010; Rudd, Mullane, & Stoll, 2010; Shields & Bredemeier, 2001; Wilhelm, 2008).

Component 1: Moral sensitivity. This is the ability to recognize that there is an ethical issue and to be "aware of how our actions affect others" (Chambers, 2011). The subject involved ought to be able to imaginatively construct possible scenarios and determine the consequences of each potential strategy.

Component 2: Moral reasoning/judgment. According to Chambers (2011), this skill is concerned with thinking through recognized moral challenges and determining, which is the preferred course of action. This component of Rest's model is most developed and researched. It has been suggested that "individuals generally move to higher levels of moral reasoning as they mature with development continuing through higher education" (Chambers, p. 24). Although Wilhelm (2008) posits that an ability to engage in moral reasoning does not assure morally correct behavior.

Component 3: Moral integrity/motivation. This component reflects the ability to prioritize moral values over personal values. It involves the individual's commitment and willingness to take the "morally correct course of action, to value moral values over other values, and to take personal responsibility for the moral outcomes of their decision" (Wilhelm, p. 6).

Component 4: Moral courage/character. Bebeau, Rest and Narvaez (1999) describe this component as a possession of character traits that provide oneself the strength to have courage, persistence, implementing skills and ego strength to overcome distractions and obstacles so as to be true to your convictions. Chambers (2011) argues that individuals with high moral courage have developed the skills of effective engagement in the moral life of their profession. Component four "presupposes that an individual has distinct goals; self-discipline and impulse control, and has the strength and skill to act in accordance with one's goals" (Bebeau et al., p. 22).

According to Bebeau et al. (1999), moral behavior will fail if an individual has mastered the first three components but lacks in the fourth component. Rest (1983) clearly states that this is not a linear decision-making model. In fact, Chambers (2011) highlights that issues and

situations could be worked in a step-wise fashion, may depend on one or two components or may involve looping and repeating through the components.

Moral Development and the Student Athlete

Sport is a major part of all societies and cultures (Doty, 2006). Involvement in organized or recreational activities at a young age is almost a global norm and hardly an exception. On college and university campuses throughout the country, “students participate in sports at the intramural, club and intercollegiate level” (Doty, p. 1). The Carnegie Foundation Study of College Athletes in 1929 maintained that college athletics needed to contribute far more than it had to the “development of the individual capacities of young men and women, their appreciation of true values, their powers of decision and choice, their sense of responsibility, and their ability to sustain it once it comes to them”, or it could not “justify the time and effort that are lavished upon them” (French, 2004, p. 52). This study further criticized the coaches for making all the important decision leaving athletes with no opportunities to do their own thinking. French (2004) posited that the question of translatability from the playing field to ordinary life is regularly raised against the generally held belief that virtues habituated in one context will be available to and used by the person in another context.

Chu (1989) proclaimed that intercollegiate sports could serve society the way organized religion once did by simply and efficiently encoding a generally accepted value system. With increased ethnic and religious diversity since the turn of the twentieth century, intercollegiate athletics “has provided a definition of the proper American character widely acceptable to a larger body of the citizenry” (Chu, p. 173). Although Chu (1989) explored and discussed how athletics perpetuates the abuse of power and the desire to win at all costs, he also argued that “the

real rationale or mission for intercollegiate sports is in how they show us not only what we were and what we are but also what we can be” (p. 184).

In a 1999 study conducted by Dunn and Dunn, the results suggested that sport had a detrimental effect upon an athlete’s moral reasoning. According to Stoll and Beller (2000), an athlete’s level of moral reasoning becomes more “masked” the longer a student athlete participates in competitive athletics. “Moral callousness” is a term that Stoll and Beller (2000) introduced to describe the lapses of moral courage that occurred on and off the field. Research involving intercollegiate athletes revealed that student athletes were less mature in their moral reasoning than their non-athlete peers (Bredemeier, 1984; Bredemeier & Shields, 1986b).

Organized and competitive athletics were used by schools to supplement the educational development of youth originated with a group of English school master in the early 1800s (Stoll & Beller, 2000). The notion that involvement in team sports developed both muscles and morals quickly adopted by school administrators in England and soon became popular in U.S. schools and culture (Bredemeier & Shields, 2006). The premise was that participation in physical activity that was competitive in nature made players “better people”. The popular saying “sport builds character” became culturally iconic and often provided the rationale for including sport programs in a wide range of educational institutions (Bredemeier & Shields, 2006, p. 1).

Although this phrase has taken root in many justifications for athletics on college campuses, there are an increasing number of studies that have cited the negative aspects of sports such as aggression, corruption, sport-related cheating, disrespectful behavior, drugs and other inappropriate behaviors (Beller & Stoll, 1995; Beller, Stoll, Burwell, & Cole, 1995; Bredemeier & Shields, 2006; Doty, 2006). The belief that sports develops positive character traits has grown to where the claim is now almost universally accepted by educators, parents, and participants

despite the fact that there is no empirical evidence to support it (Stoll & Beller, 2000). The notion that character building occurs through sports has gained momentum through participant and coaches testimonials rather than proven research. Numerous studies have suggested that sport does not build character (Beller & Stoll, 1992, 1995; Kleiber & Roberts, 1981; Penny & Priest, 1990; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995; Stoll, & Beller, 1998).

Although much of the research with student athletes has been in Division I institutions, two landmark studies were conducted where Division III student athletes were subjects. A 1995 quantitative study examined if there was a difference between the moral reasoning of Division I and Division III student athletes. This study conducted by Stoll, Beller, Cole, and Burwell surveyed 924 non-athletes and 664 student athletes from one Division I school and eight Division III schools. Using the Hahm-Beller Values Choice Inventory in the Sport Milieu survey, results showed that the deficiency in moral reasoning amongst student athletes was attributed to the selfish, rule-bound perception of competition. Interestingly, the results also showed that there was no significant difference in the moral reasoning levels between the two groups of student athletes and that the moral reasoning levels were higher for non-athletes. Unfortunately, this study by Stoll et al. (1995) reiterated the “conclusion of past that, athletics as it is now taught and modeled, in and itself, does not cognitively build moral character” (p. 14).

The second landmark study examined the relationship of competition and a Christian liberal arts education on moral reasoning of college student athletes; that is, whether religious education courses in the basic curriculum could affect moral reasoning about competition of athletes and non-athletes in four small colleges. This 1995 study was conducted by Beller, Stoll, Burwell, and Cole where 175 student athletes and 110 non-athletes were evaluated using the Hahm-Beller Values Choice Inventory to measure moral reasoning in sport. Findings revealed

that team sports athletes scored significantly lower compared to their peer non-athletes. Beller et al. (1995) asserted that it was imperative to re-examine how moral education was inculcated in the curriculum and to understand how morality was being taught and modeled in religiously-affiliated institutions.

A 2001 study by Bredemeier and Shields revealed that moral growth among student athletes was lower than non-athletes. One hundred students, of which 60 were high school and college aged athletes, were interviewed where participants were asked to provide responses to sport-based dilemmas such as Kohlberg's survey. Results from this study confirmed the notion that "when sports becomes highly competitive and central in terms of time and focus in a person's life, the patterns of sport reasoning become habitual and detrimentally effect general moral development" (Bredemeier & Shields, 2001, p. 13). According to Bredemeier and Shields (2001) sport is a unique context sometimes characterized as a "world within a world" where typical concerns and moral restraints of everyday life are temporarily set aside; i.e. bracketed morality (p. 7), a term coined by Bredemeier which means that anything goes in a sporting contest which is often different from real life (Doty, 2006). In light of recent child abuse allegations at Penn State, the spotlight on responsibility, on moral obligation, on ethical values is suddenly shining brightly on millions in the sports industry (Burton & O'Reilly, 2012). This notion of a parallel universe begs to be carefully examined, especially with the onslaught of morally decaying examples over the past year in business and the field of higher education.

Doty (2006) argued that sport does not build character but a sport experience can build character only if the environment is structured and the stated and planned goal is to develop character. Rest and Narvaez (1991) postulated that the impact of collegiate experience on moral judgment development does not seem to be mediated primarily through specific readings or

through the learning of a particular academic content; in fact it happens best interactively when the situation fosters and supports moral development. In an address to the University of Tasmania faculty members by Chief Executive Officer of the Integrity Commission, Barbara Etter spoke about the importance of moral courage in leadership. Etter (2010) shared that:

Education is always an essential tool on opening and challenging the mind and empowering people to do the right thing. In fact, it is said that virtues of thought are developed through education and moral virtues are developed through habit...I urge you, as well-educated individuals, to go out, identify and be aware of situations demanding an ethical response and actually practice moral courage. (n.p.).

Moral Courage

Aristotle said that character is the composite of good moral qualities, whereby one shows firmness of belief, resolution, and practice about such moral values as honesty, justice, and respect (Gerdy, 2000). Aristotle stressed that a person must, in the circumstances, do the right thing for the right reasons. This definition of character was further broadened by Lickona (1991) when he described “good” character as one that consisted of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good – habits of the mind, habits of the heart and habits of action. Lickona (1991) argued that reasoning is inadequate by and of itself; one must have a strong value system that resides in the psyche but that is also understood and can be articulated. Character is not simply a set of habits or independent traits but the combination of these traits in action. Stoll and Bredemeier (1995) further developed the definition of character as the possession of those personal qualities or virtues that facilitate the constant display of moral action.

Miller (2005), from the Ethics Resource Center, first wrote about moral courage with little existing literature. Philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle provide historical perspectives

of it meant to be morally courageous. Miller (2005) found that courage was divided into two distinct groups: being “physically courageous or morally courageous” (p. 2). Courage is described as a moral act that is performed out of other moral motivations. Miller (2005) argued that the first step towards being morally courageous is to be able to recognize that there is a moral situation. It is upon this recognition that an “observer appeals to her moral intuitions, values, principles, etc.”(p. 13). Similarly, Kidder (2005) described moral courage as the “quality of mind and spirit that enables one to face up to ethical dilemmas and moral wrongdoings firmly and confidently, without flinching or retreating” (p. 72). Kidder explained explicitly his definition of moral courage as follows:

- It is a “quality of mind” as well as “spirit” because, like all ethical endeavors, it partakes of both the rational and the intuitional capacities, both the processes of intellectual discourse and the feelings of rightness and wrongness inherent in each individual.
 - It enables us to “face up” to problems – not necessarily to resolve them, and certainly not to promise that we will master them, but to address them squarely, frontally, and with determination.
 - It requires action that is both “firmly” persistent and “confidently” assured that its tools – the moral, mental, and emotional elements of argumentation and persuasion – are sound enough to weather serious resistance.
 - Finally, it requires us to act “without flinching or retreating” in the face of persuasion, from the subtle to the violent, that makes us want to turn tail and run.
- (p. 72)

Lachman (2007) argued that moral courage was an individual's ability and capacity to overcome fear and openly support one's core values. Deresiewicz (2010) delivered a talk to the freshmen class at Stanford University where he challenged these students to contemplate how:

Moral imagination is hard, and it's hard in a completely different way than the hard things you're used to doing. And not only that, it's not enough. If you're going to invent your own life, if you're going to be truly autonomous, you also need courage: moral courage. The courage to act on your values in the face of what everyone's going to say and do to try to make you change your mind. Because they're not going to like it. Morally courageous individuals tend to make the people around them very uncomfortable. They don't fit in with everybody else's ideas about the way the world is supposed to work, and still worse, they make them feel insecure about the choices that they themselves have made—or failed to make. (n.p.)

According to Pianalto (2012), moral courage involves acting in the service of one's convictions, in spite of the risk of retaliation or punishment. Moral courage is the ability to persist in a moral task, to have the courage to engage in behavior that serves a moral goal while overcoming fatigue and temptations (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999). It is the kind of courage that is exhibited by those who risk punishment for taking a morally motivated stand (Pianalto, p. 168). The understanding of moral courage does not presuppose that the morally courageous person is morally wise. In fact, unlike ancient philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle for whom moral wisdom was a requirement for courage, Pianalto (2012) suggests that morally courageous acts need only be true convictions.

Moral courage has been extensively researched in the field of nursing (Lachman, 2007; LaSala & Bjarnason, 2010; Peer & Schlabach, 2010). Lachman, Murray, Iseminger, and Ganske

(2012) defined moral courage as the willingness to stand up for and act according to one's ethical beliefs when moral principles are threatened, regardless of the perceived or actual risks.

Circumstances that challenge an individual's sense of virtue are moments when moral distress might occur when feeling powerless to act seems inevitable. According to Lachman et al. (2012), moments such as this are perpetuated when "organizational constraints make doing the right thing difficult or impossible" (p. 24). In the field of nursing, developing awareness, assertiveness and negotiation skills are crucial so that nurses are empowered to act morally courageous. These virtues seem just as important in any situation that calls for individuals to act with moral courage. Lachman et al. (2012) identified several barriers to morally courageous behavior:

Organizational culture, which sets the stage for how individuals respond to unethical behavior and thus eschews the interdisciplinary dialogue crucial to resolving unethical behavior or that disregards unethical actions, lack of concern by colleagues who don't have the moral courage to take action, groupthink, in which individuals collectively decide to look the other way with subsequent loss of independent thinking and preference for redefining unethical actions as acceptable. (p. 25)

Summary

Studies clearly show that moral development, especially moral reasoning, has been vastly researched (Bredemeier, 1984; Stoll, Beller, Cole & Burwell, 1995; King & Mayhew, 2004). Almost all research argues that student athletes from all types of institutions have lower moral reasoning levels compared to their non-athlete peers. Furthermore, an examination of the current literature about codes of conduct in organizations and institutions reveal that they have been used extensively as one of the many ethical artifacts within an organizational system (Greenwell, Grube, Jordan, & Mahony, 2004; Lencioni, 2002; Tenbrunsel, Smith-Crowe, & Umphress,

2003). Moreover, it should also be noted that the argument of whether sport builds character has been validated extensively (Bredemeier, 1984; Bredemeier & Shields, 1986b, 2006; Rudd, Stoll, & Beller, 1997; Stoll & Beller, 2000; Doty, 2006).

Extensive research in moral reasoning and moral judgment has been conducted within higher education (Beller, 2002; Beller, Stoll, Burwell, & Cole, 1995; Dunn & Dunn, 1999; Stoll & Beller, 2000; Stoll, Beller, Cole, & Burwell, 1995; Stornes, 2001). However, the moral courage perspective in intercollegiate athletics has not received attention although it has been researched in academia's paraprofessional fields such as business (Kaptein & Schwartz, 2008; Trevino & Youngblood, 1990) and nursing (Gallagher, 2010; Lachman, 2007, 2009). Since qualitative studies are lacking where the student athletes' understanding of a code of conduct, its influence on their moral behaviors and their internalized reflections when faced with moral dilemmas, an opportunity exists to explore the role an athletic code of conduct has in shaping the moral courage of student athletes.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter summarizes the methods used to explore the role that an athletic code of ethics plays in shaping the moral courage of student athletes. A description of the research design, participants, data sources, data analysis process and a description of the assumptions as well as the limitations of the study will be presented. This chapter concludes with a detailed analysis of the role of the researcher and a brief summary.

Research Design

Qualitative research is a naturalistic, interpretative approach concerned with understanding the meanings that people attach to actions, decisions, beliefs, values and understanding the mental mapping process that respondents use to make sense of and interpret the world around them (Ziman, 2000). This type of research has the ability to provide an insightful understanding of a participant's experiences in one's natural environment. This qualitative study used case study as a research design with a special focus on portraiture.

Rationale for Case Study Research

Case study research is defined as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). A descriptive case study research design allows the researcher to look at the phenomenon in context. Case study research is suitable for answering questions that start with how, when and why, and its focus is on a contemporary phenomenon where the researcher has little control over the events (Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2009), this research design is able to explain, describe, illustrate and enlighten. Both Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) asserted that the constructivist paradigm is best suited for this type of study. This paradigm recognizes that reality is based on human interpretation and meaning-making. Similar to the characteristics of portraiture, constructivism

focuses on the collaboration between the researcher and the participant, while enabling participants to tell their stories (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Hence, by investigating the phenomenon of how the athletic code of conduct shapes student athletes' moral courage, this present study hopes to illustrate and describe using the stories of the participants.

The intent of this present study was to explore and understand how an athletic code of conduct shapes the moral courage of student athletes within the context of playing a sport. In order to successfully examine the findings of this study, the case study research design was particularly suitable for this present study. Stake (1995) explains that in a case study, the researcher “enters the scene with a sincere interest in learning how [actors] function in ordinary pursuits and milieus and with a willingness to put aside many presumptions while he or she learns” (p. 1). In this present study, I selected the participants and entered their natural environment with an honest interest to learn and understand the phenomenon by not only listening to their stories but also listening for their stories. The act of listening for stories is one of the four most important characteristics of portraiture. Therefore, the methodology used in this present study is generally a descriptive case study with a special focus on preserving the voice of the participants through stories, searching for “goodness” and relationship building.

Rationale for Portraiture

Similar to case study research design, portraiture is used as a focus primarily because the purpose of portraiture is not to test previously established theories or hypotheses, instead the purpose is to explore participants' experiences and the complexities of how meanings are produced within a particular context (Gaztambide-Fernández, Cairns, Kawashima, Menna, & Vander Dussen, 2011). Although portraiture is used in research that focuses on critical race theory, here it is used to make meaning by preserving the authentic voices of the participants and

the researcher. Portraiture is one of the most creative methods in qualitative research that was developed by Dr. Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot. It is a research design created in response to what Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) sees as a tendency in social science research to focus on “pathology and disease rather than health and resistance” (p.8). According to Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005), portraiture is best described as a blending of qualitative methodologies and shares defining attributes with ethnography, critical race theory, aestheticism, case studies, life history, and narratives.

Portraiture is a distinct type of qualitative research that “focuses on the convergence of narrative and analysis, in its goal of speaking to broader audiences beyond the academy, [and] in its explicit recognition of the use of self as the primary research instrument” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 14). Portraiture methodology “does not stop at the phenomenology of subjective experience but endeavors to understand this experience, with empathy and sympathy as part of the larger unity of the person of whom this experience forms a part, and to communicate this understanding in carefully constructed portraits” (Witz, 2006, p. 246). This method relies heavily on a naturalistic style of inquiry where one’s experience is authenticated through one’s voice and story. The dialogical relationship between the portraitist and the participants becomes the portrait (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The drawing of the portrait is placed in a social and cultural context and shaped through this dialogue between the portraitist and the subject, each one negotiating the discourse and shaping the evolving image (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, p. xv). Therefore, a portraiture approach takes into account the voice, relationship, emergent themes and aesthetic whole, which will contribute to shaping the storytelling dialogue between the researcher and participants.

Portraiture

There are five distinct elements that characterize portraiture. First, portraiture seeks to extract the voice of the participant by focusing on the context, relationships and emergent themes as a whole. This method of inquiry, designed by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, does not attempt to develop a cohesive and wholesome picture of a participant's life history but tends to pinpoint a specific area of focus. In this study, voice was reflected through the interaction between the researcher and the participants within and beyond the context of athletics. The researcher's voice resonated throughout the design of the study, the interview questions and through the analysis of emerging themes. This interaction of voices between the researcher and participants was further amplified in the findings of the study.

Second, portraiture actively searches for "goodness" although it is fully aware that "goodness will always be laced with imperfection" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 9). The aesthetic whole was realized in this study by finding the connections between the various opinions and issues that were raised during the interviews. The goal for the researcher was to find the verbal and non-verbal nuances of the participants by focusing on what is being shared and how it is being articulated. Meaning making occurred within the context of creating a wholesome portrait of the participant. Through all the eight differing voices, a tapestry of intertwining themes emerged which built a collage of the aesthetic whole: like "an informal photo essay" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Third, portraiture seeks to speak to a broad and diverse audience by making the research findings a purposeful and intentional act of intervention and community-building. The final portraits provide an easy topic of conversation allowing potential readers or viewers of the portrait to learn more about and perhaps even participate in the tradition created by the stories

(Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Since portraiture has not been used as a research methodology in sports ethics, the findings from this study would add to enrich and color the existing literature.

Fourth, the researcher, also known as the portraitist, tends to explicitly insert him or herself into the stories that are told in an in-depth process of reflection. Relationship building occurred early in this study between the researcher and the participants. Trust was ascertained through clear objectives of the study, confidentiality and consent. Participants were encouraged to feel involved and were educated to realize that this study would assist in better understanding how student athletes navigate instances of moral courage on and off the field. There was a crucial need to develop rapport and buy-in between researcher and participants.

