LEADERSHIP THEORY AND PRACTICE IN SPORT MANAGEMENT: WHAT CONSTITUTES ETHICAL LEADERSHIP ACCORDING TO STUDENT-INTERNS?

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

Due to the multitude of widely publicized scandalous acts exhibited by managers in the sport industry, there is a pressing need for leadership philosophies and styles that embody ethical behavior. The standard for effective leadership among scholars and practitioners has recently shifted to include ethical behavior as a valuable asset. Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to understand what constitutes ethical leadership in contemporary sport organizations and academic curriculums geared toward sport management.

This qualitative study explored ethical leadership from the perspective of 13 undergraduate students (e.g., student-interns) majoring in sport management who have acquired experience in an academic environment and business setting. Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with each of the student-interns. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which is grounded in the notion that individuals learn by observing the behaviors of dependable models, was utilized to construct interview questions for this study.

Findings revealed the ethical attitudes and behaviors of student-interns are heavily influenced by leaders in academic and organizational settings. Essentially, the ethical standards held by student-interns reflected the opinions and actions of valued faculty members and sport managers. In contrast to the widespread unethical leadership on display in contemporary sport, participants in this study indicated ethical conduct was the prevailing norm within academic and business settings. However, after analyzing data, there were notable discrepancies between theoretical and practical dimensions of

ethical leadership in the sporting realm.

This thesis contributes to the ongoing discourse concerning the level of continuity between theory and practice as it pertains to ethical leadership in sport. Findings from this study are discussed as it relates to the future ethical climate in the sport industry and academic environment.

DEDICATION

To William Taylor Hays Jr. and James Harold Clack

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finally, thanks to my parents, Steve and Nelwyn, and my brothers Landon and Chris for all your love and support. I am the luckiest son and brother alive.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership is a longstanding element of successful business entities and educational institutions worldwide. According to Barrow (1977), leadership is a unique skillset that, when enacted properly, propels individuals in an organization to achieve strategic objectives which are mutually beneficial. Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) define leadership as "a relational process of people together attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good" (p. 21). Rost (1991) claims the multitude of definitions for leadership utilized in academic literature cause confusion among scholars and practitioners. However, after examining numerous definitions of leadership formulated in the past seven decades, Ciulla (1995) states there is not a radical difference in the meaning of leadership. Therefore, miniscule differences identified within various definitions of leadership should be discounted. Instead, leadership should be viewed from a broad perspective as "some kind of process, act, or influence that in some way gets people to do something" (p. 12).

In recent decades, the standard for effective leadership among scholars and practitioners has shifted drastically to include ethical behavior as a focal point. Organizations have evolved from focusing primarily on outcome-oriented objectives to addressing a human element regarding leadership (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005). In essence, effective leaders must achieve organizational

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goals while catering to the multiple needs of subordinates, co-workers, and any other individuals or groups associated with their particular company.

Scholars have noted satisfying multiple and often incongruent demands of stakeholders is particularly relevant in the sport industry, where leaders must determine the relative importance of all constituents before making a decision which will impact the entire organization (Friedman, Parent, & Mason 2004; Parent, Olver, & Séguin, 2009). Unethical or rule-breaking behavior exhibited by a leader can cause turmoil across national or even global boundaries for large sport businesses (Lumpkin, Stoll, & Beller, 1999). Among countless other atrocities that have recently transpired, the widely publicized scandal involving the Penn State football program is a prime example of poor leadership decisions resulting in a negative perception of the entire university. Mondello (1999) claims there is a widespread negative public perception regarding leaders in the sport industry due to media coverage focusing primarily on "dubious incidents including drug use, excessive violence, point-shaving, and unscrupulous coaching behavior" (p. 495). In order to curb this trend and endorse competent and equitable leadership, scholars are advocating models that contain an element of ethics. Malloy, Ross, and Zakus (2003) posit that dependable ethical behavior exhibited by leaders will oftentimes result in positive recognition and increased organizational effectiveness for sport-related companies.

While leadership models are utilized in the sport context (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978), there are a limited number of studies specifically examining the extent to which ethical behavior is valued among sport industry leaders. Moreover, what constitutes

ethical action and behavior on the part of leaders, as perceived by subordinates, has been explored even less in the context of sports.

Ethical leadership is defined as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005, p.120). It is worth noting this definition contains deliberately constructed vague language due to the subjective nature surrounding ethics. For instance, "normatively appropriate conduct" may constitute completely different leadership actions depending on the organizational culture or country where the standard is determined (Brown et al., 2005). Due to the subjective and undeveloped nature of ethical leadership as a distinct construct, it will be used interchangeably with any term or phrase that refers to leaders displaying ethical behavior in this thesis. By doing so, the term ethical leadership is not bound to a specific style of leadership, and ethical behavior is captured from a broader perspective. This strategy is appropriate considering the abundance of ethical elements found in contemporary leadership theories. Ciulla's (1995) statement, "ethics lies at the heart of leadership" (p. 17), postulates good leadership cannot materialize unless leaders' embody a strong ethical framework. In order to demonstrate the integral role of ethics in leadership, it is conceptualized as a dimension of leadership, rather than an element or part of the whole (Ciulla, 1995).

A new leadership style known as servant leadership has been examined in the context of ethical leadership due to the congruence of its dimensions with ethical

practice. In his work "The Servant as Leader," Robert Greenleaf coined the term servant leadership to describe a phenomenon where leaders' desire to serve followers transcends the achievement of organizational objectives (Greenleaf, 1977). Herein lies the ethical element of servant leadership, as behavior is focused on serving the greater good instead of seeking personal gain. Also, Van Dierendonck (2011) explicitly cites integrity and trustworthiness as ethical components of servant leadership, marking a clear link between ethics and servant leadership. As noted by Van Dierendonck (2011), Greenleaf placed "going beyond one's self-interest" as a pivotal feature of servant leadership (p. 1230).

From a theoretical perspective, scholars have utilized social learning theory (SLT) to describe how ethical leaders are characterized and emulated by their followers (Brown & Treviño, 2006). According to Bandura (1977), SLT is grounded in the notion that individuals learn by observing the behaviors of dependable models. Following observation, individuals will attempt to follow the example previously exhibited by models. In an organizational context, a leader or manager represents the model, and his or her followers or subordinates are considered observers. Bandura (1986) explains ethical leaders are oftentimes an attractive and credible source of guidance as models because they demonstrate genuine care and concern for their followers.

Research has long supported the notion that there is not a 'one size fits all' leadership approach which renders infallible results for every single leader in a given environment or situation (George, Sims, McLean, & Mayer, 2007). However, certain traits such as ethical behavior are becoming increasingly valued as a key leadership

attribute in business and academic communities (Mondello, 1999; Aronson, 2001; Brown & Treviño, 2006). Due to numerous scandals surrounding the college and professional sport environment and the severe punishments which ensue thereafter, sport organizations and leaders need to hold ethical leadership in high regard. However, as mentioned, little research has focused on the extent to which ethical leadership is valued in the sport industry, or on how or even if ethical leadership is being taught in the classroom.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore ethical leadership from the perspective of undergraduate students majoring in sport management who have acquired experience in an academic environment and business setting alike. Further, this thesis will explore the extent to which students' views and actions regarding ethical leadership are molded in the classroom and the workplace based on the observations of, and learning from, faculty members and practitioners in each setting. By examining perspectives from a pedagogical and vocational standpoint, this study will address the level of continuity between leadership theory and practice as it pertains to ethical standards in the sport industry. The findings from this study will provide scholars and practitioners with a systematic process for recognizing and utilizing ethical leadership, which could result in advancements to both theory and practice.

Theoretical Framework

I will utilize Bandura's (1977) SLT as the guiding theoretical framework for this thesis. Because SLT explains the learning effects of social engagement among

individuals, it is well suited for studying the role of ethical leadership as it relates to the leader/follower, or supervisor/subordinate relationship in the sport realm.

According to SLT, observational learning occurs when individuals watch other individuals exhibit certain behavior (Bandura, 1977). There are three basic models constructed by Bandura (1977); a live model, a verbal instruction model, and a symbolic model. Each model serves as a platform for observational learning. While the live model includes an actual person performing a behavior, the verbal instruction model entails a verbal description of a certain action. The symbolic model relates to an external influence, which may comprise a real or fictional presence. Consuming mass media in any form (e.g., television, radio, and/or internet) is a prime example of the symbolic model (Bandura, 1977).