Last and most importantly, the portraitist not only listens to the stories but actively engages in listening for stories. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), this is described as a process of co-creating compelling narratives with the participants, characters, metaphors and a central narrative arc. In the present study, listening for stories during the interview process was the key factor leading to emergent themes, which assisted the researcher in developing further questions. However, it should be noted that although the researcher was equipped with knowledge of the field through literature and personal life experiences, portraiture sought to extract authentic portraits that resonate from the culture. Therefore, in the present study, the role of the researcher was to identify and incorporate emergent themes that created a holistic portrait within the parameters of the area of focus.

Voices in Portraiture

Although portraiture is a research methodology that stems from critical race theory, it is used in the present study as a means to recognize the voices of the participants and the

researcher. It is an in-depth form of interviewing technique that was designed by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) which is based on the recognition of the use of self as the primary research instrument for documenting and interpreting the perspectives and experiences of people and cultures being examined. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), there are six ways in which the concept of voice is distinctively used in portraiture. These are: voice as witness, voice as interpretation, voice as preoccupation, voice as autobiography, voice discerning other voices and voice in dialogue.

In “voice as a witness”, the researcher plays the role of a “discerning observer...standing on the edge of a scene – a boundary sitter – scanning the action, systematically gathering details of behavior...remaining open and receptive to all stimuli” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 87). In “voice as interpretation”, the researcher attempts to make sense and meaning of data is exhibited. In “voice as autobiography”, the researcher brings “her own life story, her familial, cultural, ideological, and educational experiences, to the research project” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, p. 95). It is in “voices discerning voices” that the researcher plays the active role in trying to capture the texture and cadence of a story by *listening for a story* rather than *listening to a story* (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, p. 99). Lastly, in “voice in dialogue”, the researcher “purposely places herself in the middle of the action (in the field and in the text)...the symmetry of voice – hers and the actor’s – as they both express their views and together define meaning making” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, p. 103). In the present study, the participants’ experiences were emphasized through their individual voices; i.e. personal interpretations, perceptions and analysis. These voices were captured in the unadulterated form so as to understand the culture of integrity and morality in the organization. This “voice in dialogue” will

lend to the ongoing construction of the story that occurs in the two-way interviews and multi-vocal conversations (Chapman, 2005).

The voice of the portraitist is everywhere – “overarching and under-girdling the text, framing the piece, naming the metaphors, and echoing through the central themes” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, p. 85). This portraiture approach will enable and empower the researcher to capture the unique stories with depth and breadth; and further enrich the existing quantitative research that is available. No one aspect of the research is devoid of the researcher’s voice.

Participants

The participants interviewed were eight young, first-generation Division III student athletes from a small, private, religiously-affiliated, liberal arts university who were involved in either team or individual sports. Four sophomores, one junior, and three seniors were selected to participate in the present study. Freshmen were excluded from this study because the influence of the institution’s athletic codes would be minimal in their first months on campus. The approval from BGSU’s Human Subjects Review Board signaled the start of this research study (Appendix C). All eight participants were randomly selected through a mass email that was sent to all 156 Midwestern University student athletes, excluding freshmen (Appendix D). In order to ensure high interest, student athletes were given the opportunity to win one of two \$25 gift cards. Since only these eight student athletes had expressed interest before the deadline, no additional random selection process was required. There was an equal representation in terms of gender. All seven were white and Caucasian except for one African-American. These student athletes were diverse in the types of sport that they represented such as wrestling, cross-country track, softball, golf, football, and basketball. All participants were assigned pseudonyms by me.

Data Sources

As the primary researcher for this study, I determined that three forms of data collection would be sufficient and effective to “paint” a holistic portrait of the participants. Observations, interviews, and document analysis were identified as key data collection tools. Observations began the moment I arrived on campus. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) emphasized that once the portraitist is in the field, “she begins by listening and observing, being open and receptive to all stimuli, acclimating herself to the environment, documenting her initial movements and first impressions, and noting what is familiar and what is surprising” (p. 187). Creswell (2003) describes a thorough researcher as one who takes notes about the context, behaviors, and actions at the research site. In order to build these portraits, I ensured that notes include the verbal and non-verbal gestures of the participants, the attire at the interviews, the participants’ training facilities, and each participant’s decorum on the field during training sessions and games as well as their mannerisms during the interviews. Importance was placed “at each stage of data collection, at the close of each day, the portraitist gathers, scrutinizes, and organizes the data and tries to make sure of what she has witnessed” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, p. 187). As a result, an on-going process of analysis was performed by examining and searching for themes from interview transcripts, audio recordings, and the participants’ self-reflective journals. Although much of this information was not explicitly reflected in the portraits, implicitly these details assisted me in understanding the participants and their lives as student athletes.

Each participant was asked to participate in two, one-hour long interviews (Appendix A). All individual interviews with each participant were scheduled at a neutral venue in the Campus Center. The first interview included the completion of informed consent forms (Appendix B),

timeline and structure of the interviews as well as introductions, followed by informal, open-ended questions that investigated their history before coming to college. Each participant was asked to voluntarily keep a self-reflective journal throughout the period of the study. These varying methods of inquiry assisted the researcher in building a sense of trust and understanding of the participants. The second one-hour long interviews were more intrusive and questions focused on the role of codes of ethics and moral courage (Appendix E). At this juncture, participants were also encouraged to share their perspectives in the different roles that they play on campus. Intrusive and probing questions were used to answer the research questions of the study, to understand the how and why while simultaneously trying to identify emergent themes. It was imperative that I listened for a story, thereby becoming an active listener.

According to Stovall (2007), portraiture requires the researcher to look for subtle nuances – the vague, almost indiscernible nugget of information that might be overlooked or lost if the researcher is not open to discovering it. During each interview, descriptive field notes were taken to ensure that key ideas were captured. Probing questions were used to further develop a thought and served to address emergent themes that had resonated to the researcher but were not necessarily articulated by each participant during the individual interviews.

Painting the Portraits

Both the case study and portraiture research design place great importance on the role of the portraitist when analyzing qualitative data. In analyzing case study research, the observant researcher must often use ‘intuitive insights’ based on “impressions of what’s seen on-site and perceptions of what is unique and meaningful given prior knowledge of the field being researched” (Kohn, 1997). In this present study, I decided the problem statement, identified the research questions, defined the composition and size of the sample and developed the

methodological strategies. This present study is infused with my personal values, tastes, writing styles, and life experiences. Even when vigorously controlled, Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) argues that in portraiture, the researcher:

is seen not only in defining the focus and field of the inquiry but also in navigating the relationships with her or his subjects, in witnessing and interpreting the action, in tracing the emergent themes, and in creating the narrative. At each one of these stages, the self of the portraitist emerges as an instrument of inquiry, an eye on perspective taking, an ear that discerns nuances, and a voice that speaks and offers insights... Even though the identity and voice of the portraitist is larger and more explicit in this form of inquiry, the efforts to balance personal predisposition with disciplined skepticism and critique are central to the portrait's success. One might even say that because the self of the portraitist is so essential to the development of the work, the portraitist must be that much more vigilant about identifying other sources of challenge to her or his perspective. The counterintuitive must always be present even as the portraitist takes full advantage of the intuitive. (p. 11)

In accordance with case study research design, I kept a journal to document salient thoughts, reactions and reflections at the end of each interview throughout the data collection phase. Entries in my personal journal were used to better understand the campus climate and also aided in identifying the stories. All interviews were conducted at the student athletes' institution of higher learning in a neutral space. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim using audio and field notes. Each interview transcription was sent to the participant via email for member checking. Participants were advised to make modifications, edits or add information for clarification. Member checks ensured that the participants' voices were accurately and truthfully

represented. Data collection was a combination of observation notes and interview recordings. In this way, the analysis process incorporated multiple formats and modes of meaning-making to validate the emergent themes that arose (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Data analysis in portraiture refers to the process of creating narrative portraits. Portraits are painted by paying close attention to the “empirical description and aesthetic expression and a careful scrutiny and modulation of voice” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p.10). When painting the portraits, the portraitist “hopes to be able to capture the raw hurt and the pleasure of her or his protagonists and works to embroider paradoxical themes into the inquiry and narrative” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, p. 10). The element of paradox is central to portraiture. An example of this paradox in portraiture is the voice of the portraitist. Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) explains that the researcher’s voice is both everywhere in the study and is also judiciously placed. In this present study, as the researcher, my voice is reflected in the types of interview questions asked, in the questions that follow, in the subtle nuances during the interviews and the banter in between the interviews, in the manner in which data is scrutinized, in the types of themes which emerge, and the style in which the stories are told. My involvement during the interview process was more than just an observer. I maintained the integrity of a case study by ensuring that my voice did not influence the responses of the participants. Responses were guided by the participants with minimal probing from me. Unlike a conventional case study, my role as the human instrument was more intrusive

Data were extrapolated from the different sources and coded by hand. I searched for the story line that emerges from the material keeping in mind that there was never one single story. Thus, I actively selected the themes that will “tell the story, strategic in deciding on points of emphasis, and creative in defining the sequence and rhythm of the narrative” (Lawrence-

Lightfoot, p. 10). In seeking the narratives, theme clusters were identified. There was special attention given to what could be included in the narratives and what was being left out. Gasps, pregnant pauses, inaudible sounds, non-verbal movements and sheer silences were transcribed verbatim because these elements also shape the story. Unique codes of the interviews resulted in provisional groups of theme clusters. These clustered themes with similar opinions and thoughts were categorized as a catalyst to explore relationships between categories. Finally themes and categories were established.

In this present study, I created the narrative by striking a balance between receiving the data and shaping the story, reflecting on the data and imposing the hypothesis, analyzing the data by understanding the coded documents and listening for a story. Coherence in the narratives was achieved “organically from the data and from the interpretive witness of the portraitist” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, p. 10). Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) asserted that it had become crucial that the boundaries of social science inquiry and discourse were redefined. One of her four assertions was the need to expand the audiences and increase the voices that engage in public dialogue about education. Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) explained that:

If we want to broaden the audience for our work, then we must begin to speak in a language that is understandable, not exclusive and esoteric . . . a language that encourages identification, provokes debate, and invites reflection and action. But it is not only the language and idiom of our texts that will change, it is also that in anticipating different consumers of our work, we will begin to conceive our research (the questions and design) differently from the very beginning. (p. 9)

In order to adhere sincerely to this assertion, the portraits in this study are presented thematically and not as singular profiles. Insight into the profiles of each participant is achieved throughout

the following chapter as separate, distinct, divergent voices converge resulting in a single thematic painting. The portrait of each participant is revealed to the reader as the categorical themes are explored similar to the contents of a simple novel that leads one to turn the page.

Trustworthiness

In order to ensure reliability in qualitative research, examination of trustworthiness is crucial (Golafshani, 2003). Trustworthiness was established by examining transcriptions of the interviews thoroughly to identify inconsistencies. Coding was done by hand so that the researcher could be more involved in the familiarization and interpretation of data. In order to increase consistency and reliability, transcripts were read by a colleague who cross-checked the codes to ensure “inter-code agreement” (Creswell, 2009).

According to Creswell (1998), triangulation is a process whereby a researcher makes use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators and theories to provide corroborating evidence. In this study, triangulation was used by corroborating data from institutional documents, transcripts from individual interviews and the researcher’s personal journal entries. A convergence of these varying data sources resulted in establishing the themes in this study.

Furthermore, trustworthiness was ascertained by engaging the participants in soliciting their views and interpretations of the findings. Member checks involved “taking data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they could judge accuracy and credibility of the account” (Creswell, 1998, p. 203).

Assumptions and Limitations

The assumption in this study was that the research design adopted would best be able to answer the research questions. In addition, despite the structured theoretical frameworks selected, which are Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development (1969) and Rest’s (1979) Four

Component Model of Morality, portraiture, as a research methodology, would be able to tell a rather vivid and colorful story beyond theoretical boundaries. Finally, responses from the interviews were assumed to be candid and accurate viewpoints of the participants. Limitations of this study included the very small sample size and the difficulty in ensuring that all sports programs will be represented. Moreover, the participant selection process might have eliminated viable students who could have potentially added valuable voices in the study.

Role of the Researcher

As the primary researcher for this study, I am a product of who I am as a person and thus bring with me the experiences that make up my life (Lucas, 2005). In this study, I assumed a facilitator and participatory role. Due to the intimate nature of the research question, it was inevitable that I would bring with my prior knowledge, experience and instilled values. According to Creswell (1998), qualitative researchers approach their studies with a certain world view that guides their inquiries. My life experiences as a young teacher who enforced the student code of conduct in an elementary school in Singapore impacted my perceptions.

Having been an administrator for more than ten years in higher education institutions in the United States of America, I often participated in non-academic conduct hearings and have had the opportunity to act as the student conduct advisor on several occasions. In such roles, I witnessed students constantly negotiating right and wrong behaviors. Sitting on honor councils and being privy to some of the private details of conduct hearings made me wonder and question if universities were providing adequate and appropriate resources for students to grow morally. I have wondered how students are enabled and empowered to act according to their values and the values of the institution. My experiences have been laced with Eastern and Western values. Nevertheless, the subject of moral courage is universally prevalent. I, as the human instrument, therefore bring with me my perceived realities.

Another area of bias that should be noted is that I was a senior level administrator in student life for six years at Midwestern University and had the opportunity to interact and engage with students, faculty and staff extensively. Even though I left the institution almost three years ago, I have an in-depth understanding of the academic and co-curricular responsibilities of the students. Due to this advantage, my familiarity with the institutional environment might influence my preconceived notions as I re-enter as a researcher. However, through the process of data collection, I would be able to identify findings based on data collected only and not my perceptions. As a result of all of these experiences, the potential for subjective interpretation of the phenomenon and a bias may be possible (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000).

Conclusion

This study explored the role of an athletic code of conduct in shaping the moral courage of student athletes in a small, liberal arts institution in the Midwest. Participants were interviewed individually to investigate the extent to which they believed that the athletic code of conduct shaped their moral courage both on and off the field. The interest in this qualitative study was piqued because of the limited qualitative research on moral courage amongst student athletes in a Division III institution and also to determine if an athletic code of conduct is a useful tool to ensure moral development of student athletes as prescribed in the literature (Greenwell, Grube, Jordan, & Mahony, 2004).

CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

This chapter presents the key findings related to the five research questions. The chapter begins with an overview of the participants' portraits, which are composite descriptions painted using observations and conversations during each interview. The composite results of the study are organized in response to each of the five research questions. I wanted to understand the extent to which student athletes understood their university's athletic code of conduct; how they made meaning of their understanding; how they defined moral courage; in what ways they acted with moral courage; and if the athletic environment was supportive of acts of moral courage.

Major themes and categories identified will be presented following the participant portraits. These themes – being a student athlete, understanding the code, moral courage, and finally the athletic code and moral courage – were captured by contextually analyzing direct quotes from the participants during the data analysis process. Each section begins with an overview of the major themes in relation to that specific research question and supported by the participants' voices and stories, which are preserved and presented through quotes and thick description. This chapter will conclude with a summary and relevance of the key findings explored in this study.

Participant Portraits

Four men and four women from Midwestern University were interviewed in this study. All eight student athletes were full-time, traditional-aged college students who lived on a residential campus in the Midwest. These student athletes ranged from sophomores to seniors and were involved in various individual and team sports. There were three seniors, one junior and four sophomores. All of the participants were from the same Midwest state except for one who was from a bordering state. All eight student athletes have been involved in their sport since

they were children and had decided to continue engaging in athletics by attending a small, private, liberal arts institution that offered them an opportunity to play their sport from the time they enrolled.

Founded in the mid-1800s, Midwestern University is a small, quaint campus nestled in a rural community. MU has been ranked as one of the top colleges in the Midwest and the nation for 24 consecutive years. MU has about 30 buildings that boast aesthetic features such as Gothic architecture. Besides its physical architecture, it prides itself as a community of learning that promotes and nurtures intellectual, personal, and professional developments, leading to a life of purpose with distinction (MU Website). Due to its religious affiliation, MU's faculty, staff, students and Board of Trustees understand, respect and celebrate diverse cultures, religions and lifestyles. Its educational philosophy states that MU is committed to developing individuals with high morals and ethical standards who are engaged and responsible citizens (MU Website).

MU is a member of the oldest and most prestigious Midwest Athletic Conference and is an NCAA Division III college. MU varsity athletics began in 1892. Today, MU offers 20 varsity sports in its athletic program. Athletics is woven into the fabric of student life at Midwestern University since more than half of its enrolled students are athletes. The athletic department at Midwestern University (MU) places the highest priority on the overall quality of the student athlete's educational experience and on the successful completion of their academic programs (MU's Website) while recognizing that the athletic program satisfies the needs and interests of student athletes outside the classroom.

Toby

Toby, a senior, has been a wrestler since he was in seventh grade. He is a White male sporting a beard and is rather stout in nature. He decided that going to a small institution meant

that he could do other things as well as wrestle. A polite, well-mannered and confident individual who wanted college to be a holistic experience:

Umm, I wrestled in high school and wanted to continue to compete and I knew that at a smaller school I would be able to compete as well as do other things. Because I didn't want to go to a Division II school and have wrestling be everything that I did. I wanted it to be a part of what I did and I was very dedicated to it and I enjoyed it a lot but that wasn't going to be all that college was.

There were several factors that led him to choose MU. The German program offered at Midwest University, its proximity to one of his parents and the fact that he was not quite as talented a wrestler solidified his decision to attend Midwestern University. Furthermore, Toby was recruited by the wrestling coach at MU when he was a senior in high school.

Toby has a very full schedule where classes are from 9 in the morning to 2 in the afternoon, followed by practice, dinner, and then work at one of the administrative offices on campus. He does not believe his day is very different from non-student athletes except that he has practice every day. As a student athlete, he constantly has wrestling on his mind. This is especially so when there is an upcoming match. Toby worries about eating healthy, getting enough sleep, going to practice, and putting in an extra workout in his already tight schedule. His typical day, when wrestling is in season, is rigid yet Toby thrives successfully:

I would wake up at 5 or 6 in the morning. Go do a morning workout, have breakfast, classes and then practice with the team, and then work and then homework after or meeting depending on the groups I was involved in at that time and the day of the week. So I think it is a pretty established schedule and for non-athletes it depends on whether

they are involved or not. Because if you are not involved then you are not going to have much of a schedule but if you are then it's also pretty regimented.

Wrestling has had quite an impact on him since he was thirteen. At first, he was really horrible. He lost every match except for one because of a technical foul. Toby believes that wrestling has taught him dedication, will power, and the ability to be constantly focused. Competition has aided him to be a good wrestler ensuring that he is fit and ready, and that he is providing his body with the right nutrients and hydration. He has perfected the skill of keeping his composure during matches although there are a couple of times during practice, early in his college career, where he would get frustrated. When asked if the athletic code of conduct was highlighted and explicitly shared with the wrestlers, Toby stated that it was not explicitly shared as a document on a daily basis but the values embodied by the code were highlighted often during practice and at matches.

Salli

Salli, a charming and vibrant senior, is the captain of the softball team at MU. She has been playing softball since she was three years old. Her mother was a softball coach and her older sister played too. Salli was not sure that she would play at the collegiate level because in high school, she was told that she was not good enough. Midwestern University was a good fit for Salli for several reasons. The opportunities to be engaged in multiple activities such as studying abroad and being involved in other student clubs, the friendly professors, the availability of her chosen major, and the location of the campus enticed her to make her decision to attend MU.

Salli was not recruited, unlike the other seven participants in the study. She had visited at least ten other institutions in the Midwest and met with all the coaches but it was MU's coaches

who were the most receptive and supportive of her doing more than just playing softball. Her days typically begin at nine in the morning and end at nine at night. She feels that she has a rigid schedule because she is always trying to fit in softball, work outs, and practices. She claims that her schedule is overloaded with athletics and extra-curricular activities. Softball does lend to her missing classes during game season and she feels that she is always juggling between sports and classes. According to Salli, softball is a game of failure. She has been told this her entire life:

Softball is a statistics-based game and it's all about what your batting average is and what your earned run average is as a pitcher; how many stolen bases you get. People get too caught up with the numbers.... I look at it as mistakes are going to happen but how you react to them and what you can control and how you can like put aside those mistakes and make good the play you need is more important.

Given that she has been ingrained with this philosophy, Salli shared that softball as a sport has taught her positive values. Softball practices the values in the athletic code of conduct on a daily basis according to Salli. She shared that the code of conduct is a way for athletes and coaches to understand what the institution expects from them, both on and off the field. It is part of their acculturation. Being the captain and the only senior of the softball team, Salli is responsible for a very young team with fourteen freshmen who lack self-confidence, sometimes have a bad attitude, do not know how to manage their time, and sometimes make poor decisions. It is overwhelming for her as she has never been responsible for so many of her teammates in the past. Salli shared that in softball:

You have to depend on yourself on the field and you also have to depend on them or at least know that... you have to give off the impression that you trust everything that they

are going to do or else they are not going to improve. So I always try and talk to them in a circle and like I will call people and tell them that it's fine or just brush it off.