Another important construct in SLT is an individual's state of mind, or mental state, which relates to cognitive capabilities (Bandura, 1982). It is worth noting that even if observational learning is taking place, it is not a forgone conclusion these behaviors will subsequently be processed or carried out effectively. Bandura (1977) developed the modeling process as a result, which delineates four crucial steps necessary for measuring the effectiveness of social learning processes:

1.) Attention – the extent to which focus is solely on behavior exhibited by the model;

2.) Retention – cognitive ability to remember and process model behavior;

3.) Reproduction – the actual demonstration of retained model behavior; and

4.) Motivation – there must be a need or reason to perform a certain behavior.

The central tenet of SLT's modeling process is human behaviors are influenced by observation and direct experience. In other words, cognition along with environmental factors can affect the process of observational learning (Bandura, 1977, 1982). Another important element of observational learning is the consequence that follows engaging in a certain behavior. A consequence, also known as an outcome or reinforcer, could manifest in a positive manner such as a reward, or a negative outcome such as punishment could follow. Bandura (1977) found through extensive laboratory experiments that it is more effective to inform observers of consequences prior to their engagement in a particular behavior, rather than administer a reinforcer subsequent to the behavioral demonstration. "Observer attentiveness to and learning from the model is increased when he or she knows that the consequence of a model's behavior is either a valued outcome or the avoidance or removal of a punishing stimulus" (Latham & Sarri, 1979, p. 240). Whether consequences are transparent or ambiguous, utilizing the modeling process as a means of exploring human relationships is the foundation of this thesis.

Research Questions

Drawn from SLT (Bandura, 1977) and the aforementioned literature, the following research questions are posed in an attempt to decipher perceptions and behavior regarding tenets of ethical leadership as taught and practiced in the sport realm:

RQ1: How do student-interns perceive and experience ethical leadership in an academic setting?

RQ2: How do student-interns observe and emulate ethical leadership in the workplace?

RQ3: What is the level of congruence between theory and practice with regard to ethical leadership in the sport context?

Contents of the Thesis

This thesis is structured according to the following format. Chapter 1 introduces the conceptual and theoretical framework and outlines the purpose of the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of literature, with a primary focus on ethics and servant leadership research. The methodology is detailed in Chapter 3, followed by the findings that address each research question in Chapter 4. The last section, Chapter 5, provides interpretations of the findings and discusses implications from a theoretical and practical position. This section concludes by noting limitations and directions for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of three distinct sections which highlight relevant literature and provide a rationale for the current study. The first section defines ethical leadership as it will be utilized for the purposes of this research. The second section discusses previously conducted empirical studies concerning ethical leadership as it pertains to the theoretical model for this study and servant leadership. The final section reexamines the research questions and their relative importance to the progression of scholarly content regarding ethical leadership.

Ethics and Leadership

Ciulla (2004) explains that ethical leadership is determined by examining normative behavior, or how leaders "ought" to behave. Others attempt to define ethical leadership by associating certain personal attributes with ethical leaders, such as honest, altruistic, and principled (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Brown et al. (2005) postulate ethical leaders are straightforward individuals who treat followers with dignity and respect. They further conclude that several leadership theories, such as transformational, authentic, and spiritual leadership, contain an ethical dimension, making it difficult to differentiate between ethical leadership and the leader displaying ethical behavior. Aronson (2001) claims ethical behavior can be classified as "behavior which is good as opposed to bad or right as opposed to wrong" (p. 245). This straightforward definition

exemplifies the subjective nature of ethical leadership, as there is not a definitive

categorization for leadership behavior related to ethics in an organizational context.

Treviño et al. (2003) reiterate this point in an investigation of executive ethical

leadership; "the ethical dimension of executive leadership is likely to be a highly

subjective phenomenon open to multiple interpretations" (p. 8). Therefore, the behaviors

and attributes associated with ethical leadership may vary depending on the context.

Fostering Ethical Leadership

This section reviews studies with an emphasis on fostering ethical leadership

based on Bandura's (1977) SLT and Greenleaf's (1977) paradigm of servant leadership.

SLT (Bandura, 1977, 1982) has been used to determine the antecedents and

outcomes of ethical leadership in business settings (Brown et al., 2005). As Brown and

Treviño (2006) explain, "social learning theory sheds light on why some individual

characteristics of the leader and situational influences are related to followers'

perceptions of a leader as an ethical leader" (p. 597). This particular study examined the

influence of role modeling on the development of ethical leadership among followers.