Athletics has impacted Salli positively. Skills such as being accountable, managing time, being responsible for herself and her team, being confident, passionate having trust and being able to depend on a support system has helped her grow into a better person. She does not believe that being involved in an individual sport would have had a similar influence on her.

Daisy

Daisy decided to attend MU when she visited campus during her senior year of high school. MU was the only university she had visited. The friendly community, small campus and the right major contributed to her wanting to be a student at MU. At the time of this study, Daisy was a sophomore and was recruited to run cross country and track. She was very determined to continue her running career in college. The MU athletic mission statement clearly stated that academics came first and athletics a close second. This philosophy aligned with hers and that sealed her decision to be a student athlete at MU. Daisy has a full schedule with class, practice and work:

Right now is track season, it is more difficult because we leave campus on many Fridays for track meets so students on the track team miss class quite a bit during the season. She makes sure that her time is managed well so that she is able to keep up with all her commitments. Daisy believes that, unlike non-student athletes, she has to carve out time during the day for practice to catch up with class work.

Daisy feels that athletics has given her something to always work hard at and strive. As a student athlete, Daisy believes that sports has made her a stronger person, more motivated to be

successful and has helped her in managing her time balancing classes and athletics. Daisy also shared that her people skills have improved because she is part of a team.

When asked about the code of conduct, Daisy shared that in track, the coaches include the values highlighted in the code of conduct during practices and in their coaching techniques. There is a shared sense of responsibility between the coaching staff and the student athletes to uphold the values of the code though it is once again not explicitly referred to as a document.

Colleen

Colleen, a double major in Psychology and Business, has been playing basketball for the past thirteen years. Currently, a sophomore at MU, she decided to pursue higher education at MU because of the small campus environment and the friendly people. The basketball coach played a very strong role in her decision to be a student athlete. A tall and lanky young woman, Colleen was heavily recruited when she was a senior in high school. Colleen has long fourteen-hour days filled with classes, practice, and homework. Colleen feels that her friends who are not student-athletes have more time to hang out with their friends while she has to commit two to four hours daily after classes towards basketball.

Nonetheless, Colleen loves her sport and has been involved in team sports for most of her life. She strongly believes that her coaches and teammates have played a big role:

The players are a reflection of the coaches so I feel that I am a culmination of all the coaches I have had in my life from early middle school, middle school to high school. I have had different coaches and I feel that they are a big part of my life and also the teammates as well. The girls are like my family and that's who I look to for advice and stuff.

Athletics, on a broader scale, has impacted Colleen to reassess her surroundings and environment, especially when she was temporarily disabled due to a sporting injury:

Well, I have been playing for more than 13 years and when I was...after I tore my knee I was very aware of other people's disabilities and like people who are healthy and are able to do everyday things. You don't think about it but you should think about it and be thankful for what we have. I think that has really impacted me and I've become very persistent from this experience because like after I injured my knee I had to work hard to gain my position back on the team. I feel like I am more aware of other people's emotions as well.

When asked if the code of conduct and its values were explicitly talked about in the sport of basketball, Colleen candidly shared that even if the expectation is that every player should know the code of conduct, many of her teammates were not aware of the contents of the code. She asserted that it should be coaches' responsibility to explain these expectations to the student athletes. She also believed that there should be consequences if the code of conduct is violated.

Mandy

Mandy is a White female with an extremely cheerful personality. During the interview process, Mandy stayed true to her personality. She giggled incessantly, paused often before responding and was quick to declare that she was clueless and unable to answer a few questions. Her light-hearted and authentic demeanor was refreshing.

Mandy, a sophomore, has been running track since she was eleven. Her coach from high school was her motivator. She was the only one on the team who had been involved in track for all four years of her high school career. Mandy's major is athletic training and she hopes to become a physical therapist. Her days are filled with classes from eight in the morning to

practice in the afternoon followed by classes till eight in the evening. Clinical hours for athletic training are interspersed throughout the week, which makes her days hectic. She strongly believes that her life is busier than the lives of non-athletes:

Umm...it's a little hard to say because I am in athletic training so I...in athletic training I have to do clinical hours. I am in Beta Gamma, which is an honor society for athletic training majors, so I have meetings. We do stuff with our freshmen. We go out and do community service so athletic training puts me at a different level than regular students.

And then adding track to the mix makes it even worse like crazy, crazy busy.

She feels that although non-athletes may also be involved in other organizations or clubs, they are not as busy as student athletes are.

Mandy believes that athletics saved her life. During her freshman year in high school, she indulged in harmful activities that placed her well-being in danger. It was her high school coach who succeeded in convincing her to channel her energies towards athletics. She believes that she would have only graduate from high school and would never have made it to college. Mandy explained how her coach helped her:

And he is the one who got me to stop cutting and took the most interest in me to actually help me. And that was what really made sports a part of my life. Just him being there for me because he was the coach and he took time out of his own life to help somebody like me. So that was when sports started to become big and he was the coach. I was in track two years before that but it didn't become big until he helped me and then I realized that he was the coach for those two things and I just wanted to do everything to make him proud of me. If not for athletics, I would probably be knocked up. I have...I used to hang out with these girls especially my freshman year. Umm, there is like a group of six or

seven of us. Probably seven including me and four or five of them are pregnant and one is my cousin. Three of them dropped out. One has two kids. They all smoke and drink.

They all do that kind of stuff and I am sure if I did not have had him, I am sure...my life might have been like that.

According to Mandy, athletics is an environment which needs a code of conduct because it would provide student athletes and the athletic community guidelines to act appropriately. She further explained that in competition, student athletes sometimes lose perspective of what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. This was the first hint of how the athletic code might shape an athlete's moral actions. Mandy shared that in track, the code of conduct was a document that was signed at the beginning of her freshmen year but she does not remember revisiting it.

Finn

Finn is the only African-American student athlete in this present study. Quiet, shy, and reserved, he was not quite sure what he had signed up for. However, as we started talking, I realized that Finn was thoughtful in his responses and he enjoyed being at MU. At the time of this study, Finn was a junior who played football and ran track and field. Coming from an urban, inner city high school, Finn did not fathom going to a rural Midwest university. In fact, MU was his last choice:

The rate of Black males graduating from [my] high school to go to college was very low. Everybody has to go to college and when it came time to do my college application...my scores... I had good grades with a 3.0. My ACT scores were very low and MU was literally one of my last choices. I never knew nothing about Ohio, like any schools in Ohio. It got brought up by my high school track coach and he asked me to go look at

some school and he actually came with me here... for a visit. When I came here, I was kind of amazed because my high school is small and I was looking for that small environment. If I was at a big school I would probably be wound up somewhere.

When asked what he meant by “If I were at a big school I would probably be wound up somewhere”, Finn explained that he would have been unsuccessful and possibly dropped out at a large university. The small campus allowed for him to attend small classes where he would get the necessary attention and guidance from his professors. He was intrigued by the cheerful and intimate environment on campus. He enjoyed the fact that everyone knew his name when he arrived for football camp that summer as a freshman.

Sport has always been a part of Finn’s life. Before high school, he only played basketball. He ventured into football and track after being motivated by the athletic director at his high school:

Sport is what got me through high school. I really didn’t think sports management was a major until I came here and was told that I could major in sports management. I didn’t know that. It’s just another thing that is keeping me going and something that I like to do. After I graduate I want to continue in the sports field.

Since these interviews were conducted in the spring, Finn was only involved in track at the time of this study. Finn’s daily routine begins with track workouts. He starts training in the morning at six; classes follow from ten in the morning through three in the afternoon and then more track practice, dinner, and lastly indulging in other extra-curricular activities such as dance and theatre. His typical day ends when he retires to bed around two in the morning. Finn strongly believes that athletics has taught him how to manage his time and he has learned to prioritize. Unlike his non-student athlete peers, he constantly compartmentalizes his time so that he can be

fully engaged in his environment. Finn shared that some of his friends who no longer play a sport feel lost because they do not have a structured regiment. They have a lot of free time and this time is spent sleeping. Having been involved in athletics since he was eight years old, athletics has taught him values and skills that he deems important:

I have been an athlete since I was eight years old and it's a long time. Each year is different...like going through the aging process and becoming more mature. Sport teaches you a lot of discipline, patience and anxiety, determination and hard work. It is what you take out of each year; you get better and plan out your life. Me, personally, my biggest would be resilience because of all the things that I have been through with my injury and even things that are not dealing with sports. In some way I use sports to build my resilience.

The code of conduct, according to Finn, is more like a guideline that coaches follow and not all of them do. He also believes that student athletes should adhere to and apply the values of the code of conduct on and off the field. He upholds these values. He joked that no one tests you about the code at the end of each year. It is something that becomes a part of you.

Donald

As the only participant who is a transfer student, Donald is much older than the traditional-aged sophomore. Donald is twenty-three. During the interviews, Donald was suffering from a bad chest infection and often his responses were interrupted by coughing spasms. Nonetheless, Donald's responses reflected a level of maturity similar to the senior student athletes rather than the sophomores in the study.

Donald has been playing golf for almost ten years of his life but he did not pursue golf as when he was a freshman. MU is the only university where Donald has chosen to play golf as a

student athlete. He also runs track. Donald's day starts early with classes and extra-curricular activities:

In the morning, class between noon and 3pm, I have either class or a break which is nice it splits up the day. It gives you an hour to unwind from class and do any homework and then from 3-6pm is track and field time: practice. On certain days it can take up the whole three hours. Obviously I have lunch during the break time at noon and at 6pm dinner and after dinner I have any other activities I want...meeting with friends or in the German group, Model UN. Right now, I am not in any fraternity I am still deciding with that...track and field has got me pretty occupied.

Donald believes that student athletes are always managing their time between practice and classes. According to him, participating in sports is like being on borrowed time:

There is a huge difference because my time is not mine.... I am on someone else's time for track and field. Someone who is just here for school and fraternity or sorority aside, they are not on anyone's terms. I feel that it's easier for them but I like where I am at because you are stressed for time but it keeps you going.

As far as his thoughts on the role of the athletic code of conduct, Donald believes that it is a part of belonging to the university community. Just like Finn, Donald shared that, in track, the code of conduct is a guideline that teaches a student athlete how to act and respond during practices and competitions. According to Donald, if the code is violated, there should be consequences.

George

George, a senior at Midwestern University, is a wrestler. He was attracted to MU because of its academic program. After high school, George was not ready to give up his only passion

and MU assured him that he would be able to pursue his wrestling career as well as earn a business degree.

The wrestling coach at MU was his mentor and he, not only recruited George, but also helped him learn how to manage his time balancing academics and athletics effectively so that he could be a quintessential student athlete. Like all the other participants in this study, George's day begins early with classes, followed by wrestling practice and ends late at night with completion of homework. George stated, as a matter of fact, that his time was highly structured:

I believe so from a social standpoint I don't put aside so much time for hanging out with friends and other groups on campus especially when I am in season. I am focused on my homework and wrestling and so being able to go outside of that is a bit strenuous unless we have a free weekend where we don't have any competitions, then I am able to socialize but....

George started wrestling in first grade. Although he used to play football and run track in high school, it was wrestling that he wanted to pursue in college. Wrestlers have a very special and strong bond according to George. The ability to provide support, establish honest relationships and problem solve are key attributes that he has learned from being with his teammates and coaches. For George, wrestling is part of his daily life and he believes that the experiences he has gained on the mat will help him navigate his personal and professional life.

According to George, the code of conduct is so steeped in the wrestling culture that he does not remember when he first came across it. He knows that the professional decorum and wrestling etiquette empowers him and his teammates to act on and uphold the values of the code of conduct during matches and daily practices.

Summary of Participants' Background

In understanding and painting the initial portraits of the participants, there were two distinct themes that emerged: passion for the sport and passion for the institution. All eight student athletes shared that they playing a sport was part and parcel of their lives from an early age. Having the support of their families, these student athletes were able to pursue and explore athletics. For these student athletes, balancing academic and athletic obligations became the norm instead of the exception. Being able to play the sport that they enjoyed was one of the many reasons that attracted them to MU. The institution was able to meet each of their individual needs. All eight student athletes shared resoundingly that the warm campus environment, the faculty and staff, the coaches, the ability to pursue diverse academic interests while still being able to play, MU's investment in the development of the student were reasons as to why MU was the right fit for them and their endeavors.

Table 4 is a snapshot of all eight participants' demographics. Each participant's major and academic standing, the sport they play at MU, and their understanding of why athletics needs a code of conduct is showcased here. This is a concise demographical representation at this juncture of the study. A secondary tabular representation will be added at the end of this chapter to showcase the detailed profiles of all eight participants in this study and their individual responses to the five research questions (Table 5).

Table 4

Background Information on Participants

Name	Academic Standing/Major	Sport	Understanding the Need for Code of Conduct
Toby	Senior German	Wrestling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not explicitly shared as a document • Values embodied during practice and competition
Salli	Senior Political Science	Softball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Way for coaches and athletes to be informed about institutional expectations • Values are intentionally taught and practiced as part of being a team daily
Mandy	Sophomore Athletic Training	Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition can create a different mindset where the unethical is tolerated • Values are intended to serve as reminders to act with morality
Colleen	Sophomore Business	Basketball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches are responsible for upholding the code and sharing values of the code with student athletes • Consequences must be in place when code is broken
Daisy	Sophomore Psychology	Cross Country and Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not explicitly shared as a document • Values embodied during practice, in coaching techniques and competition • Shared sense of responsibility to uphold values
Donald	Sophomore International Relations	Track and Golf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code is a set of guidelines for student athletes to know how to act and respond during practices and competition • Consequences must be in place when code is broken
Finn	Junior Criminal Justice	Track and Football	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches are responsible for upholding the code and sharing values of the code with student athletes • Code is a set of guidelines for coaches • Values are practiced on and off the field • Values become a part of who you are
George	Senior Business	Wrestling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values embodied during practice and competition

Being a Student Athlete

The Carnegie Foundation Study of College Athletes in 1929 maintained that college athletics needed to contribute far more than it had to the “development of the individual capacities of young men and women, their appreciation of true values, their powers of decision and choice, their sense of responsibility, and their ability to sustain it once it comes to them”, or it could not “justify the time and effort that are lavished upon them” (French, 2004, p. 52).

Influence of Sport

Athletics is an integral part of all eight participants’ lives in this present study. Every participant shared that playing a sport was part of growing up and their parents were typically their greatest motivators. These student athletes strongly believed that sports has had a positive influence in their lives. Virtues such as dedication, confidence, determination, and resilience were resoundingly shared by three of the participants.

Toby started out as a weak wrestler and he lost all of his matches in middle school. He learned to focus on how he could will his body and mind to hone in his skills. For Toby, He giving up his sport was not an option. He candidly shared that his weak performance motivated him to persevere:

I lost every match except for one because my opponent locked his hands and I got a penalty point so I actually did not earn the point. And then the next year I worked really hard and got better. I think I learned a lot from wrestling, specifically because it has taught me a lot about dedication and will power because you need that in every sport. In wrestling, you have to constantly be focused. You just can’t go to practice, work hard and have that be it. You have to constantly be thinking about your next competition. Are you ready? Are you fit? Are you providing your body with the right amount of nutrients and

are you hydrated properly? Are your teammates prepared? So I learned a lot about dedicating yourself to something and also keeping your composure.

Similarly, Salli asserted that being involved in a team sport made her responsible for her own behaviors. Her love for softball meant that she had to be devoted to her sport. She learned the value of managing her time, respecting her teammates and trusting other people:

I think that it has given me a group of people that I have to answer to so I have to make sure that my grades are together and that I am on time and doing my workouts because there a lot of things you have to do on your own during off season. If you don't do your workouts you might be behind everyone else. So I think it's just made me more accountable to myself and to my team and I have had to balance a lot of things. Time management is the biggest thing that I have learned from it.... I think softball has really helped my confidence and trusting of other people.

For Finn, who has been playing a sport since the age of eight, athletics has helped him to mature into a young man who wants to build a better future for himself. Coming from an inner city high school from a neighboring state, Finn experienced obstacles such as the absence of role models, personal and financial struggles. Athletics acted as his launch pad to change his fate:

Each year it is something different...like going through the aging process and becoming more mature. Sport teaches you a lot of discipline, patience and anxiety, determination and hard work. It is what you take out of each year; you get better and plan out your life. Personally, sport taught me resilience because of all the things that I have been through with my injury and even things that are not dealing with sports. In some way I use sports to build my resilience.... Basically where I come from, things that I saw, family issues and struggles and stuff like that. Athletics helped me bounce back and continue.

For Daisy and Mandy, athletics gave them a purpose in life. It provided them structure, direction and zeal. Daisy shared that:

It has given me something to always work for. I love running and it just is that I have grown attached to it in a way. Like I mentioned earlier, the idea of giving up is difficult.

So I guess it has made me a stronger person and more motivated.

Mandy exclaimed that she was quite a difficult child when she was younger. She was labeled as the “devil child” as she was always rebelling against her family. Athletics turned Mandy over a new leaf. She explained that:

I used to cut and burn myself. Umm, I even tried to smoke. I and my mother like hate each other. And I don’t know; it was weird. I was kind of just a really different person my freshman year in high school and whenever I got into power lifting (my sister did it) and got to know my high school coach. And he is the one who got me to stop cutting and took the most interest in me to actually help me. And that was what really made sports a part of my life.

For others, athletics was a place to better themselves in terms of strength, skills, self-esteem and learn from their coaches. Colleen strongly believed that she is a product of all the different coaches she has had over the years. She leans on her teammates for advice and support. Donald blossomed from a shy and insecure boy to someone who is confident. He believed that athletics helped him mature mentally and physically. Like Donald, George asserted that his character has been shaped by his sport.

No doubt, all these student athletes were involved in athletics at a young age; each one of them understands the importance this early experience has had on their individual personalities, strengths, values and belief systems both on and off the field.

Influence of Environment

Every participant in this study was able to articulate the individual or individuals who had the greatest impact in teaching them good values. Six out of the eight shared that their parents, especially their mothers, played a significant role in shaping their values while coaches were the other key players. Both Salli and Daisy believed that their parents played important roles in being actively present in their upbringing and daily routines. Salli said:

I think it is my parents and how they raised me. They are very serious about following rules, getting my work done and I think sometimes people don't have those parents who are willing to say that "You need to get this done and I am willing to read your book to you". That's what I had as a child. I think that makes a huge difference.

Daisy added that her parents were active stakeholders who held her accountable for her actions by asking her questions:

They have always told me...they have always guided me in the right direction and they kind of let me make my own mistakes as they happen but then they are always there at the end. They would ask, "Why did you do that, is that something that you are ok with?" They kind of let me think about it for myself but at the same time they have been very open and honest with me about what they have done so that kind of impacts my values and decisions too.

Colleen was the only participant who declared that her mother was solely responsible for molding her by working from home when she was a child.

Mandy and George, on the other hand, shared that their values were influenced and shaped by multiple groups of people. For Mandy, it was her parents and her coach who guided

her and taught her what was right and wrong in every aspect of her life. George believed that his coach and a few administrators on campus helped him to broaden his views think critically.

However, it was Toby who provided me with a holistic answer. He was able to articulate with distinct precision and in the most simplistic words what I was trying to research. His level of maturity and keen sense of understanding seemed beyond his years. He ranked his faith as the number one factor that has guided his values. Everyone else came after his allegiance to his faith:

Probably my faith has had the biggest impact on my values and beliefs. And who – probably my mom and a lot of different people I look up to who have been in my life whether they were pastors or professors or coaches have had a huge impact on me.

Teaching me about integrity, leadership and knowing how to make the right decision at the right times. Making the right decisions when people are watching you and being aware of who you are representing at all times and making the right decisions when no one is around because that defines who you are.

Toby's perceptions about his character building were methodical and insightful. It became apparent that the presence of such strong influencers on and off the field created an environment where values taught at home, the church, or by mentors were mirrored and further enhanced on the field. As a researcher, I wanted to know if these student athletes could describe how and why a set of values were important to them, how their moral compass may be guided by their values and to what extent they influenced their actions on the field.

Importance of Values

When asked what these participants understood by the term “values”, most of them responded that these were core teachings that they learned growing up which helped them to make informed decisions. Daisy explained:

To me it means what a person lives by and what a person knows in order to make them feel as if they are doing the right thing. To feel comfortable with the decisions that they are making and something that they hold strong.

George also shared the same view and stated quite literally that “values guide the way I carry myself. Values teach me how to act towards people, how I respect people and I feel that that is going to reflect on me”.

Toby defined values as the types of things that he has deemed of great importance. He believed that his values were impacted by his perception of the world, his life experiences and his family background. He explained:

It is the way you perceive situations based on where you were born and what you experienced throughout your life, your socio-economic status and things like that. So as far as athletics go, by my sheer involvement I deemed it important and I said that by involving myself in it that this is something I think I can learn from. I can get something out of and I am going to put a lot of work into and I want to do whatever I can to help my team. And belief systems I think have a lot to do with... with faith. But we can apply it to pretty much everything that we do because if you believe in something strong enough or if you have a belief that you allow to permeate through your life then it will impact the way you handle things outside of your faith or athletics. My values affect the way I work, the way I treat my friends, the way I treat people I don't know.

Finn had a more practical perspective where he believed that values were life skills. The ability to set a goal and to pursue a mission was to lean on your values and what you had been taught at home. According to him, he was the product of values that he had learned from religion and his

faith as well as his family. Again, faith and religion emerged as perceived contributors to shaping one's set of values.

All eight student athletes had described their lifestyle, their environment and how they relied upon their set of values when confronted with a moral dilemma. Having established a snapshot of the lives of these student athletes, we move to the next segment of the present study: the athletic code of conduct.

Understanding the Code

All eight participants in this study expressed the positive influences that athletics has had in their lives. Respect, sportsmanship, and integrity are three key values spelled out clearly in the code of conduct at MU. Being student athletes at MU, all of them have had the opportunities to understand the values prescribed in the athletic code of conduct and demonstrate these values during practices and competitions. According to all the participants in this study, these were values they have learned from their parents and they were further instilled by their coaches.

Respect and sportsmanship are two values from the athletic code of conduct that were well understood, whereas the concept of integrity was confusing to define and misunderstood by half of the participants. According to all the participants in the present study, the three key values in the athletic code of conduct are salient and are reflected in the daily routines of being a student athlete. However, the code of conduct as a document is only introduced and signed by the student athletes at the beginning of their college career.

Hence, it was important for me to learn why these student athletes believed that athletics should have a code of conduct, if they had they seen their athletic code of conduct, what were their perceptions of the key values spelled out in the code and whether this code of conduct strengthened their value system.

Reasons for the Code in Athletics

It was critical for me to understand what their perceptions were to a more overarching question, which was why they thought athletics needed a code of conduct in the first place. It was at this juncture in the interview process that the phrase “competitive” emerged. Even though all eight participants shared very similar responses, Mandy, Salli, and Toby were able to share with depth how challenging it was to play a sport.

Mandy tried hard to articulate her thoughts into words. She described how the environment of play can lead a player astray:

I don't know if I am saying this right. I believe that athletics really needs to have a code of conduct. Umm, because a lot of people who are competitive really sometimes need that guidelines to refer back to. Sometimes when you get competitive you are not always like in the same mind that you would be when you see something going wrong outside of athletics where you want to be somebody else. So I think there definitely needs to be a code of conduct just to remind them about what they need to remember...morals.

Salli professed that the role of the athletic code of conduct was to provide student athletes opportunities to learn to act with civility and decorum in accordance with MU's values and also in their professional careers upon graduation. She shared:

I think the code of conduct is important in trying to outline that you are a student and what you do on the field should help to transfer into your personal and professional life. Sport is kind of a microcosm of the world, which is all about competitive events and winning.

According to Toby, the athletic code of conduct acted as a deterrent against bad behavior and he believed competition often brought about such behaviors:

Every sport is competitive and people can get passionate and if you don't have a code of conduct then, I mean, even when you do have a code of conduct, people lose their tempers which is why you have fouls and penalty flags and time out boxes, whatever they call it in hockey. You have to have it because otherwise you will have these people who might be very strong or very aggressive and then they will just go crazy and beat each other up and it will be no good.

In short, the athletic code of conduct is interpreted in three distinct forms: (1) a guide for positive behavior on the field, (2) a document which provides student athletes clear expectations and deters them from playing against the rules, and (3) a platform that reinforces positive values of the athletic department and the institution.

Code is No Stranger

In this study, the student athletes were asked to share their memories of when they were first introduced to the athletic code of conduct. Although all eight of the participants echoed that they remembered signing it at the very beginning of their college career, at least one of them, Mandy, candidly shared that "I have seen it and I am sure I signed it but it's like sign, sign, sign...nobody reads this stuff". Despite the lack of specific knowledge of the document or its contents, all of them could articulate the importance of the document quite succinctly.

Both Donald and Salli shared that it was through the code of conduct that student athletes knew and understood what was expected of them at MU. Interestingly, seven of the participants believed the code of conduct was a document that governed the behaviors and actions of both the student athletes and the coaches. They also shared that it was the coaches' responsibility to uphold the code of conduct. Colleen shared this notion:

I feel like even though players are supposed to be aware of it, a lot of us aren't aware of like the technical terms that are written in it. So I feel like it is up to the coaches to explain to us what is to be expected of us and then also if we do something that is not up to the school standards then they are there to say that there is a code and you should be following this.

Daisy believed that some coaches used the athletic code of conduct in ways that were practical:

Some include them in their coaching techniques and really want their students to apply them.... I think it's the coaches' responsibility to expressly state this is our code of conduct and here is how we follow it which means to work it into everyday life and practice and how they expect us to act in class and on the field.

All the participants clearly understood that the athletic code as a document was a set of guidelines crafted by the institution, operationalized by the coaches in their daily routines and upheld by the student athletes and coaches in everything that they did on and off the field.

Thus far, it was evident that these student athletes were aware of and respect the athletic code of conduct at MU. Even though some of these student athletes did not know the specific contents of the athletic code of conduct, they understood its importance. Now, it was more important to learn whether these participants knew the contents of MU's athletic code of conduct and the importance of this document.

The Values of MU's Athletic Code of Conduct

According to MU's website, the athletics department has a vested interest in the overall quality of every student athlete's educational experience and the successful completion and graduation from the university. Athletics is an important component of the university's community of learning as it "promotes and nurtures intellectual, personal and professional

development” (MU website, 2013). The promise that the athletic code of conduct makes to every student athlete is that the athletic experience shall promote attitudes of integrity, sportsmanship, and respect for others. The student athletes in this study were asked to define the three key values reflected in the athletic code of conduct. They were also asked how their understanding and perceptions of these said values described in the athletic code influenced their behaviors.

Sportsmanship. This concept was very familiar to all the participants in this study. All eight participants learned about sportsman-like behaviors when they got involved in sports for the first time. In wrestling, shaking hands before and after a match was a mandatory act of sportsmanship whereas for Colleen, a basketball player, it was being considerate to members of the other team.

To three of the participants it was about doing the right thing regardless of the outcome of the game while the other three participants described “sportsmanship” as respecting others; therefore using these two terms synonymously. Donald, Salli, and Finn described “sportsmanship” as doing the right thing. Donald shared rather succinctly that “it doesn’t matter whether you win or lose, you do the right thing”. While Salli stated that being “sportsman-like” meant:

...being confident and positive and proud of who you are as an athlete even if it means putting aside your own. Not your own values but putting aside your own wants to win the other team. Let’s say they beat you but you are still positive about it. You see the things that you did right instead of tearing the other team apart... always doing everything to be the better team and the better person.

Finn believed that sportsmanship was doing the right thing consciously and with clarity:

Being able to know what to do, how to do it and when to do it. Your attitude...you may not get everything your way...shouldn't go out angry with whomever. Sportsmanship is being able to encourage your teammates and just being a good leader and having a smile on your face and being ready to do your best.

George, Daisy, and Toby described "sportsmanship" as a form of respecting others. All three of them echoed that respecting their own teammates, their coaches, the referees, and their opponents as well as the spectators were all acts of sportsmanship. Toby described it best when he shared quite interestingly that the opposing team was no different than him during a competition. He explained this 'man-in-the-mirror' phenomenon thusly:

I think sportsmanship is a lot about composure and always respecting your opponent because there is kind of an interesting mindset with athletics where you kind of only think about yourself. You think that you are putting in all this hard work and I am the good guy and I am the one who should win and he's my opponent. He's from a rival school and they are all bad. They are just evil people and they are coming to our school and trying to make us look bad. Realistically, he is doing the exact same thing that you are doing... he is just from a different school. Trying to put yourself in another person's shoes clears up a lot of that. So I think sportsmanship is trying to understand that they are trying to do the same thing that you are doing. They are just on a different team. Your opponent is not a bad person and trying to be sportsman-like or trying to represent sportsmanship is always going to be to respect your opponent whether they respect you or not.

It was interesting to learn that although sportsmanship was a term that was defined with ease by all the participants in this study, at least one-third of the group defined it almost synonymously

with respecting others. Hence, I was intrigued to know how George, Daisy and Toby would differentiate sportsmanship from the next key value: respect for others.

Respect for Others. This is the second key value in the athletic code of conduct that all participants had no hesitations in defining and sharing their perceptions. In fact, “respect for others” was more clearly understood by all eight participants unlike “sportsmanship” where three of them confused it with the former.

Salli described “respect for others” as trusting their opponents without negative or preconceived notions. It was a way of accepting someone for who they were:

I think respecting someone means you trust them. You also understand...you understand where they are coming from. You trust what their belief systems are. You know what their beliefs are and you are okay with what they are because that’s who they are as a person.

Here, Toby did not describe “respect for others” as “sportsmanship” interchangeably. In fact, he strongly believed respect meant giving his opponents the benefit of the doubt. He explained that respecting others meant:

...not making negative assumptions because if I see someone who is from a certain school, I can assume that he probably acts this way because I met someone from that school who acted that way or someone I competed against from that school kicked me and I didn’t like that. So he probably kicks people. I think respect is giving everyone an equal chance and not assuming negative things about them.

Finn, Mandy, Colleen, and Donald summed up this key value as their ability to understand, appreciate and realize that everyone is different and it is important to value the differences of opinions and beliefs. All four of them talked about virtues such as being considerate to others

and being on their best behaviors when winning or losing. Daisy was the only one who invoked the Golden Rule of treating others as she would want to be treated as the definition for respecting others. However, it was not surprising to me that George continued to equate “respect for others” to “sportsmanship”.

Integrity. The concept of integrity, the third and last key value mentioned in the athletic code, was highly misunderstood by the participants in this study. Integrity, in the athletic code of conduct, is defined as the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. Only two out of the eight student athletes could articulate the meaning as stated in the code of conduct. It was interesting to observe that, out of the other six participants, only one was forthright and honest in declaring her inability to define this concept.

Mandy, in the midst of nervous giggles and loud, gregarious laughter, confessed that she had no clue as to what “integrity” meant. She was unable to define it through words or a story when I tried to encourage her. She simply gave up:

M: Integrity...I don't even know what this word is.

I: There is no right or wrong here.

M: Like I don't even know if I am close. [Continuous laughter]

I: It's ok. It's what you think is right.

M: Umm, integrity...gosh I don't know. I think it is like I kind of want to say that it is like a mixture of stuff. I would think of somebody with integrity...kind of like toughness, a good person [laughter] Integrity...

I: You could even tell me a story or a description of a person who has integrity.

M: I am not really sure. [Deep breath]

Unlike Mandy, who was very sure that she could not make meaning of the concept of integrity, Colleen, George, Donald, and Finn breezed their way through with very short descriptions of what they thought it meant.

Colleen shared that she remembered her coaches referred to the term quite frequently during practice and competition. However, she stated quickly that she did not know the dictionary definition of the word. When probed further to try and share what she might guess, Colleen described integrity as “just standing up for what you believe in and working hard to stand up for it”. George and Donald defined integrity as physical courage and described it as an act of pushing oneself to excel in a sport. Finn, on the other hand, shared that the concept of integrity was one of the eight core values that he had learned in high school. According to Finn, integrity meant “whatever I choose to do or want to do, it starts with me”.

Toby, one of the two participants who was able to define integrity with ease, captured the concept of integrity profoundly and in detail. He explained succinctly how acting with integrity was doing the right thing consistently without exception. In fact, Toby shared a biblical story so I could understand how strongly his faith influenced his perception. He described integrity as:

“Doing the right thing” when no one is watching. It’s a lot about sincerity and character because if I meet someone and they say one thing but I see them doing something completely the opposite, then I might not think that they are very sincere in what they are saying and maybe there is not quite as much integrity. So I think this is kind of like a Bible story. The story goes that at one point Jesus told the Pharisees because they would go out and pray in the public very loudly and make a big spectacle of it like “Oh look at me I am praying” and He said don’t do that. You go in your room and you lock the door

and you are by yourself and you pray there because it's not about everyone seeing you.

It's about doing the right thing when no one is watching.

Salli, on the other hand, concisely stated that to her integrity meant “being honest to yourself and others with what you believe in”. Except for Toby and Salli, each one of the other six participants shared varying interpretations of this key concept.

I learned that these student athletes engaged and immersed themselves into their environment completely. Interpretations were harnessed on an intimate and personal level out of a belief system shaped by experiences in their sports, from family values, and from one's faith, not from a structured or curricular experience. This finding provided evidence that perhaps it is the values that influenced their moral courage and not just the athletic code of conduct. Since the promise of MU's athletic code of conduct is to promote an attitude of integrity, sportsmanship, and respect for others, it was crucial to find out to what extent these student athletes understood the role of the code and their own personal values.

Role of the Code in Value System

Half of the participants in this study shared that MU's athletic code of conduct was an extension of their own values. The concepts of sportsmanship, respect and integrity further strengthened what they already believed in and practiced. These values were familiar as Colleen explained:

I think they have been there all along. And I think all of them strengthened and grew because of the people here and because of my experience with them throughout my basketball career. I try to make a conscious effort to better myself when I am away. I know that a lot of times I get frustrated with people but I try to respect them anyway even though I may not agree with them. Athletics has made me more aware.

As for Daisy, her value system has also been strengthened and re-affirmed because she has always had a strong sense of these three values and being in athletics gave her a consistent and familiar environment. Both George and Finn reflected that the code of conduct acted as a guide and reconfirmed what they already knew. Toby and Salli believed that the code of conduct was not just a document that guided their actions on the field but it was a set of values that they would take with them beyond their college career. For Toby, the athletic code reinforced what he was taught at home and in church.

Salli was able to articulate why she was proud to be a student athlete at MU and how her sport was preparing her to face the outside world. Salli summed it up passionately:

Uhm...the athletic code has been really instrumental in shaping my value system. I think all three values are really important to have as a student athlete and it even goes beyond being a student athlete...like being a person. That's really what the college experience is about especially at this level and in Division III where you are not being paid to play a sport. So having integrity is doing what is right for yourself and doing what is right for others, being honest with yourself and others and telling them something is wrong or you are not ok with that. It is really important to have that integrity because it can become ugly later. And then respect for others, I think it has been shaped here because I realize, especially this year, how much the freshmen respect me since I respect them. If I am willing to go the extra mile to help them out then that respect is vital in how we play together. And then sportsmanship... I think that just continues. I think all three (attributes) have continued to shape me, especially sportsmanship. Because there are times where people are negative on the team and I could tear them down and yell at them instead I try to approach them and understand their situation and figure out how I can talk

to them or why they are acting that way. I think before coming to college I would not have necessarily looked at it this way.

Although I was taken aback by the passion and fervor that Salli exhibited in her response, I respected her ability to formalize her thoughts in answering a rather philosophical question. On the other hand, two participants shared candidly that the code of conduct had no effect or added value to their set of beliefs. Donald and Mandy adamantly shared that they had had these values all along and the code did not matter. Donald described:

I am one of those guys no matter what I do, I will still uphold those three attributes outside of sports. I might be playing a friendly game of chess I should still have sportsmanship and respect the person and the game. It doesn't matter because I still live my life within those three realms.

At this time after listening to the student athletes' responses about understanding the athletic code of conduct, it was important to know how these student athletes understood the term "moral courage" and if they were able to identify moral dilemmas on and off the field. It was important for me to learn how these participants engaged in acts of moral courage and if the athletic environment was adequately conducive to take a moral stand.

Moral Courage

Moral courage is the ability to persist in a moral task, to have the courage to engage in behavior that serves a moral goal while overcoming fatigue and temptations (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999). According to Pianalto (2012), it is the kind of courage that is exhibited by those who risk punishment for taking a morally motivated stand. Lachman (2007) argued that moral courage was an individual's ability and capacity to overcome fear and openly support one's core values.

Understanding Moral Courage

Moral courage, introduced in the second half of the interview process, was a difficult concept for all eight participants to grasp. This portion of the interview process was laden with pregnant pauses coupled with points of clarification. At least two of the participants wanted to know how moral courage differed from physical courage. One of the participants was perplexed because she believed that she had never heard of the phrase. Two of the other participants remained silent for an extended period of time before attempting to define moral courage. Nonetheless, these moments of long pauses, quiet thinking, and thoughtful clarifications led to responses rich in detail, insight, and conviction.

All eight student athletes' responses converged to highlight two distinct definitions of moral courage. The responses were rich and colorful, and most stated more than one definition for moral courage. Responses were extensive and intentional. In essence, moral courage was defined as someone possessing the ability to stand up for what you believed in and to do the right thing regardless of what others thought.

Ability to Stand Up for Oneself. Six participants defined moral courage as the act of standing up for oneself. Toby, a wrestler and also a senior on his team, was one of the two participants who asked for clarifications. He described moral courage as having the ability to make decisions aligned with his values:

Moral courage, I would think of it to mean applying your morals to decision making where you see something which is either not being done or something that is being done wrongly or immorally. And you stand up against it and for the right thing that it actually is.

Salli, on the other hand, paused for an extended period of time before committing herself to a definition. When asked why she was hesitating, Salli said that she was choosing the right words to describe moral courage:

...is to understand what your values are and understanding what the values are of other people but still sticking with your own and not being afraid to stay with them. Not backing down from what you believe just because there is outside pressure.

For Daisy, who was quick to respond, moral courage meant “being put into a situation that kind of goes against your belief system and values but then still having the nerve to stand up for your values and defend what you think whether it is what everybody thinks or not”. Mandy, a young sophomore who had struggled with the concept of integrity earlier in the interview process, was rather succinct when she said moral courage to her was “sticking up for what you think is morally right”.

Colleen, the junior basketball player, was apprehensive and she struggled in providing her response initially. After a few long minutes of silence, she described:

Moral courage...morals are like your values and beliefs and courage is like... Moral courage is standing up for what you believe in. Umm, not necessarily do something about though that also plays a role in it but just being aware of your values and beliefs so you don't umm...you aren't persuaded or are influenced by others' beliefs at the same time.

George, the other wrestler and also a senior on his team, believed that acting with moral courage meant having an opportunity in one's lifetime to act with conviction. He summed it up after a long pause:

To me it is when there is a time to stand up for yourself and you may not have the time or backing of others but you must have the moral courage to do what you want or what you believe in. Standing behind that takes a lot of courage and guts to do that.

For five of these participants, having moral courage meant doing something. It was not a passive behavior but an intentional act that utilized one's values as a catalyst.

Do the Right Thing. Three of the participants believed that someone who did the right thing had moral courage. This commitment in actively engaging to right a wrong because it aligned with one's values was an overarching theme. For Toby, moral courage was not only standing up for what he believed in but also doing what is right despite negative consequences. He shared:

Moral courage happens when someone else is in a bad situation and you know that if you stand up for them you will be accosted or you will be treated poorly or people will react adversely to it. But you are willing to take that because it is the right thing to do. And hopefully it is not a physical repercussion but I am thinking that it is probably comments or glares that you will receive.

Moral courage was also described as an opportunity to identify wrong-doings. For Salli, having moral courage meant "knowing what's wrong and be willing to tell that person that it's wrong and to tell them why they can't do it...to stick to your beliefs". She described how she had to muster her courage when faced with a moral dilemma with one of her softball teammates:

I think, especially on campus as a college student, there have been a lot of situations where you have to have your own moral courage. There have been a lot of situations where your teammates or your friends want you to help them with an assignment. People have asked me for papers and I don't want to necessarily make them fail but I know that

it is wrong in my own beliefs to give my work to other people and for them to not do their work on their own. I know that it is wrong and it's cheating and it's not going to help them. So I think that actually has come up a few times in the past couple of days, I had a teammate who was plagiarizing a paper and that's like one of the main things I am really against: plagiarism. I always make sure that I don't do it.

In the above example, Salli shared that acting out of the norm and speaking out against one's own teammates required moral courage. According to Salli, she is in an environment where it is easier and often expected to engage in behaviors that are non-confrontational even if these behaviors are wrong. She further explained that her teammates were her support system and to confront one of her own is sometimes detrimental to the team. Cohesiveness and mutual respect might be jeopardized in such instances within the team. Although this example of moral courage is not one where Salli was confronting the power of authority, there was a risk of punishment where she could have been ostracized. Yet, Salli chose to draw on her strengths to ensure that she upheld her values and acted with moral courage. Like Salli, Donald shared that life provides him with opportunities to be courageous all the time. According to him, to have moral courage meant to do "something outside your own realm for a greater good".