Similar to previous research (Weaver, Treviño, & Agle, 2005) findings indicated having

an ethical mentor was positively associated with ethical leadership (Brown & Treviño,

2006). More specifically, Brown and Treviño (2006) noted the importance of designing

an ethical leadership development program which could be implemented in

organizational and academic settings. Latham and Sarri (1979) utilized SLT to explain

the improvement of supervisors' interpersonal skills while dealing with their employees

after completing a behavioral modeling program. Similar to heightened interpersonal

skills, Gibson (2004) addressed the application of SLT in the field of human resource development (HRD). This study noted the importance of SLT to the development of adults in dynamic organizational settings. Ethical leadership and corporate governance were specifically cited as emerging HRD constructs, (Gibson, 2004) each of which can develop through the model interaction component of SLT (Bandura, 1977).

Prior research indicates ethical leadership can have a positive impact on job-related outcomes among followers. Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, and Chonko (2009) utilized SLT to determine the influence of ethical leadership on job satisfaction and affective commitment. Not surprisingly, commitment and satisfaction were higher among followers whose manager embodied ethical leadership principles. Neubert et al. (2009) noted an impressionable managerial influence when discussing results; "managers seem to have considerable moral authority to promote virtue or vice through their behavior" (p. 166). Moreover, this study found that ethical attitudes and behaviors stretch beyond follower influence to overall improvement of the ethical climate for a particular organization. Several other studies have similarly linked ethical leadership with other virtuous outcomes, such as distributive, procedural, and interactional justice (Colquitt, 2001; Cohen-Charash, & Spector, 2001; Bies & Moag, 1986).

It should be noted these positive organizational outcomes are unlikely to materialize if the leader is not revered by his or her followers (Neubert et al., 2009). Brown and Treviño (2006) explain a leader can gain positive recognition through a plethora of means, such as possessing a designated job title or achieving credibility by surpassing organizational goals. Essentially, the leader is perceived as a role model in the

eyes of followers. If this key component of perceived attractiveness in the leader/follower relationship is missing, followers are unlikely to readily observe and reproduce ethical behavior displayed by leaders (Bandura, 1986).

Research suggests ethical leadership can be observed at several different levels, particularly within large organizations. For instance, followers may emulate ethical behavior based on an indirect message from a top-level executive or a more explicit demonstration from a front-line supervisor (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009). Empirical evidence has given credence to the notion of an organizational trickle-down effect regarding ethical leadership, whereby top ownership and management influences supervisors, who in turn influence behaviors of the individuals they are supervising (Aryee, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006; Tepper & Taylor, 2003). Thomas, Schermerhorn, and Dienhart (2004) claim that setting a positive example of leadership at the executive level is imperative for organizations to recognize the benefits of ethically-sound behavior. While these studies highlight the importance of ethical leadership at all organizational levels, Mayer et al. (2009) concludes immediate supervisors are the most influential, as they are the "lens through which employees see what the organization values" (p. 11). Regardless of the medium of observation for followers, ethical leadership is deemed a valuable asset in the workplace and can influence the surrounding community in which an organization is embedded (Resick, Hanges, Dickson, & Mitchelson, 2006).

With regard to servant leadership and ethics, Van Dierendonck's (2011) meta-analysis highlights various measurement instruments formulated specifically for servant

leadership. Because servant leadership is a relatively new construct and has not been examined extensively, measurement techniques are continually refined and redeveloped in order to obtain unanimity regarding the classification of servant leadership. Despite this incongruence, these instruments yield six key characteristics of servant leadership:

- Empowering and developing people – followers are given a sense of purpose from leaders, and followers gain an understanding regarding their personal development;

- Humility – leaders understand the value of contributions from followers, and they provide support in order for followers to reach their potential;

- Authenticity – the actions of a leader consistently reflect their feelings and intentions;

- Interpersonal acceptance – leaders comprehend and are able to relate to followers unique circumstances, even if this requires dismissing preconceived notions;

- Providing direction – leaders construct an environment where followers carry out tasks in a manner that is congruent with their particular needs or abilities; and

- Stewardship – followers emulate the positive example set by leaders. This element is synonymous with "social responsibility, loyalty, and teamwork" (Van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1234).