For all these student athletes, moral courage was seen as an opportunity to stay true to one's own values, to persist in a moral task without fear and to have the courage to engage in behavior that resulted in good. In this present study, acting with moral courage was often standing up for oneself against one's teammates and not necessarily against a coach or someone in a position of authority. Doing the right thing, even if it meant following the rules, required these student athletes to be morally courageous because it was during such occasions that they had to make the right choice. Hence, in order to investigate how these student athletes engaged in

doing the right thing, it was crucial to understand what factors empowered to move beyond being a passive bystander to taking an active role in doing the right thing.

Empowered to Act with Moral Courage

All eight participants in this study voiced that they had a responsibility to be morally courageous. Despite the circumstances and the types of sports they played, these student athletes strongly believed that a variety of factors aided them to do the right thing. Gathering strength from their own psyche, their seniority on the team, and their community – coaches, parents, and peers – and finally gathering strength and guidance from the athletic code of conduct empowered these student athletes to act with moral courage during practice sessions and at competitions.

Four of the participants described themselves as the greatest motivators when faced with a moral dilemma. Their individual values and belief system guided them to act with moral courage. Donald shared that he believed he had a responsibility because he was the oldest person on his track team. His maturity and physical age empowered him even though he had only been on his team for a short time. He stated that:

I am the oldest on the track team. But the thing is that the coaches have not given me the responsibility yet to show moral courage. One because I am a sophomore but I am the new kid on the team and I haven't proven myself. I am trying to and I am leading myself up to, although I have the age on my side. But I haven't proven to anyone that I can be morally courageous. But I think I should as an adult.

Unlike Donald, Mandy is the youngest on her track team; but despite her youth, she asserted that she has “some kind of responsibility to be morally courageous.... I expect it from myself”.

Colleen and Daisy echoed each other when they shared that every decision made starts from

“within themselves”. Colleen, the basketball player, shared it was solely about being true to herself and her values because her actions had direct repercussions on her teammates. She said:

If you aren't being morally courageous you are not only hurting yourself, you are also hurting your teammates. If you don't speak your own opinion, then you are not going to give others room to grow. Like you are not going to give them a reason to think what they [have] done, like if they have done something wrong then you don't say that they are wrong then they are just going to keep doing it and not change.

For Finn, being a student athlete meant that he was a role model for his peers. As a result, he is compelled to act with moral courage because of how he wants people to view him. His position on the track team has given him very few opportunities to stand up for what he believes in but when he is confronted, he leans on his values. On the contrary, Salli strongly believed that her position as a senior on her softball team has provided her the leverage to act with moral courage. She attributed her zeal to doing good to the length of time she had spent being a part of the team and her experiences. As the captain of the softball team, Salli shared:

This year, I am in a unique position where I am the only senior on the team. There is only one junior, one sophomore, and 14 freshmen. So I am just kind of in that natural position where I have seen things more than everyone else on the team through different classes, different problems and experiences. The rest of the team hasn't been able to experience. I feel like I want to leave something behind...more as a senior so that the team can build upon when I am gone.

Salli, Daisy and Toby credited their coaches in empowering in giving them ability to stand up and make the right decision in a moral dilemma. According to them, coaches are instructors, mentors and also guardians of the athletic code of conduct. Their responsibility is to

disseminate the contents of the code of conduct to their teams, integrate and apply the values of the code into daily practices and competitions and uphold the athletic code of conduct. Daisy shared how her coaches always reminded her not to engage in behavior that was contrary to the code of conduct. Salli described how her coaches and the athletic code of conduct empowered her to act with moral courage:

Naturally the coaches have leaned on me to ensure that I display moral courage and role model for the younger freshmen on the team. I try to do what I can on the field. My softball coaches make sure that we are doing things right like in the code of conduct. It's how we carry ourselves. We are not allowed to text in class or tweet. Someone used profanity last year on twitter and got kicked off our team for giving our team a bad image. So I think my coaches take it really, really seriously.

Toby also shared that coaches really mattered and were seen as the cheerleaders of their team. He stated that "one of the biggest encouragers for having moral courage is probably coaches". He shared that the coaches guided him and his teammates to uphold the values articulated in the athletic code of conduct. It is done through application of these values on the court during practice and competition. Toby strongly believed that his growth as a strong and ethical character has been a combination of experiences throughout his journey as a student athlete. Toby was able to summarize best when he revealed that it takes a village to empower him to act with moral courage:

It can come from people who have been examples for us like parents and coaches. It can also come from being in a certain leadership position. Like when Spiderman says, "With great power comes great responsibility!" With leadership on the team or in any

organization, you should have moral courage and know what your team needs and what to stand up for and how to handle the situation.

Every participant in this study felt empowered to act with moral courage. However, I wanted to understand if they found themselves in situations on the field where they had to act with moral courage. All eight student athletes were encouraged to delve deep using personal stories. It was essential to hear their authentic stories.

Acting with Moral Courage

During the time this study was conducted, all eight participants were engaged in spring athletic programs where practices and competitions consumed their days. With hectic schedules, balancing academics and athletics, these student athletes were able to identify specific moments in time where they were challenged to confront moral dilemmas and commit themselves to doing the right thing.

Salli, Colleen, and Toby shared stories of how they took a stand against their own teammates while Donald described how he stood up for an athlete from another team during a race. Salli and Colleen were involved in team sports, softball and basketball respectively and their experiences revealed that they faced moral dilemmas on the field or court more frequently because of the nature of their sport. According to both of them, they often had to step up since their success depended on their teammates. Salli described one such instance where she was confronted to do the right thing at a softball match:

There was one school that liked to hit our players and knock them down. They would go out of their way to do that. I have had teammates come up to me and say that this girl is going to come up to bat and will hit another girl on purpose. So it is kind of a struggle between me wanting to defend my team and me understanding that the other team is

upset and that it is also wrong to purposely injure someone. So I had to stand up and say that we are not going to do that. I will try to strike them out. That will do more to stop their behavior than hitting them and hurting them because the consequences of hurting someone physically could be horrible. You don't know what they are going through or what had happened for them to act that way that day. And you don't know what could happen if you did hurt them. They could be out for the season. So you don't know the consequences. So I just stood up for myself and said that I am not going to do that. Some of my teammates were just kind of irritated as to why I didn't listen to them. "You are not on our side" but then a couple of them were on my side because they understood that obviously you shouldn't hurt someone on purpose. I was frustrated that my teammates would even consider that as an option but I was just confident with my decision. I knew that it was the right one even if they disagreed with me that was just the way it is. And I was ok with it.

Salli was able to exhibit confidence in her decision-making by standing her ground because her actions aligned with her values and the code of conduct. Taking a stand here meant that she disagreed with her teammates and chose not to engage in an unsportsmanlike behavior. Salli shared that she could have been ignored or ostracized by her teammates for disagreeing with them. Despite this possible adverse reaction from her teammates and as the captain of the team, she was more compelled to model the way for her younger players. This act of moral courage was one of the many times that Salli stood up for what she believed in despite how her other teammates felt. It is important to recognize that the "man-in-the-mirror" phenomenon once again presented itself when Salli described being empathetic towards the other team.

The story that Colleen shared differed from Salli's because she had to confront her own teammate during a game. Winning the basketball game was only possible if she gathered her courage to do what was necessary. Despite the volatile situation, Colleen stood up against a larger and stronger player. She described this act of moral courage in her own words:

This girl on my team, she is taller than me and bigger but she cusses a lot more than I do and like if the referees hear you cuss, they will give you a technical foul and you will be out of the game and so when we were playing a game she fouled someone. She clearly fouled someone. So she started saying stuff and I ran up to her and I like put my hand on her mouth so she couldn't say anything and I was like Kayla you need to calm down. She almost hit me and I told her "You need to stop and take breaths." She had trouble controlling her anger and so I just tried my best to control that for the better of the team because if she was put out...like if she had to sit the bench any longer than she would have then our team would have been lost. Our team...we needed her and so I was just trying to help out the team in that situation. I played with her for three years and so I knew the way she played. I knew that if she continued to cuss she would have gotten thrown out of the game. So I knew like I had to do something about it and I couldn't just let her do it. I had to step up and tell her that she couldn't do it and she had to calm down. Colleen had to remind her team mate to exhibit values of sportsmanship and respect for others on the court during a game. Colleen shared that although she procrastinated quite a bit to overcome her fear before taking action because she was confident that it was the right thing to do for her team.

Doing the right thing compelled Toby to go against the rest of his team to protect a younger wrestler. He shared a time when he was a senior on the wrestling team and he had to act

with moral courage so as not to compromise his values. He stated that even though wrestling was an individual sport where they did not compete together, he and his teammates shared a sense of camaraderie and did everything else together. Toby described his story:

There was this smallest guy. He was 103 pounds and he was a freshman. I came into the wrestling room one day and he was kind of mummified in tape and they were rolling him around in the wrestling room. And I was like “Guys! Let him out!” and they were like “No, he’s fine. He is fine with it.” I told them to let him out and they started poking him and stuff. I have a knife on my keychain and I pulled it out. They ran away and I was like “I am not going to...cut anybody. I am going to cut the tape off.” It really bothered me that they would single someone out and treat them poorly. Especially as I was trying to lead the team in whatever capacity a senior student does. I think it was important at that instance for me to react in a way to let them know that it’s not ok to do this because then maybe when I leave they’ll do it less. I don’t know. I mean I don’t think I have a huge impact on people but any impact that I do have especially in a leadership role should be a positive one.

Just like Toby, reacting in a way to let them know that it was not right was the reason why Donald, a track runner, acted with moral courage. He was at a race as a spectator when he witnessed an incident that compromised his principles. Donald described how:

A Hispanic runner got discriminated against on track and the only official was the gunner on the other end of the track. I witnessed it and I also took care of the problem. After the official came down and asked what happened, the timers told the official and I was right there. I heard every word they said and the official also knew me at that time. I stepped in

and said they were lying and explained what happened. The official believed me. That's where I have seen someone being discriminated against because of race. That's wrong.

All four of these student athletes were able to share their stories when they had to stand up to do the right thing. Salli, Colleen, and Toby shared that at times their seniority on the team helped them to do the right thing while at other times taking a stand meant not compromising their values. For Donald, it was his strong convictions to his personal values that contributed to his act of moral courage. For some it was the natural thing to do while for others it was outside of the comfort level.

On the other hand, half of the participants in this study were unable to share any personal stories where they had acted with moral courage. All of these student athletes were involved in individual sports such as track or wrestling. George, the senior wrestler, was silent. Although I encouraged him to think back to his younger days when he was in high school, he said that he had nothing to share. Finn and Mandy, both track runners, did not have any stories about themselves acting with moral courage while running. They asserted that it was an individual sport where they hardly interacted with others. According to them, running was a solitary endeavor and you were only accountable to yourself.

Daisy, another track runner, described it best:

Track is different. You are technically in a team but it's really an individual sport. You compete in your own events. I have never had an instance where I am compromising another teammate. If somebody is injured, I am not taking over their spot because it may not be my area of expertise. So I never really had to deal with that.

Responses from Finn, Mandy and Daisy illustrated that their experiences differed from those who played team sports or contact sports. Based on these differing points of view, I was curious

and anxious to find out if the athletic environment provided opportunities for student athletes to act with moral courage. Despite the fact that the athletic code of conduct was the same, perhaps the nature of an individual sport versus a team sport determined the ease with which these student athletes acted with moral courage.

The Athletic Environment

This section on moral courage turned out to be the most difficult segment of the interview process. Participants in this study were finding it harder to provide simple and quick answers. Questions posed required them to be thoughtful, introspective, and perhaps even retrospective. The time it took to answer was longer and the answers were detailed. Participants were asked if athletics allowed them to act with moral courage – how and when did they engage in morally courageous situations if they did and why if they did not.

Five of the participants strongly argued that the athletic environment provided them with opportunities to act either with moral courage or not with moral courage. Regardless of what the athletic code of conduct stated, these student athletes shared that when confronted with moral dilemmas, their behaviors were often reactive on the field. Competition and winning could cloud one's judgment to act with moral courage. Salli described candidly how the softball field could be a morally disconcerting and challenging venue where one has to decide whether to play dirty or play with integrity. She said:

It gives you more opportunities to display or not display moral courage. It's hard in softball to get around a lot of the rules because you rely on umpires but you can play dirty and you can trip people. You can hit them like harder than you should and you can run into them when you are running across the bases or slide into them with your cleats up to hurt them or to slide into them hard to take out their knees. There are certain things that

you know you can do. I think that is the difference between teams that are respected and teams that have a reputation for playing dirty and I know that there are teams in our league who you just have to as you are preparing to play a game, say, “Be careful” because they will slide into you and they will cut you with a metal cleat. One of my teammates got her arm broken because the girl ran into her purposely to snap her arm. So you just have to be aware and know that you don’t want to have that reputation and I think that it is really up to the coaches. If they see you playing dirty, they need to stop it or your teammates need to yell at you and tell you to get yourself back together.

Similarly, Mandy and Daisy shared that the athletic environment was two sides of the same coin. As a student athlete, they were faced with situations where they could have chosen to either do the right thing or choose to not stand up. According to them, it was up to the student athlete to use the opportunity to decide what is best. Daisy echoed these sentiments quite succinctly:

I feel like athletics gives you the opportunity to do the right thing and it also presents the opportunity to do the wrong thing. There are opportunities that some people take advantage of – it happens in football I mean it does happen in running too. It’s a chance to really prove that you are able to do that [act with moral courage]...that you are able to be a moral person and act morally. Like I said, both options present themselves and it gives you the opportunity to define your course and make the right decision.

Toby’s response to this question also pointed to this interesting phenomenon of duality. He suggested that rules in all sports were there to give student athletes the parameters to work within and also work around. Toby described his perception on how athletics encourages morally courageous acts:

I think athletics gives you rules and gives you options to go around a rule. Not cheating is a rule. Student athletes may not like it and want to go around it so every sport presents rules. In wrestling our coach says that you should not leave it up to the ref, which essentially means that you want to have enough points to where even if the ref isn't judging the match fairly that you will still win. Umm, if you are trying to cut corners... if you are playing dirty and gaining pressure points when you are not supposed to do things like that. You shouldn't but there are people who do those things and then there are people who don't. You kind of make the decision to win or lose with dignity or you are going to do whatever kind of scrappy stuff you can to win. It gives you the option. It tells you that you might lose if you try to have moral courage or you might win. You have to decide.

On the other hand, two of the participants, Colleen and Finn, described basketball and football as two team sports that were complicated environments for acts of moral courage. Colleen highlighted that basketball was a close contact sport where being aggressively physical was part and parcel of playing the game. As far as Colleen was concerned, playing with a group of girls had its challenges. This is how Colleen described her environment:

Yah it's very physical with basketball. You are really very up close and physical with your opponent and a lot of the girls on the team, girls especially, they don't like what people say about them or to their face. So they want to get back at them or start something. A lot of people don't have the ability to contain themselves. An example of this was at a finals game, this girl got in my face and ...she was shorter than me and I felt that I was superior over her but she was just like in my face saying stuff and I just stared at her. She asked, "What are you doing right now?" but I didn't say anything. Still it was

like ridiculous. Girls have such hot heads that it's just unbelievable. There are many people out there who don't display moral courage in a positive manner.

Just like Colleen, Finn was certain that some athletic sports encouraged bad behavior. Although Finn ran track at MU, he played football in high school. He believed that football was a mental sport where opposing teams engaged in psychological games such as talking inappropriately on the field. Finn seemed sure that inappropriate behaviors were encouraged on the field so that the game would be sensational for the spectators. Finn described his perception thus:

I think for certain sports, like in football, displaying moral courage hardly happens. I guess a lot of stuff goes on the playing field that referees, coaches, certain players would know certain plays like cheap talk, trash talking. No one would know but the 22 guys on the field. It is not necessarily a bad thing but it's a way to get into your opponents' heads. It's not like the cheap shots of trying to get somebody out of the game but more of the trash talking and getting people off the game. Football is also a mental sport and I don't think that moral courage is really displayed. If it is a fair game of football, then I don't think people will watch it. Basically it is like something has to go on [some trash talking] to get the crowd hyped, motivate the team, some penalty that nobody agrees on to change the momentum of the game.

When asked if the cross country track environment was different, Finn quickly asserted that personally he had never experienced or witnessed situations where his own values were compromised.

It was interesting to note that depending on the type of sport: individual or team, the athletic environment either fostered or did not foster acts of moral courage. At the same time, it was also evident that the student athletes who experienced moral dilemmas chose to stand up for

the right thing despite the environment while the rest chose not to act with moral courage because they had not faced such moral dilemmas at MU. Nevertheless, it became important to find out if the athletic code of conduct, which is a set of guidelines, played a role in shaping the moral courage of these student athletes.

The Athletic Code and Moral Courage

The athletic code of conduct serves as a framework which guides student athletes to stay true to the expectations set by the institution. At MU, it is a document that is presented once to all student athletes at the beginning of their student athlete career and never or rarely revisited. It is signed by all student athletes so that they recognize their commitment to the athletic code of conduct and understand clearly the expectations that MU has placed on them. The administration in the athletic department and the coaches together with the student athletes keep the promise of being good sportsmen who respect others and act with integrity. These are the key values spelled out in MU's athletic code of conduct. Since the athletic code of conduct plays such a prominent role in the indoctrination of the student athlete into the institution, it became important to understand if this code of conduct was just as prominent in the decision making when student athletes were faced with moral dilemmas.

Code and Sense of Morality

All eight participants were asked to describe what bearing the athletic code of conduct had in their own sense of morality and moral courage. The responses to this question elicited four major themes. Two of the student athletes suggested that the code of conduct offered them an opportunity to grow and mature quickly because it assisted them in making the right decisions early in their student athlete career. Donald explained that as a student athlete he found himself in precarious situations where he had to make the right decision as a freshman. In his opinion, he

had to grow up faster than his non-athlete friends because of such moral dilemmas. Learning about sportsmanship, respect, and integrity helped him to work hard at his sport and be focused. He insisted that, unlike him, others around him seem to have no sense of purpose. According to Donald, his own sense of morality and moral courage has been supported and strengthened because the athletic code of conduct exists.

Similarly Finn, the track runner, described the athletic code of conduct as a tool that strengthened his moral compass because the three key values aligned with his own sense of morality. For him, the code of conduct served as a reminder to do the right thing:

I think people lose sight of waking up every day and doing the things that they set out to do and they lose sight of their purpose. The code of conduct is a good way to remind me why I am doing what I am doing: waking up at 6am and carrying out my day's responsibilities.

Finn's reference to the code giving him a sense of purpose was echoed by the remaining five student athletes. Every one of them stated that the athletic code of conduct gave them guidance and clear expectations to act with moral courage on the field and beyond.

The key values in the athletic code of conduct – sportsmanship, respect for others and integrity – were inculcated into them throughout their tenure as student athletes. These values were extensions of their own belief system and as a result strengthened their own sense of morality. Salli shared that the code of conduct provided her with clear and attainable expectations which equipped her with the tools to act with moral courage when faced with any moral dilemmas. She described that the code as:

...an important thing to live by obviously. I don't sit down and take the document and read all its technical terms. I take the gist of it out. Being respectful towards other people,

having a positive attitude, no matter what the outcome, integrity really is that one thing that I believe in and also being honest and true to myself.

For Colleen, her sense of morality was strengthened by the athletic code of conduct because its contents reflected the values that her parents taught her as a child. The code of conduct also gave the impetus and motivation to stand up and make the right choices beyond college. She shared that:

The code of conduct is a large part of a lot of people's lives even though they don't think about it. The way I was raised and what my parents have taught me like how you should respect people and everything. The code guides me and my actions now and in the future.

Toby articulated that the code of conduct reinforced the values that were important to him. It taught him how to respond under certain circumstances and these were skills which he would utilize at work after graduating. He shared:

I think the code helps me to know how to react when I win or lose. Respect, integrity and sportsmanship provide me with a certain way to act whether I win or you lose. It puts things into perspective in terms of importance. While athletics is great and it can be a lot of fun and you put in a lot of work, is it the most important thing in your life? And I think you can see a lot of times that once people do not have athletics and once they graduate college or don't become an Olympian, they are still competitive people but what are they competing for. It might be their job or a game of checkers they play with a family member. It is during such times that I lean on the code of conduct because it puts things into perspective – what things are important and at different phases of your life.

Mandy, the youngest participant in this study, was the only student athlete who seemed very conflicted as to how the athletic code of conduct shaped her sense of morality. She kept

silent for an extended period of time before responding. She shared similar sentiments as Donald where she believed that athletics had accelerated her growth into a mature person who was faced with moral dilemmas more often than non-athletes. At the same time, she argued that the athletic code of conduct had no special place in her sense of morality. Her ability to act with moral courage was motivated by her values only and how she was raised. She strongly asserted that though she believed that student athletes should pay more attention to the code of conduct, it was not a document that shaped her sense of morality or moral courage. Mandy explained:

I feel like I don't go around saying to myself that I should have respect for this person or have integrity.... I am not saying, "Oh! Code of conduct. I am the way I am. It is how I was raised. People who graduate and go on with life are not referring to that code of conduct. It's mainly how they have been raised is their code of conduct. The place of the code for a student athlete is not as explicit or as front and center as it should be sometime I think. I think all the components of how I am raised are bigger.

Seven out of the eight student athletes confirmed that the athletic code of conduct shaped their moral courage because the key values spelled out in the code of conduct further aligned or reflected their own personal values thereby strengthening their sense of morality. This juncture in the data collection process presented an opportunity for me to pause and wonder if these participants had experienced reflecting on their activities as student athletes. Perhaps this research study provided them a chance to ponder and make the connection between the values in the athletic code of conduct with their personal values. An opportunity to reflect resulted in personal stories, which shared a similar theme and showcased how the code of conduct guided in the acts of moral courage of the seven student athletes.

The Code as a Guide

It was essential to keep in mind that this study focused on the three primary values described in the athletic code of conduct – sportsmanship, respect for others and integrity. Hence, the stories that emerged revealed examples of acts of moral courage in the context of these attributes. George, Finn, Colleen and Mandy shared that the code of conduct reminded them that sportsmanship was an attribute that they could often engage in because they were involved in individual sports. Mandy best described this with her personal story:

In track it's hard to be...I guess in any sports it's hard to be like friends with people you are competing against especially when they are your own teammates. I run against my teammates all the time especially when you come from a small school and you go to small meets. But for sportsmanship, I always remember this girl who always beat me in these races. When it finally came down to regionals, I just full out beat her by a second and a half in this race. We still went up to each other and hugged each other. It was our senior year and we showed each other that we both did good despite the competition.

George, Finn and Colleen resoundingly described how it was the little things they did on a daily basis that reflected their sportsman-like behavior. It was the “good game” and the handshakes after a game regardless of a win or a loss that was important to them because many times it was easier to just ignore the opponents whom you disliked. Having sportsmanship consistently, even in the minute times, was more significant to them.

For Salli, the code of conduct reminded her to always have respect for her teammates, coaches, fans, and opponents. She believed that everyone she interacted with was inherently good-natured and it was circumstances on the field that sometimes brought out the ugliness in

people. Her respect for her teammates enabled her to trust that they were capable of winning games without her presence on the field. She explained:

When I was a freshman, I wanted to do Model UN in San Francisco and it is one week in April which meant that I had to be absent for four to six games. I went in and talked to my coaches. My coaches have always supported student first, athlete second, so I went in there to share that I am at MU to get an education first. I mean I love softball and I put everything I have into it but if it is something that is going to benefit me later on I am going to talk to my coaches and I am going to do it. They were fine with it. They knew that if I did it in my freshman year that I would do it every year after that. So every year, they know that I am gone in April. So they schedule games around when I am leaving. In this case, my coaches have really supported my decisions. It is personal, professional and athletics and they all connect together. The code of conduct reminds me to respect and therefore trust my teammates. So I know that I am missing those games and I wish I could be there for them but I also have trust my other teammates. I trust that those freshmen are going to be fine and take over when I leave.

Donald and Toby shared instances when the athletic code of conduct assisted them to do the right thing. According to both of them, the athletic code of conduct urges an individual to rise to the top. As student athletes, they believed that they were summoned by the code of conduct to expect more from themselves – to be exemplary and to act with integrity. Donald shared that despite undergoing surgery that left him wheelchair-bound for several months, he continued to attend practice with his teammates and be present. He was compelled to be there with his team, to show his commitment and support even though he could not compete.

Toby, the senior wrestler, found himself in a dangerous situation when he had had one too many concussions and he had to make a decision to continue wrestling or not. For him, removing himself from his team and from the sport he loved was an act of moral courage. With a heavy heart, Toby shared:

My story is not conventional with athletics. I have had many concussions and when I had my sixth one I knew once my head healed up, I could have stayed competing. But that would have definitely impacted my ability to be a student if I had brain damage. If I had continued to wrestle I would have had more concussions where I could have died or had brain damage and no longer function. It really stinks to have to remove yourself from your team for that reason. But having a code of conduct that repeatedly tells me that we are student athletes, it puts the focus on the fact that while athletics are very good and I can gain a lot. My life after college is more important. I needed to know when to stop. That was a hard thing for me to learn but knowing that the school and the coaches understood that made it easier.

It was only then I understood how much Toby missed engaging in a sport that he loved dearly. His opportunities to shine as a student athlete with moral courage were no longer accessible to him on the mat or in the court. However, having been a student athlete all his life until recently, Toby had matured into a young man who respected others, maintained civility and stayed true to his belief system and the values of the athletic code of conduct.

As a researcher, this was one of two times during this study, where I was able to further gain clarity as to what I was trying to learn. Through this process and through the stories shared, I was learning not only about my participants but also about myself. I was entwined and a part of their stories of personal victories and anguish when facing moral dilemmas, wins and losses in

competition, and personal growth and maturity. Throughout the interview process, I reminded myself that I should be an observer. Inwardly, I was excited about the data gathered. However, as the human instrument, I maintained objectivity by ensuring that I did not influence the responses of my participants. I recorded my observations at the end of each interview into my personal journal. These journal entries assisted me in understanding how their stories resonated with me and I developed clarity and insight into the lives of student athletes throughout this process.

Summary of Findings

These student athletes explained that the way in which the athletic code of conduct shaped their moral courage was definitely varied for each one of them (Table 5). The types of sports they were involved in, either individual or team, certainly proved to be environments where some of them were more susceptible to facing moral dilemmas compared to others. Often, they engaged in acts of moral courage against their teammates when confronted with a moral conflict rather than someone in a position of authority. Within this contextual environment, standing up for one's own convictions against one's peers was just as difficult and required strength from within. Nevertheless, the participants shared resoundingly that the most important factor that led them to act with moral courage was their own personal values.

All eight of these student athletes shared that because the athletic code of conduct advocated values that were aligned to their own and reflected values that they believed in, it was only natural for them to take a stand and do the right thing. The three key values spelled out in the athletic code of conduct were extensions of their own set of values that they learned from their parents, coaches and their pastors.

These values strengthened as student athletes grew and moved through schools and into college. These student athletes, unanimously, agreed that athletic codes of conduct should not be

elusive documents that are seen once at the beginning of a student athlete's college career. The athletic code of conduct should be an organic document that is revisited consistently only then it would become inherently relevant. Revisiting the code of conduct coupled with illustrating and fulfilling the three key values on and off the field would result in these values being ingrained and embedded as part of their DNA. One of the participants stated it most precisely when she said "it is really my values that should make up a code of conduct".

Table 5

Summary of Findings

Participant	Toby
Profile	A white male student athlete involved in wrestling at MU. He is a senior and has been a wrestler since he was in seventh grade. He is well-mannered and confident. He has a strong Christian faith. He is mature in his responses and steadfast in his philosophical views on life. His values are shaped by his life experiences, his family and his faith.
RQ1: To what extent do student athletes perceive or understand their university's athletic code of conduct?	Understood all three key values of the code of conduct. "...I am the good guy and I am the one who should win and he's my opponent. He's from a rival school and they are all bad...realistically, he is doing the exact same thing that you are doing... putting yourself in another person's shoes clears up a lot of that". He was able to distinctively define integrity as the ability to do the right thing without exception. His religious faith was the foundation of his moral compass.
RQ2: What does this perception and understanding mean to the student athlete?	The athletic code of conduct acts as a deterrent against bad behavior. Competition brings about such behaviors. MU's athletic code of conduct reinforced values taught at home and in church.
RQ3: How do student athletes define moral courage and to what extent do they believe that they act on moral courage?	The ability to make decisions aligned with his values. He credited his coaches for empowering him to act with moral courage by being advocate of the code of conduct.
RQ4: In what ways are there opportunities or lack thereof for student athletes to act with moral courage?	Though wrestling is an individual sport, there are instances where during training and competition, Toby is empowered to act with moral courage by coaches, teammates. He has a deep sense of responsibility.
RQ5: In what ways is the athletic environment supportive of acts of moral courage?	The environment provides you both options. "I think athletics gives you rules and gives you options to go around a rule. Not cheating is a rule. Student athletes may not like it and want to go around it so every sport presents rules...you kind of make the decision to win or lose with dignity...It gives you the option. It tells you that you might lose if you try to have moral courage or you might win. You have to decide".

Participant	Salli
Profile	An enthusiastic and charming, white female student athlete. She is the captain of the softball team. She has been playing softball since she was a toddler. Her passion for softball is uncompromising. She is the cheerleader and the role model for the freshmen on her team. She wanted college to be more than just playing softball. Her responses were detailed and insightful.
RQ1: To what extent do student athletes perceive or understand their university's athletic code of conduct?	Understands the values of the code of conduct. Integrity means being honest to herself and others. Salli is responsible for living out her values and the code. Her experiences provided her opportunities to act with moral courage with clarity and confidence. Salli explained: "...being confident and positive and proud of who you are as an athlete even if it means putting aside your own want to win the other team. Let's say they beat you but you are still positive about it. You see the things that you did right instead of tearing the other team apart. Always doing everything to be the better team and the better person". Her maturity and her values which align with the code guide her moral compass.
RQ2: What does this perception and understanding mean to the student athlete?	The athletic code of conduct is a guide that gives student athletes opportunities to learn to act with civility and decorum and its values are applicable to everyday living.
RQ3: How do student athletes define moral courage and to what extent do they believe that they act on moral courage?	The ability to stick to your convictions without fear or succumbing to pressure. Knowing what is right and wrong is important to Salli and she believes in "doing good". Her confidence empowers her to be morally courageous always on the field and in her personal life.
RQ4: In what ways are there opportunities or lack thereof for student athletes to act with moral courage?	Salli models the way as the captain. She chooses to act with moral courage at all times. You have to depend on yourself on the field and... you have to trust everything that they are going to do. Softball is a game of failure... I did not realize that when I was young. Now, I tend to lean on myself a lot on the field and then in between innings, I will tell the coach if there is a problem".
RQ5: In what ways is the athletic environment supportive of acts of moral courage?	"Athletics gives you opportunities to display or not display moral courage. You can play dirty It is up to the coaches to stop dirty play. My teammates, my coaches, and I decide which reputation we want to have...good or bad".

Participant	Mandy
Profile	Cheerful, light-hearted white female who runs track at MU. Mandy is a sophomore. Her interviews were strewn with infectious laughter and incessant giggles. Mandy is consumed with classes and practice. Her high school coach saved her from going astray. Mandy believes that her coach has influenced her the most. Mandy had a volatile relationship with her mother when she was growing up. Her youth is reflected in her responses.
RQ1: To what extent do student athletes perceive or understand their university's athletic code of conduct?	Mandy had the most difficult time defining integrity. She was not familiar with the contents of the code though she remembered signing the document. She believes that young people must have parameters, i.e. a code of conduct, in order to function at their best.
RQ2: What does this perception and understanding mean to the student athlete?	Mandy argued that the athletic code of conduct had no special place in her sense of morality. She is motivated to be morally courageous because of her values and how she was raised: "I don't go around saying that I should respect this person or have integrity...I am not saying...'Oh! Code of conduct'. I am the way I am".
RQ3: How do student athletes define moral courage and to what extent do they believe that they act on moral courage?	The ability to do good and "doing the right thing": "sticking up for what you think is morally right and wrong...you step in". She shared that she acts on moral courage whenever such a dilemma presents itself though it does not happen often. She believes that she is empowered by everyone around her to be morally courageous. Her sense of responsibility enables her to act with moral courage always.
RQ4: In what ways are there opportunities or lack thereof for student athletes to act with moral courage?	Track is an individual sport and Mandy shared that she hardly faced moral dilemmas. The opportunities are limited.
RQ5: In what ways is the athletic environment supportive of acts of moral courage?	Mandy could not share if the athletic environment was supportive because track did not provide such opportunities.

Participant	Colleen
Profile	Colleen is the only female basketball player in this study. She is tall and lanky with a very confident demeanor. Her candor and honesty are reflected in her responses. Colleen's passion for her sport is unwavering. A thirteen-year veteran, she argues that athletics must teach athletes responsibility. Her mother shaped her values.
RQ1: To what extent do student athletes perceive or understand their university's athletic code of conduct?	Understood all three key values of the code of conduct. However, Colleen was unaware that these were a part of MU's athletic code of conduct. These were values she learned from her family and through her life experiences. She holds them to the highest extent although she shared that it was difficult to do so when playing basketball.
RQ2: What does this perception and understanding mean to the student athlete?	The athletic code of conduct acts as a guide on how to behave on the court and its values are relevant throughout life's endeavors. Although she does not think of the code of conduct when doing good, its values are universal and part of her own belief system. Her belief system is strong and was shaped before coming to MU.
RQ3: How do student athletes define moral courage and to what extent do they believe that they act on moral courage?	Moral courage is "being aware of your values and beliefs so you aren't persuaded or influenced by others' beliefs". Colleen is motivated by her sense of responsibility to act with moral courage. She acts with moral courage to the best of her ability.
RQ4: In what ways are there opportunities or lack thereof for student athletes to act with moral courage?	Basketball is a sport where acting without moral courage is easier. There are many opportunities to foul a player just to score a basket. Her sense of morality empowers her to be brave because "if you aren't being morally courageous you are not only hurting yourself you are also hurting your teammates. If you don't speak your mind then you are not going to give others room to grow...I need to give them a reason to think about what they have done". However, she has not always been true to her convictions when she was in high school. She is getting better at it as she gains seniority in college.
RQ5: In what ways is the athletic environment supportive of acts of moral courage?	Basketball is very physical and playing the sport can be aggressive. Competition allows for unacceptable behaviors shared Colleen. Nevertheless, her teammates and coaches and her sense of morality support the acts of moral courage.

Participant	Daisy
Profile	A white female with dark flowing hair and a petite frame is a sophomore at MU. She runs cross country and track. She knew that she wanted to pursue her running career at college. Despite being shy and quiet, her responses were pointed and insightful. Being an athlete has made her strong, determined and driven. Her values are shaped by her family and her life experiences.
RQ1: To what extent do student athletes perceive or understand their university's athletic code of conduct?	Daisy shared that these values were part of her personal belief system: "I have always had a strong sense of all three key values of the code. So I guess being here has just kind of made them more defined and prominent." Her values aligned with the code and serve as her moral compass.
RQ2: What does this perception and understanding mean to the student athlete?	The athletic code of conduct acts as a guide that Daisy reflects on as it shapes her actions. Integrity and respect are good words to live by.
RQ3: How do student athletes define moral courage and to what extent do they believe that they act on moral courage?	Moral courage to me would be being put into a situation that kind of goes against your belief system and values. Like what we talked about earlier but then still having the nerve to stand up for them and defending what you think whether it is what everybody thinks or not.
RQ4: In what ways are there opportunities or lack thereof for student athletes to act with moral courage?	"You are technically in a team but it's really an individual sport. You compete in your own events. I have never had an instance where you are compromising another team mate or if somebody is injured, you are not taking over their spot because it may not be your area of [expertise]. So I never really had to deal with that... I can't really think of anything. Running does not really have a lot of things that you can do that are immoral".
RQ5: In what ways is the athletic environment supportive of acts of moral courage?	The opportunities in track are limited but there are times where "you can trip somebody or cut them off or cut a course. I believe in fairness and equality and that I wouldn't do it because I wouldn't want it done to me". Athletics gives one an opportunity to either act or not act with moral courage: "It's a chance to really prove that you are able to act with moral courage...both options present themselves and it gives you the opportunity to define your course...yourself".

Participant	Finn
Profile	African-American student athlete who runs track and plays football. Coming from an inner city, urban environment from another state, Finn had to find his home away from home at MU. He has been involved in sports since a young child. Finn's quiet, shy and matter-of-fact demeanor resulted in rational and concise responses. Finn's values are shaped by his faith and his family.
RQ1: To what extent do student athletes perceive or understand their university's athletic code of conduct?	Has been familiar with all three key values of the code of conduct since high school had similar values. Agrees that athletics should have a code of conduct and shared that they talked about these values often in football. However, Finn did not know that these were values found in MU's athletic code.
RQ2: What does this perception and understanding mean to the student athlete?	The athletic code of conduct is a good way to remind him that he why he was doing what he was doing. It gave him a sense of purpose and reminds him to engage doing good.
RQ3: How do student athletes define moral courage and to what extent do they believe that they act on moral courage?	Moral courage is the ability to do something extraordinary. It is a moral obligation. Finn believes that he owes it to himself and his team. He shared that he was not morally courageous when he was younger but he is more confident in college.
RQ4: In what ways are there opportunities or lack thereof for student athletes to act with moral courage?	Though track is an individual sport, there are very few instances to act with moral courage. Although football provides more opportunities to display moral courage, it is difficult to do so according to Finn. "Football is also a mental sport and I don't think that moral courage is really displayed at such moments as much as if it is a fair game of football, then I don't think people will watch it. Basically it is like something has to go on [some trash talking] to get the crowd hyped, motivate the team, some penalty that nobody agrees on to change the momentum of the game".
RQ5: In what ways is the athletic environment supportive of acts of moral courage?	He does not think that the athletic environment is supportive or not supportive. Finn is empowered to act with moral courage by coaches, teammates.

Participant	Donald
Profile	A white male student athlete who transferred to MU as a non-traditional aged student. He runs track and golf at MU. He is a sophomore. He is a polite and confident individual. His philosophy about participating in sports is that he is accountable to the coaches and is on their time. He has strong convictions about being responsible and being a mature role model for the younger players because of his age. At 23, Donald chooses to create his collegiate experiences according to his desires.
RQ1: To what extent do student athletes perceive or understand their university's athletic code of conduct?	Understood two out of the three key values of the code of conduct. Integrity was defined as physical strength. Donald understood completely the need for an athletic code of conduct and he believed that he also understood its contents.
RQ2: What does this perception and understanding mean to the student athlete?	The athletic code of conduct acts as a guide and a deterrent. It sets the institution's expectations on how student athletes should behave. MU's athletic code of conduct reinforced his personal values.
RQ3: How do student athletes define moral courage and to what extent do they believe that they act on moral courage?	Moral courage means doing "something out of your own realm for a greater good". The ability to make decisions align with his values. He credits his maturity, his age and life experiences for empowering him to act with moral courage.
RQ4: In what ways are there opportunities or lack thereof for student athletes to act with moral courage?	My coaches encourage me to have moral courage in golf but it kind of comes down to yourself because you can cheat. There are ways to shave off strokes on your score or to play the round clean. In golf, you have to trust yourself to do what is right because you are your own referee. However, track is a lonely sport. It lacks opportunities to be morally courageous.
RQ5: In what ways is the athletic environment supportive of acts of moral courage?	Regardless of the athletic environment, Donald believes in himself and is driven by his values which happen to align with the values of the athletic code of conduct. For Donald, there are no exceptions.

Participant	George
Profile	A senior wrestler at MU who was six when he first started his wrestling career. His love for his sport consumes his days. He is a well-mannered and stoic individual. George's responses were short, succinct and often monosyllabic. His quiet demeanor was reinforced when he chose to not answer some questions. Wrestling and his coaches influenced his values.
RQ1: To what extent do student athletes perceive or understand their university's athletic code of conduct?	Understood all three key values. He did not remember that these values were in MU's code.
RQ2: What does this perception and understanding mean to the student athlete?	The athletic code of conduct acts as a guide.
RQ3: How do student athletes define moral courage and to what extent do they believe that they act on moral courage?	The ability to act with conviction. George associated moral courage with physical courage. He believes that he acts with moral courage every time he is confronted by a moral dilemma.
RQ4: In what ways are there opportunities or lack thereof for student athletes to act with moral courage?	Wrestling is an individual sport and there are very few instances. George is empowered to act with moral courage by his coaches and his strong bond with teammates assists him to stand up for what is right.
RQ5: In what ways is the athletic environment supportive of acts of moral courage?	He is confident it is supportive because the coaches ensure that the values of the code are adhered.

CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This present study sought to gain insight into the experiences of eight student athletes from a small, private, liberal arts institution in the Midwest. All eight student athletes in this present study successfully found an institution which appealed to their values and beliefs where staying true to their convictions was less complicated than at most Division I institutions. They have been involved in athletics from an early age and have successfully chosen to pursue their respective sports in college. In part through their involvement in sport, these student athletes have been ingrained with the concepts of sportsmanship, respect for others and integrity.