Greenleaf (1977) does not provide an explicit definition of servant leadership in his work, but there are undoubtedly specific characteristics and behaviors which embody this unique style of leadership (Van Dierenconck, 2011). This thesis will utilize the six

key characteristics of servant leadership illustrated by Van Dierenconck (2011), and of particular interest are the characteristics which exemplify ethical behavior; empowering and developing people, humility, and stewardship. Ethical behavior should not be confused with ethical leadership as defined by Brown et al. (2005), which contains facets not directly related to servant leadership. This thesis will examine elements within servant leadership related to ethical behavior, which is partly what differentiates servant leadership from other similar leadership theories conceptualized in recent years (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004).

While Van Dierenconck (2011) identified seven distinct leadership theories that exhibited comparable characteristics, there are fundamental and subtle differences between servant leadership and each of the constructs mentioned. For instance, while transformational leadership and servant leadership are innately focused on developing followers, the latter is strictly concerned with their personal growth whereas the principal aim of the former is to maximize organizational objectives (Graham, 1991; Giampetro-Meyer, Brown, Browne, & Kubasek, 1998; Parris & Welty Peachey, 2012). Differences between servant leadership and other leadership theories are similarly related to aspects surrounding the follower-centered approach of servant leadership (Van Dierenconck, 2011). Greenleaf's (1977) sincere and isolated focus on the welfare of followers is the overarching aspect that sets servant leadership apart from other contemporary leadership approaches.

As previously mentioned, the three characteristics of servant leadership that contain an ethical component are empowering and developing people, humility, and

stewardship (Van Dierendonck, 2011). There are, however, ethical features of servant leadership beyond these core characteristics. The motivation to become a servant leader, for example, could be rooted in the selfless need to serve the greater good. For instance, Frieze and Boneva (2001) related *helping power motivation*, which is the need to acquire power and subsequently utilize it to help others, with servant leadership. A model constructed by Patterson (2003) postulates servant leadership begins with *agapao*, or moral love, which advocates humility and altruism. Van Dierendonck, (2011) defines this Greek term (*agapao*) as "doing the right thing at the right time and for the right reason" (p. 1244). Another ethical component of servant leadership can be found by exploring moral cognitive development, a theory formulated by Kohlberg (1969) that describes six distinct stages individuals pass through as the reasoning process develops. At the highest (sixth) level, mutual respect for others' becomes imperative in the decision and reasoning process. It is therefore reasonable to assume an individual categorized in higher stages of this model will act as a servant leader (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

Research indicates subordinates working under servant leaders show increased levels of satisfaction, commitment, and overall performance (Chung, Jung, Kyle, & Petrick, 2010; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Van Dierendonck (2011) explains there are three specific dimensions of follower outcomes that are associated with Greenleaf's idea of servant leadership: "personal growth in terms of self-actualization; becoming healthier, wiser, free, and more autonomous in terms of positive job attitudes; and becoming servants themselves in terms of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and

collaborative team work" (p. 1248). Discretionary behavior exhibited by followers that goes beyond their specified job description and ultimately improves organizational effectiveness is considered OCB (Organ, 1988). Graham (1995) notes the positive relationship between servant leadership and OCB is due to heightened moral reasoning among followers exposed to this behavior. Therefore, OCB as a favorable outcome of servant leadership is particularly relevant for this thesis because it contains an ethical component concerning the leader-follower relationship. Several empirical studies confirm significant correlations between servant leadership and elements of OCB (Ng, Koh, & Goh, 2008; Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko, & Roberts, 2008; Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, & Roberts, 2009; & Ehrhart, 2004)

Research Questions

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this thesis will explore how ethical leadership is perceived and emulated by undergraduate student-interns based on their experience in the domain of sports as a student and employee. In an attempt to discover the value of ethics from a leadership standpoint, student-interns' views and experiences will be weighed regarding the extent to which faculty members are upholding ethical standards in academic settings. Next, the resulting behavioral aspects of ethical leadership will be examined from an employment perspective. Finally, this thesis will seek to determine the level of congruence between theoretical and practical elements of ethical leadership in sports.

RQ1: How do student-interns perceive and experience ethical leadership in an academic setting?

RQ2: How do student-interns observe and emulate ethical leadership in the workplace?

RQ3: What is the level of congruence between theory and practice with regard to ethical leadership in the sport context?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains five sections which illuminate how this study was conducted. The first section justifies the choice of a qualitative methodology and addresses the interpretive framework utilized in this study. The second section outlines the study participants and sampling technique. The third section describes how the data is collected. The fourth section explains the analysis of data, while the final section outlines methods to ensure dependability and credibility.