Research (Dunn & Dunn, 1999; Stoll & Beller, 2000) has shown that the ethical integrity of student athletes decreases as the number of years in a sport increases. In other words, student athletes have a stronger propensity to be “morally calloused” (Stoll & Beller, 2000). Research has also been conducted on the moral reasoning of student athletes, particularly from large institutions, and most findings have revealed that their involvement in sport adversely affects their ability to make decisions when confronted with moral dilemmas when compared to non-athletes (Beller, Stoll, Burwell & Cole, 1995; Bredemeier, 1984; Bredemeier & Shields, 2001).

The intent of this present study was distinctly different from the above-mentioned studies, which focused on the negative behaviors of student athletes. Case study research design was used in general with special attention given to portraiture as a methodology. Portraiture focuses on highlighting the positive aspects of a social system and extracting the element of goodness rather than fixating on the imperfections (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). In accordance with this methodology, this study researched how student athletes, in a Division III institution, were motivated to engage in positive behaviors. It sought to understand how this selective group of student athletes perceived the three key concepts spelled out in the athletic code of conduct – sportsmanship, respect for others, and integrity and in what ways they were

empowered to act with moral courage in an ever changing athletic environment. The conceptual framework of the two constructs – understanding the importance of the athletic code of conduct and how this code shapes the student athletes’ moral courage – shall be discussed in this final chapter. This will be followed by the implications for policies and practice and shall end with the implications for future research.

Discussion

Interviews with these eight student athletes produced extensive and rich data which could potentially have significant implications for policy-making in athletic departments within colleges and universities as well as the moral well-being of student athletes during their college career. The discussion in this chapter shall address how student athletes understand the key concepts of the athletic code of conduct and what role such a code of conduct plays in empowering them to act with moral courage. According to Molander (1987), codes are followed for two reasons: the individual subjects himself or herself to ethical standards above and beyond his or her personal beliefs, or he or she feels there are provisions for enforcement of such standards.

Importance of an Athletic Code of Conduct

The student athlete is a moral agent who is both a team player and a leader, one who displays positive character traits such as courage, loyalty, perseverance and self-sacrifice (Stoll & Beller, 2000). To the contrary, however, student athletes are sometimes involved in environments of play where they might be compelled to engage in unethical behaviors when confronted with a physical or moral dilemma. Often, such behaviors are characterized as violence, the use of prohibited drugs, assaults, intentional injury of opponents, violation of rules and abusive language (Kavussanu, Seal & Phillips, 2006). The establishment of codes of conduct

by intercollegiate conferences became a desirable outcome of this greater concern about moral and ethical misconduct (Jordan, Greenwell, Geist, Pastore & Mahony, 2004).

Foundation for Strong Ethical Culture. Athletics is an important component of the university's community of learning as it "promotes and nurtures intellectual, personal and professional development" (MU website, 2013). One student athlete in the present study articulated that the role of the athletic code of conduct was to provide student athletes opportunities to learn to act with civility and decorum in college and also into their professional careers. The student athletes in this study were insightful and their candid responses allowed me an opportunity to comprehend how they lived as student athletes. They shared that being a student athlete at MU provided them the environment and responsibility to uphold and do the right thing relative to sports and academics while in the college environment.

MU has transcended from its physical architecture into a complex, values-infused, mission-driven educational setting. Its institutional ideals permeate into the different facets of student life. Since the 1850s, MU has continued to provide its students opportunities to make the connections between personal and institutional values both from within the classroom and on the field. Student athletes strongly believed that the athletic experience was further enhanced when the athletic code of conduct explained clearly the expectations and standards that they had to meet. Student athletes described how the attitudes of sportsmanship, respect for others and integrity are best displayed when they are playing a sport. Although some of these student athletes could not recite the specific contents of the athletic code of conduct, they understood the code's importance. When codes of conduct are adhered to correctly, such adherence shows a form of respect and commitment that an organization has towards establishing a strong ethical climate (Stevens, 2009).

Seven of the eight participants believed the code of conduct was a document that governed the behaviors and actions of both the student athletes and the coaches. Half of the participants strongly believed that the key values spelled out in the athletic code of conduct were embodied during practices and competition. Student athletes in this study shared extensively how the three key values in the athletic code of conduct were successfully “reinforced through active practices provided the foundation for a strong ethical culture within an institution” (Desplaces, Melchar, Beauvais, & Bosco, 2007, p. 84). Coaches acted as disseminators of this code. They lived out the code while coaching and teaching on the field. All the student athletes in this present study were able to clearly articulate the athletic code as a visionary and transformational document crafted by the institution, operationalized by the coaches in their daily routines and upheld by the student athletes and coaches in everything that they did on and off the field.

Two of the student athletes shared that, in their opinion, the code of conduct acted as a deterrent against bad behavior. These student athletes believed competition often brought about such inappropriate and unethical behaviors because athletics is a volatile environment which can lead a player astray. This observation is consistent with Harrison-Dyer’s (2011) research. It highlighted that it was such behaviors that provided the model framework for the development of a code of conduct that is designed to identify appropriate behaviors expected of administrators, coaches, student-athletes, and others. Hence, a code of conduct acts as an ethical infrastructure consisting of “formal and informal systems—each including communication, surveillance, and sanctioning components—as well as the climates that support these systems” (Tenbrunsel, Smith-Crowe, and Umphress, 2003, p. 287).

Salient and Familiar Virtues. These student athletes explained that the three key values in MU’s athletic code of conduct aligned with their own personal belief systems and were

extensions of what they had been taught at home and on the field. Understanding and upholding these key concepts came with ease for these student athletes. The student athletes in the present study shared that sportsmanship, respect for others, and integrity were virtues they were taught whilst they were young children both at home and on the field. These values were ingrained into their character development and had become part of their psyche. Greenwell, Geist, Mahony, Jordan, and Pastore (2001) found that two of these three key values – sportsmanship and integrity – were among those most reflected in codes of conduct.

Sportsmanship and respect for others were two virtues that were clearly understood by the student athletes in this study. Their stories portrayed how they had engaged in such positive behaviors during practices and competitions. Having sportsmanship meant, for example, shaking hands with your opponents before and after a game, match or a race. It also meant holding oneself to a higher ethical standard and not being consumed by a loss. This clear understanding of sportsmanship aligned with the findings of a study conducted by Greenwell, Grube, Jordan, and Mahony (2004) where 336 student athletes identified sportsmanship as one of the ideal virtues spelled out in the NCAA code of conduct. Similarly, respecting others was a simple concept that student athletes easily linked with their own belief systems. This was a value that was not only understood easily but also a concept that they had been taught by their biggest cheerleaders – their family and coaches.

Although ‘integrity’ was a term familiar to all eight student athletes, it was an unclear concept to more than half of them. Six of the student athletes struggled at defining ‘integrity’. Having integrity was often confused with having good sportsmanship. One student athlete was completely dumb-founded and did not even attempt to make an intelligent guess. The inability to define and understand such a familiar virtue was surprising and it heightened my sense of

curiosity. Perhaps, the overarching question is what opportunities have been missed where student athletes could have learned what it means to have integrity. The data have revealed that there may be an opportunity for coaches and athletic administrators to engage students in understanding the values of a sport experience (Doty, 2006). As Etter (2010) suggested, moral virtues, such as integrity, are developed through education and habit.

Nevertheless, two senior athletes were able to succinctly capture the essence of integrity by defining it as doing the right thing without exception. Although both of them strived to stay true to their convictions, they shared that sports provided two types of opportunities – to do good and to bend the rules because winning is important. This concept of winning at all cost echoes the unique context of “bracketed morality”, which Bredemeier and Shields (2001) found in their quantitative study. However, both these student athletes strongly believed that their moral actions were governed by their personal values and their inner moral compass regardless of the environment. This finding is an anomaly when compared to previous studies which have highlighted often that the moral reasoning of student athletes was lower than their non-athlete peers (Beller, 2002; Beller, Stoll, Burwell, & Cole, 1995; Dunn & Dunn, 1999; Stoll & Beller, 2000). One of the three fundamental contributions of Kohlberg’s (1981) legacy explains this concept as cognition. As a key component of morality, cognition shows how a person thinks about their ethical responsibilities as an important part of their character (Bredemeier & Shields, 2006).

Shared Responsibility and Consequences. Although it is difficult to establish if codes of conduct directly lead to the rise in moral and ethical behaviors in an organization (Desplaces, Melchar, Beauvais, & Bosco, 2007), through the stories of these student athletes, it became clear that MU’s athletic code of conduct acts as a surrogate indicator of the institution’s commitment

to ethical behavior. As an institution of higher education, MU's athletic code of conduct supports its mission of leading a life of purpose. MU's athletic code of conduct provides guidelines to the coaching staff who then impart these values onto their student athletes. Institutional expectations are emphasized. This notion was echoed in Greenwell, Geist, Mahony, Jordan, and Pastore's (2001) study which concluded that codes of conduct were created to provide guidelines for ethical decision-making by many athletic organizations.

Half of the student athletes in the present study believed that the athletic code of conduct was a document that symbolized a sense of shared responsibility between the coaching staff and the student athletes. Greenwell, Grube, Jordan, and Mahony (2004) found similar sentiments when student athletes in their study expressed overwhelmingly that they felt more responsible for conduct than their coaches. As members of this community, it is important to note that only some of the student athletes in this present study believed that they were keepers of the code and their daily actions on and off the field operationalized and upheld the values of the code. Others believed that the coaches were responsible in articulating and imparting the values of the code to their teams.

On the other hand, the code of conduct should also act as a deterrent against inappropriate and unethical behavior. Athletics has been inundated by a tradition of negligent behaviors, questionable conduct and lapses in judgment by student athletes, emulating findings from earlier studies (e.g., Crawford, Greenwell, & Sherrick, 2008). An athletic code of conduct should hold these student athletes accountable for their actions on and off the field. It should institute a set of repercussions and consequences, if and when the code is violated. Four out of the eight student athletes in the present study shared honestly that athletics was an environment in need of ethical infrastructures such as a code of conduct because in competition, student athletes sometimes lose

perspective of what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. This concept of competition where winning is everything has been extensively studied and findings have resulted in a term coined as a “world within a world” (Bredemeier & Shields, 2001). It should be noted that in this present study, most student athletes shared that an intentional and purposeful athletic code of conduct might assist in strengthening their moral actions. Unfortunately, a void of information has existed on how effectively codes of conduct have been used by intercollegiate sport organizations (Greenwell, Grube, Jordan, & Mahony, 2004).

Code of Conduct Revisited. In a 2004 study, it was discovered that although “student athletes felt strongly about the efficacy of codes of conduct, very few had actually read their conference’s code of conduct” (Greenwell et al., p. 130). One student athlete who played a team sport shared rather brazenly that not one of her teammates was familiar with the content of MU’s athletic code of conduct even if that was the expectation from the coaches. Seven of these student athletes had memories of reading the athletic code of conduct and acknowledging that they had understood it with a signature. However, one student athlete candidly shared in her interview that nobody remembers the code of conduct.

Through such stories, it was ascertained that an effective code of conduct was one that should be revisited often throughout the career of a student athlete. It should be visible, intentionally placed in their environment of play and it must be weaved into the decision-making processes in order for the athletic code of conduct to be effective. Otherwise, codes of conduct may be “perceived at best as irrelevant and at worst as hypocritical guides for decision-making and action” (Desplaces, Melchar, Beauvais, & Bosco, 2007, p. 84). Hence, organizations must institute policies, such as codes of conduct, which officially communicate the ideal ethical values

and principles (Tenbrunsel, Smith-Crowe, & Umphress, 2003). Student athletes ought to be constantly reminded that their moral actions are a result of them living their code of conduct.

Athletic Code of Conduct and Acting with Moral Courage

Bebeau, Rest and Narvaez (1999) described moral courage as a possession of character traits that provide oneself the strength to have courage, persistence, implementing skills and ego strength to overcome distractions and obstacles so as to be true to your convictions. Student athletes in this present study adamantly agreed that their individual moral compasses consisted of their personal values and the key concepts of the athletic code of conduct. Their stories reflected how they gathered strength from their own value systems together with the values of the athletic code of conduct, and from an internal moral compass which empowered them to become moral agents (Early, 1998).

Congruence between Values and Behaviors. It was important to acknowledge that the values of the athletic code of conduct overlapped perfectly with the values that these student athletes had learned as children. In short, the values in the code of conduct were a subset of their own value system. Student athletes described the values in the athletic code of conduct as core teachings which they learned growing up and these values aided them in engaging in ethical behavior. Sportsmanship, respect for others and integrity were taught by their parents, coaches and religious leaders of their faith.

The values of the code of conduct acted as guidelines which shaped their character. Their character development was influenced by life experiences, family background and the perceptions of their environment. These values explained how they should behave when confronted with a moral dilemma. In other words, values from the athletic code of conduct and the student athletes' personal values align with ethical framework for their moral actions. This

crucial finding in this present study supports the seventh vector of Chickering's Theory of Identity Development. Chickering and Reisser (1969) described this stage as the congruency of values and moral behaviors. The seventh vector is a non-linear stage where young adults develop their sense of integrity. They are able to humanize and personalize their values and move on a continuum from "a literal belief in the absoluteness of rules to a more relative view" (Chickering & Reisser, p. 51). Hence, values prescribed in an athletic code of conduct should resonate, overlap and speak to the personal values of student athletes.

Being true to oneself and one's values were sentiments echoed several times when asked about acting with moral courage on the field. These student athletes shared that every decision made started from "within themselves". Therefore, there is a sense of recognition that their values and beliefs have implications on their actions (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). One of the youngest student athletes described how she did not expect anything less from herself. She exclaimed that she had a responsibility to be morally courageous because that is who she was taught to be as a person. The values of the athletic code of conduct were salient, familiar, and had always been a part of their own moral fabric. As one student athlete so eloquently stated that the athletic code of conduct should really be made up of her personal values. Thus, acting with moral courage was part and parcel of their character.

Unlike the other seven student athletes, the youngest student athlete argued that her sense of morality, her understanding of what is right and wrong and her ability to act with moral courage, were shaped by her values and how she was raised. This idea of staying true and in congruence with one's personal values resonates with Kohlberg's (1969) definition of moral competence. It is the "capacity to make decisions and judgments which are moral (i.e. based on internal principles) and to act in accordance with such judgments" (Kohlberg, p. 425). Although

she agreed that student athletes should take into consideration the values reflected in the athletic code of conduct, she strongly believed that it was not a document that influenced her to act with moral courage. However, she did not deny that the values within the code of conduct aligned with her own personal values which were congruent with her moral behaviors.

Although this finding is an anomaly when compared to the other participants' responses, in this present study, nevertheless, it presents an opportunity to examine further the reasons for such a perception. As the youngest student athlete in this study, her experiences with her team may be limited in terms of "role-taking opportunities" (Kohlberg, 1984) unlike the other participants. It is also important to acknowledge that the athletic code of conduct may not have been as significant to this student athlete. The contents of the code were unfamiliar and thus indistinctive. Although this finding cannot be generalized due to the limited sample size and range of ages, it gives administrators in higher education an opportunity to influence young incoming freshmen student athletes. Athletic codes of conduct ought to be intentionally introduced and young student athletes should be given leadership roles within their teams.

Internal Moral Compass. Stories about how these student athletes had to take a stand either with or against their own teammates emerged when asked about acting with moral courage. All eight of them shared that standing up for what is right was part of their character. This perception aligns with Kohlberg's argument that how a person thinks about their ethical responsibilities is an important part of their character (Bredemeier & Shields, 2006). Two student athletes shared the athletic code of conduct assisted them to do the right thing and it compelled them to distinguish themselves from their teammates. Chambers (2011) argued that individuals with high moral courage developed skills of effective engagement in the moral life of their profession, in this case, being a student athlete. As student athletes, they believed that they were

summoned by the code of conduct to expect more from themselves – to be exemplary and to act with integrity. Kohlberg (1969) believed that such individuals who respond with moral courage at a higher moral stage are more likely to resist the pressure of conforming to the judgments of others. Hence, coaches should use such student athletes as a resource and as role models to further ensure that the values of the athletic code of conduct are operationalized on the field.

For other student athletes, their stories described their “capacity to make decisions and judgments which are moral (i.e., based on internal principles) and to act in accordance with such judgments” (Kohlberg, 1969, p. 425). Their strong convictions to their personal values contributed to acts of moral courage. It was only natural for them to take a stand and do the right thing.

Other Relevant Findings

It would be remiss if I omitted to discuss two other emergent themes at this juncture. The ability to act with moral courage when faced with dilemmas on the field was also contributed to factors such the “man-in-the-mirror” phenomenon, and the positions these student athletes held on their teams.

“Man-in-the-mirror” Phenomenon. This refers to the virtue of empathy. Empathy is neither a value that is reflected in MU’s athletic code of conduct nor has it been mentioned in any of the previous studies on moral development and sports. In fact, the notion that is most discussed is how “when sports becomes highly competitive and central in terms of time and focus in a person’s life, the patterns of sport reasoning become habitual and detrimentally effect general moral development” (Bredemeier & Shields, 2001, p. 13). This notion is disqualified by the stories of two student athletes in the present study. Two seniors, one involved in an individual sport and the other in a team sport, explained that despite any external pressures, they

treated their opponents with respect by putting themselves in their shoes. Toby explained empathy as such:

There is kind of an interesting mindset with athletics where you kind of only think about yourself. You think that you are putting in all this hard work and I am the good guy and I am the one who should win and he's my opponent. He's from a rival school and they are all bad... Realistically, he is doing the exact same thing that you are doing... he is just from a different school.

Similarly, Sally, a team captain, explained that she had to model the way and stand up against her own teammates when she was encouraged to injure the opponents because of an illegal play. This student athlete described herself as someone who has distinct goals; self-discipline and impulse control. She possessed the strength and skill to act in accordance with her own goals (Bebeau, Rest & Narvaez, 1999). She shared how she displayed empathy and acted with moral courage on the field:

There was this girl who was going to come up to bat and will hit another girl on purpose. So it is kind of a struggle between me wanting to defend my team and me understanding that the other team is upset and that it is also wrong to purposely injure someone... So I just stood up for myself and said that I am not going to do that. Some of my teammates were just kind of irritated as to why I didn't listen to them. "You are not on our side" but then a couple of them were on my side because they understood that obviously you shouldn't hurt someone on purpose...but I was just confident with my decision".

This ability to reason at a higher moral stage and not succumb to the external pressures of conforming to the judgments of others was only described by these two senior student athletes. This could perhaps be attributed to their sophisticated level of moral reasoning or may also be

bolstered by their seniority and years of experience on the team. Again, this finding is in contrast to most of the previous studies that have found that moral reasoning of student athletes is lowered the longer they are involved in athletics (Stoll & Beller, 2000). However, this is a key finding in this present study because it reveals that athletic environments should provide student athletes opportunities to lead their teams and be empowered to engage in purposeful life experiences.

In Relation to Society. For the senior student athletes in the present study, their seniority and position on their teams empowered them to act in accordance with their moral beliefs. The idea of “bracketed morality”, a term coined by Bredemeier (2001), where anything goes in a sporting contest and which is often different from real life (Doty, 2006) did not apply to these student athletes. “Bracketed morality” is a unique context in sports where typical concerns and moral restraints of everyday life are temporarily set aside (Bredemeier, p. 7). For them, being the captain of a team or a senior on the wrestling team, gave them the confidence and determination to stay true to their moral compass despite the athletic environment. This finding aligned with Kohlberg’s (1981) belief that moral development progressed with age. One student athlete shared that his maturity and physical age empowered him even though he had only been on his team for a short time. A female student athlete reaffirmed that it was because of the four years she had spent being a part of the team and her experiences with her team that she felt it was her responsibility to act with moral courage.

Implications for Practice

The focus of this research was to shed light on the positive behaviors of student athletes whilst being confronted with moral dilemmas. The data collected have provided a different view from the studies of previous research (Bredemeier & Shields, 2006; Rudd, Stoll, & Beller, 1997;

Stoll & Beller, 2000). Administrators in higher education, especially athletic directors and coaches, may use the findings of this study to further strengthen their ethical infrastructures (Greenwell, Grube, Jordan, & Mahony, 2007) and the moral climate of athletics. This section will present recommendations which will range from intentional and purposeful teaching of the values of the athletic code to teachable moments on the field to a more structured and mandatory curriculum requirement for all incoming student athletes.

First, athletic codes of conduct must be salient. Coaches are deemed as the advocates of such ethical infrastructures. It is crucial for coaches to understand and accept the moral responsibility that comes with their position within the institution. They, not only embrace the values spelled out in such a code of conduct, but also embed these values into their daily routines – practices, workouts and competitions. Student athletes look upon their coaches as role models and sometimes even as surrogates or guardians. Coaches have a special place in the lives of student athletes. Coaches should intentionally teach the athletic codes of conduct to student athletes during practices and competitions. This education must be explicit and purposeful so that student athletes have meaningful opportunities to make the connections between the values of the athletic code and their personal code of conduct. Such connections would enable them to discover the alignment of their values and actions for themselves. It is far more important for student athletes to be actively engaged in the acculturation process of being a member of the university community. Athletic departments can benefit positively and create an ethical brand from such an explicit form of commitment by their coaches. Intentional and purposeful education of the values in the athletic code of conduct will empower student athletes to develop a strong and reliable moral compass.

Second, a sport experience can build character only if the environment is structured and the stated and planned goal is to develop character (Doty, 2006). Student athletes who hold senior-level positions on their teams should also be commissioned as role models and disseminators of the values of the athletic code of conduct. These student athletes are confident, determined to act with integrity and have a strong sense of morality. The sport environment is no longer intimidating to them and the number of years on the field has enhanced their character development. These student athletes have discovered that their personal values mirror the values of the athletic code. They have had opportunities to engage in moral dilemmas and act with moral courage. Through their years on the field, they have reflected on their actions and have grown strong and steadfast in their commitment to be morally courageous. These student athletes should be recruited as resources and they should model the values of the code to their peers.

Third, administrators should be cognizant of the moral development of their student athletes. Most student athletes have been involved in athletics since they were young children. Key values such as sportsmanship and respect for others are simplistic but familiar virtues that carry weight resoundingly throughout the environment of athletics. On the other hand, values such as ‘integrity’ should be expounded on and explained by coaches to student athletes. It should not be assumed that student athletes understand such supposedly simple terms. It is, therefore, important for coaches to lean on these key values when confronted with a teachable moment on the field. The more practitioners “understand how students make meaning of their identities, the better they are able to assist in promoting student learning and development in higher education institutions” (Valentine & Taub, 1999, p. 578).

Another recommendation for administrators in higher education is to make mandatory a curriculum requirement for student athletes in their first semester. A three-credit hour course on

‘Ethics in Sport’ could provide student athletes with opportunities to learn that competition is not unethical but the appeal of winning can motivate some competitors to unethical behavior. In order to show institutional commitment, coaches, paired with faculty members who specialize in ethics, should teach this course to their teams. Such a class would enable student athletes to discuss concepts of ethics and morality by first understanding their own athletic code of conduct and its values. It would provide them opportunities to discuss real case studies which highlight both positive and negative moral behaviors. Personal reflection should be an important component when reviewing such case studies. Engaging in reflection would provide them an opportunity to further make the connections between their own personal values and the values in the athletic code of conduct. Student athletes and coaches learn together in a non-threatening environment. They develop a better perspective of the athletic environment this may further strengthen the moral fabric of athletic departments and ultimately institutions of higher education.

All the student athletes in the present study honestly shared that they only remembered experiencing the athletic code of conduct as a document once – early in their student athlete career at MU. This is one of the greatest disappointments that presented itself in this study. Student athletes were unable to recall or elaborate on the contents of the athletic code of conduct. Some, in fact, were oblivious to the existence of such a code of conduct. It would be rather naïve and short-sighted to consider that the athletic code of conduct, in and of itself, had a direct influence on the moral courage of student athletes. Tenbrunsel, Smith-Crowe, and Umphress (2003) believed that in order to create an ethical climate, organizations should prioritize strategies and policies, such as codes of conduct, as “formal communication systems that officially communicate ethical values and principles” (p. 288). The athletic code of conduct

should be explicitly shared with all incoming student athletes as soon as they become members of the MU and athletic community. Its values, expectations and goals must be explained and student athletes should be educated as to how these stated values are operationalized during their practices and in competition. Student athletes should sign the athletic code of conduct on annual basis and it should be displayed in the hallways of the athletic department and in the locker rooms. This intrusive and pervasive existence of the athletic code of conduct would remind student athletes of their values on a daily basis and would assure that they are living their code.

Implications for Future Research

The sample size in this study is small and no generalizations can be made from these findings. Thus, a larger, quantitative study may be conducted at a similar type of institution to investigate if similar findings would be observed. Previous studies were mostly preformed at large, Division I or II institutions but they did not investigate how an athletic code of conduct shaped the moral courage of student athletes. This present qualitative study researching student athletes in a Division III not only provided rich data but also provided the participants an opportunity to pause and reflect. Future qualitative research could be conducted on the impact or influence of such codes of conduct on the moral competencies of similar types of student athletes at larger institutions. However, such studies may or may not produce identical results. Furthermore, similar qualitative research could also be conducted with student athletes from different demographics such first-generation college students or student athletes from lower socio-economic statuses.

Future quantitative studies may research the same topic with student athletes who have been awarded full athletic scholarships and compare the results with student athletes who have partial scholarships. The present study was conducted with a sample population of student

athletes who were not scholarship recipients, and played the sport because of sheer passion and interest. It would be valuable to understand how students are driven and motivated to act with moral courage if they are on paid scholarships to play at universities. There are also opportunities to conduct quantitative research on the same topic with student athletes who only play team sports or individual sports. In this present study, two student athletes who played contact sports such as basketball and softball highlighted that “bracketed morality” was a phenomenon that occurred in team sports (Bredemeier & Shields, 2001, p. 7). It would be interesting to explore, in a quantitative study, the impact of an athletic code of conduct on the moral courage of student athletes who play a team sport versus those who are in an individual sport.

Another aspect of this present study that resonated throughout was the role of coaches in the lives of student athletes. Coaches were deemed as practitioners of the values of the athletic code of conduct. They embed values of sportsmanship, respect and integrity into their daily routines, their interactions with the student athletes and during competition. Future quantitative or qualitative research may be conducted to investigate in what ways coaches uphold the athletic code of conduct and how do they role model acts of moral courage. Findings from such studies may assist coaches and administrators to reexamine and understand the impact of their roles as figures of authority.

Case study with a special focus on portraiture was used as a methodology of choice in this present study. The stories from the participants provided the colorful and rich content to paint an insightful picture into the moral lives of these participants. Perhaps there is an opportunity to use other qualitative research methodologies to gain greater insight into the life of a single student athlete after their college career. For instance, phenomenological studies could focus on the “man-in-the-mirror” phenomenon which was highlighted by two senior student

athletes in this present study or the notion that anything goes in a sporting contest which is often different from real life (Doty, 2006).

Finally, while this present study is narrow and limited in its focus on exploring how the athletic code of conduct shapes the moral courage of student athletes at a small, private Midwestern institution, little research exists where the moral development of student athletes is studied after they complete their athletic career. Since it is expected that student athletes would join the workforce and be contributing members of society, many of them would once again be members of organizations that are guided by ethical infrastructures such as corporate codes of conduct (Tenbrunsel, Smith-Crowe, & Umphress, 2003). Longitudinal, qualitative studies may be beneficial to athletic departments and corporate organizations as they strive to understand how empowered these student athletes are to act with moral courage at the work place as they leave athletics and enter into a new realm.

Conclusion

Midwestern University has been able to fulfill its mission and keep the NCAA promise by providing a unique environment, where institutional values, educational philosophy, athletic code of conduct and the campus climate, perpetuates values that are meaningful to its students. Living a life of purpose is achieved by enabling and empowering students through experiential learning. Unlike MU, athletic departments at larger institutions are labeled as revenue generating auxiliary services and the actions of student athletes are sometimes guided by competition, limited play time, and sensationalized celebrity statuses. In light of these differences, perhaps the moral dilemmas faced by student athletes in Division III institutions explicitly vary in comparison to those in Division I and II institutions. It is imperative for all institutions of higher education to reassess their main purpose, which is to strive to create organic learning

environments where values and institutional ideals make up the architecture of the moral development of young minds.

This study attempted to explore the role an athletic code of conduct played in shaping the moral courage of student athletes in a small, private Midwestern University. In so doing, concise portraits were painted of eight student athletes who chose to share intimate personal stories of their childhood, their families, friends and coaches and most importantly, their individual moral values. The findings presented here suggest strongly that values of the athletic code of conduct must be intentionally taught to student athletes. Through play and in the classroom, student athletes should be able to make the connection between their personal values and the values of MU's athletic code of conduct further enabled and empowered to act with moral courage. Being a new member of a university community should not be limited to indoctrination but should also include education and personal reflection.

This was a very small study but the stories were unique. Even though all of them were identified as a cohort of student athletes, their stories depicted personal struggles and triumphs that individually they experienced each time they decided to act with moral courage. Their stories demonstrated a strong desire to stay true to their inner moral compass. Being strong and committed to a set of personal values learned at a young age made these eight student athletes steadfast in making moral decisions. Their sense of morality, responsibility for one another and commitment to the sport that they played commanded my respect for them.

Although the results from this study may not be generalized to any other settings, I do believe that the stories of these student athletes can help administrators in higher education recognize the goodness and true power of individuals who strive for moral courage.

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APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

An overview of being a Division III student-athlete

Interviewer: Welcome participant. Introduce myself and thank them for participating. Introduce research study and explain the interview processes: confidential, interview recorded if permitted by participant, I will be taking notes during the process, and participant will be provided with a transcript of the interview in order to clarify and edit as well as make additions.

There are about 30 questions and we have an hour for this first interview. We will go through as much as we can. The rest of the questions will be completed the next time we meet (Interview #2). In all there will be two individual interviews.

Demographic Written Survey [given prior to scheduled interview via email]

- Gender
- Academic Standing
- Type of Sport
 - How long have you played?
 - How many years have you been a student-athlete at this university?
- Campus Involvement
 - What student groups are you active in?
 - How many hours a week do you spend on these activities?
 - 1-5
 - 6-10
 - 11-15
 - more than 15
- Leadership Roles on campus
- Permanent Residence
- Age
- Race/Ethnicity
 - White
 - African-American or Black
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian or Asian-American
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - Multiracial
- Religion
 - Christianity/Christian denominations
 - Hinduism
 - Islam

- Other: Please indicate []
- No religion

Onsite Interview Questions (over the span of two 1-hour long sessions)

Background and Experience

1. Please share with me why you decided to enroll at this university.
2. What or who impacted your decision to be a student-athlete here?
3. What is a typical day for you on campus?
 - a. Do you think your day is different from a non- student athlete?
 - b. What do you feel are some explicit differences in terms of established routine?
4. Can you share a time when you were faced with a dilemma on the field or on the court?
 - a. Follow up: Or when you witnessed one of **your teammates** experiencing such a situation? What did you/team mate do?
5. In challenging situations such as the above, who do you lean on or do you think you depend on the field?
6. Overall, how do you think athletics has influenced you as person, if at all?
 - a. Follow up/Prompt: What are some of the most important influencing factors?

Values and Belief Systems [RQ4]

7. What do you think the terms “values” or “belief system” means?
8. What or who do you think has had the most important impact on your values/belief system?
9. Can you tell me of an instance when your role/status as a student-athlete caused a conflict with your values/belief system?
10. How would you describe your relationship with your teammates?
11. Can you share a time when you wished you had acted on your moral beliefs? When you were punished/embarrassed [these words suggest social stigma related to “ethics”] or felt regret [this suggests personal failing related to “morals”] for not following it?

Understanding the Athletic Code of Conduct [RQ1]

12. What do these terms mean in your own words:
 - a. Integrity (this suggests holding to a general ethic/moral)
 - b. Sportsmanship (this suggests a sports-centered, action-related ethic)
 - c. Respect for others (general moral/ethic – might see conflict with integrity here)
 - d. Can you tell me a story of a time when you had the opportunity to display or witness any one of these attributes as a student-athlete?
 - e. Can you tell me of a time where you think you *should have* displayed or witnessed these attributes, but did not?

13. Have you seen this document before? When, if you have?
14. What do you think it stands for? What do you think is its purpose?
15. Why do you think athletics has a code of ethics?
16. Why do you think these three attributes (Integrity, Sportsmanship and Respect for others) are spelt out by the athletic department's code of ethics at your institution?
 - a. Were you familiar with these attributes before today? If yes, when.
 - b. Can you share a story or a memory where the code guided your actions?
 - c. Can you share a story or a memory where your actions did not meet the expectations of the code?
 - d. What is the place of a student-athlete code of conduct in your own sense of morality and moral courage?
17. How do you think these three attributes have shaped your value system since being a part of the university's athletic program?

Moral Courage and Perceptions [RQ2, RQ3]

18. Can you define moral courage in your own words?
 - a. Or tell a story that demonstrates it.
19. Can you share a time when you displayed moral courage, or regret that you didn't?
20. Do you think you have a responsibility to be morally courageous?
 - a. Who or what gives you this responsibility?
21. Do you believe you are encouraged to act with moral courage on the field? How does this happen or not happen?
22. Do you think athletics allow you to act with moral courage? How and when and if not how come?
23. How would you describe the support you receive from the athletic department and its followers (fans)?
 - a. Can you tell a story of a time when you felt supported/did not feel supported?
24. How would you define a student-athlete?
25. How do you think your role as a student-athlete is different than other students?
 - a. What else are you involved in on campus?
 - b. How are you viewed in that role?
 - c. How will you describe those roles as compared to being a student-athlete?
26. Do you think student-athletes are good role models for other students? Why or why not?
27. What advice would you give other student-athletes? What about having moral courage?
28. What are your future aspirations?
29. In what way do you think athletics would shape who you become when you grow up?
30. What else would you like to share about your life as a student-athlete?

APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT FORM



BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

School of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Policy
Educational Administration and Leadership Studies

Dear Student Athlete,

I. Purpose of the Study

My name is Reetha Perananamgam and I am a doctoral student in the Leadership Studies Program at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. I am conducting a study exploring the moral development of student athletes. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between an athletic code of conduct and the development of moral courage amongst student athletes.

II. Study Procedures

You have been selected based on your interest to participate in this research study. I am inviting you to participate in two individual face-to-face interviews lasting about one hour each. In these interviews, you will be asked to share your athletic experiences and your perception of the athletic code of conduct. The focus of these interviews is to explore how you believe your moral development has been influenced by your athletic involvement. The interviews and focus group session will be scheduled over a one-month period in the spring semester of 2013.

There will be two one-hour long face-to-face interviews with me. You will be asked open-ended questions about your personal thoughts and experiences as a student athlete. The discussion will be audio recorded and transcribed following the session, but you will not be identified individually on the transcripts.

You will also be asked to voluntarily keep a self-reflective journal during the course of the interviews. You can choose to opt out and not keep a journal. Your journal will be collected by me at the end of the three interview sessions. Your entries will only be used to help me better understand you and your life as a student athlete. Journal entries will not be used as direct quotes in this study. Your journal will be returned to you by mail at the end of the spring semester 2013.

550 Education
Bowling Green, OH 43403-0250

Phone: 419-372-7377
Fax: 419-372-8448

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EXPIRES 03/18/2014

III. Risks and Confidentiality

The risk of participation is no greater than that experienced in daily life. You are also free to withdraw from the study without explanation at any time during the interview process. If you leave the study, your relationship with Heidelberg University will not be negatively affected. Your decision to participate or not will not impact your grades, academic standing, athletic involvement or your status as a student at Heidelberg University. You are allowed to skip any questions you do not wish to answer during the interview sessions.

Your participation in this interview will be kept strictly confidential. Your personal information will not be shared without your prior written permission. Your confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study. Your responses will not be shared with other participants. Through the use of pseudonyms for you and the institution, your will remain in strict confidence in the final findings and throughout the study. Your responses will be assessed carefully for information that might compromise confidentiality. In such instances, your responses and direct quotes will be either paraphrased or used in segments so that no personal compromising information is reflected in the study. However, by participating in this study, you are asked to keep and maintain what you hear in confidence.

All interviews will be digitally recorded for accuracy. The recordings will be digitally stored on compact disks (CDs) that will be kept under lock and key by the researcher at the researcher's residence. Data will only be accessible to the researcher. The researcher will transcribe your interview responses verbatim and send them to you via your personal email account. This is an opportunity for you to review, revise and make any necessary additions to your responses. Once you have done this, you should send me your acknowledgement and changes to the transcripts electronically. This process may take up to a few weeks or months. These tapes will be destroyed within three years following the study.

IV. Benefits

Although this study is not designed to personally help you, your participation in this study will help us better understand how athletic codes of ethics influence moral and character development of student athletes in a Midwestern University.

V. Contacts

If you have any questions or comments about this study, please feel free to contact me at reetha@umd.umich.edu or 419-618-0255 or my dissertation chair, Dr. Pat Pauken at paukenp@bgsu.edu or 419-372-2550. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board at Bowling Green State University (419-372-7716 or hsrb@bgnet.bgsu.edu) if any problems or concerns arise during the course of the study.

VI. Consent

If you agree to participate in the study, please sign below. Participants must be 18 years old or older to be eligible. Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years old. You also acknowledge that the researcher has fully explained to you the nature of the interview and all your queries have been answered.

I, _____, have chosen to participate in this study voluntarily.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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03/18/2014

APPENDIX C. HSRB APPROVAL



DATE: April 18, 2013

TO: Reetha Perananamgam, Ed.D

FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: [440143-4] LIFE OF PURPOSE: EXPLORING THE ROLE AN ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT PLAYS IN SHAPING THE MORAL COURAGE OF STUDENT ATHLETES

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: April 17, 2013

EXPIRATION DATE: March 18, 2014

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

You have been approved to enroll 9 participants. If you wish to enroll additional participants you must seek approval from the HSRB.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on March 18, 2014. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board's records.

APPENDIX D. EMAIL OUTREACH

Dear [insert name],

My name is Reetha Perananamgam and I am a doctoral student in the Leadership Studies Program at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. I am conducting a study exploring the development of moral courage of student athletes. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between an athletic code of conduct and the development of moral courage amongst student athletes.

I am inviting you to participate in my research study that is conducted as part of my dissertation. If you are interested, you will be asked to participate in two one-hour long interview sessions with me where we will talk more about your life as a student athlete. All interviews will be held on campus during a convenient time. Most of the interviews are scheduled in the month of April. You will be provided a range of times and dates that best work for your schedule. You will also be asked to voluntarily keep a journal throughout this process.

Your participation in this study will be kept strictly confidential. There are no anticipated risks to participate in this study. Your decision to participate or not will not impact your grades, academic standing, athletic involvement or your status as a student of Heidelberg University.

If you are interested, kindly click on reply and indicate **“Yes, I am interested in participating in your study”** as the SUBJECT heading of your email. The first two participants to respond will receive a \$25 gift card. You must respond by [insert date].

I will contact you as soon as possible so that we can discuss more about my dissertation and set up the first personal interview.

Please do not hesitate to email me at reethap@hotmail.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Reetha Perananamgam
Doctoral Student, Leadership Studies
Bowling Green State University

APPENDIX E. CODE OF CONDUCT

Athletics Mission Statement/Code of Conduct

The Midwestern University athletic department places the highest priority on the overall quality of the student-athlete's educational experience and on the successful completion of their academic programs. In doing so, we strive to operate in harmony with the academic atmosphere of the university.

Athletics is an important part of the college's community of learning that promotes and nurtures intellectual, personal and professional development, leading to a life of purpose with distinction. Recognizing that students have needs and interests outside the classroom, the athletic program is committed to providing opportunities of participation that enhance the educational experience. The athletic experience should promote attitudes of integrity, sportsmanship, and respect for others.

The athletic department should be operated in a manner designed to protect the health and welfare of the student-athlete. The department should strive for equitable opportunities for males and females and should support ethnic and gender diversity for all constituents.

APPENDIX F. NEWS ARTICLE

Board approves athletics code of conduct

November 16, 2012

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. -- Penn State's Board of Trustees today (Nov. 16) approved a code of conduct for intercollegiate athletics, as required by the Athletics Integrity Agreement entered into by the University, the NCAA and the Big Ten Conference as part of the consent decree imposed by the NCAA and accepted by the University. The code brings together policies and procedures that already in place at the University.

The code of conduct applies to all coaches, managers and student-athletes of NCAA-sanctioned Division I intercollegiate athletics teams; University employees directly involved with intercollegiate athletics teams; the University Board of Trustees; the President of the University; and all members of the athletic director's executive committee.

The purpose of the code "is to serve as a guidepost to direct the ethical bearing of the athletics department." It was drafted to reflect the athletics department's mission, vision and core values of integrity, respect and honor, as well as the Penn State Principles, a document shared with the entire University community that spells out the values that Penn State embraces.

All covered individuals under the code must comply with University policies and procedures; the Intercollegiate Athletics Policy Manual; applicable NCAA constitution and bylaws and Big Ten Handbook; and all applicable laws, rules and regulations. Additionally, all those covered by the code must report through designated methods suspected violations of policies and rules.

In addition, the code of conduct requires student-athletes to adhere to the University's Student Code of Conduct and team rules established by the head coach.

(<http://news.psu.edu/story/board-approves-athletics-code-conduct>)

Revised Athletic Code of Conduct at <http://www.athletics.psu.edu/teamsporthandbook09.pdf>