Choice of Methodology

Qualitative methodology is appropriate due to the exploratory nature of this study and academic research concerning the views of ethical leadership according to college students is currently limited. Creswell (1998) notes qualitative research is appropriate for identifying variables that are difficult to measure, such as student perceptions regarding the current climate of ethical leadership in the sporting realm. Capturing an accurate and thorough understanding of these personal opinions would be a dubious task if statistical analyses were administered. Moreover, Miles and Huberman (1994) explain qualitative research provides holistic data that yields a comprehensive understanding of complex and abstract subjects such as ethical leadership. Also, Creswell (1998) references the reflexivity, or personal investment and potential gain procured as a researcher involved in a qualitative study, which is appealing as a researcher and practitioner in the sport industry.

Personal interviews were selected as a data collection method for this thesis for two underlying reasons. First, the scope of this thesis is relatively limited in terms of sample size, or number of respondents needed to answer the research questions. Second, the information gathered from respondents is subject to considerable variation. As Gratton and Jones (2010) explain, each of the aforementioned factors is a significant justification for selecting interviews as a method of data collection for qualitative research.

In qualitative research, there are certain philosophical assumptions embedded in the interpretative framework utilized for a particular study (Creswell, 1998). This thesis was approached through an interpretist lens, whereby knowledge is gained through social construction such as language, shared meanings, or normative behavior among a group of individuals (Walsham, 1993). Creswell (1998) noted interpretivism is often described as social constructivism, which is a worldview in which individuals attempt to understand their environment by drawing on subjective experiences. This framework is appropriate for the purposes of this study due to the complex and subjective nature of ethical leadership, as the meaning of this construct will likely entail multiple and varied interpretations among participants. As the primary researcher for this study, I recognize and acknowledge my interpretations are influenced by personal experiences, cultural background, and societal norms formed over time.

Participants

Data were collected from 13 undergraduate sport management students enrolled in a 12 credit-hour internship program at a large university located in the south-central

region of the United States. These students were completing their final academic semester as students while simultaneously working as interns in a sport setting. It should also be noted participants were required to complete a business minor while enrolled in school. In order to explicitly classify these individuals, participants are referred to as student-interns throughout this thesis. The duality of their role as a student and an intern elicits a unique perspective which is an integral element of this study. Implications related to ethical leadership can be drawn from both an academic and practitioner standpoint based on the student-intern's experience in each of these domains.

Participants were chosen by utilizing a purposive sampling method in order to ensure the best participants are selected to answer the research questions. A purposive technique entails deliberately choosing diverse participants that will yield a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter (Creswell, 1998). This inclusive measure also ensures systematic diversity with regard to the cultural and sociological background of participants, thereby mitigating the potential for homogenized results.

In total, 41 student-interns were enrolled in the internship program, all of whom were contacted inviting them to take part in this study. Eventually, eight male and five female participants were selected to participate in this study. Two prospective student-interns who agreed to participate were not chosen for this sample due to the considerable distance of their internship locations.

The age of selected student-interns ranged from 21 to 23 years old. With regard to ethnicity, 10 participants identified as Caucasian and 3 identified as Hispanic. While young Caucasian males comprised the majority of this sample, study participants

accurately reflected the demographic makeup of the internship class as a whole. Moreover, demographics in this study are consistent with the student-body enrolled at Southeast University.

The lack of African American representation was due to the voluntary nature of this study, as this group of student-interns was either unwilling to participate or did not respond to multiple requests for interviews. Further, there were no individuals enrolled in the internship program at the time of this study who identified as Asian American or any other racial/ethnic classification not previously mentioned.

Table 1 below depicts the demographic characteristics of the sample for this study and the entire internship class. Demographic and work-related information concerning the 13 participants selected for this study is further illustrated in Table 2. Acronyms are utilized to depict the type of sport organization student-interns were working for, and their job descriptions are outlined as well.

Table 1. Student-intern demographics

	Participants (#)	% of Sample	Entire Class (#)	% of Class
Total	13	-	41	-
Male	8	61.54%	25	60.98%
Female	5	38.46%	16	39.02%
Caucasian	10	76.92%	32	78.05%
Hispanic	3	23.08%	6	14.63%
African American	0	0%	3	7.32%

Table 2. Participant demographics and work-related information

Name	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Internship Site	Job Title
Jay	M	23	Caucasian	CPO	Events Intern
Palladin	M	22	Hispanic	SPSO	Operations Intern
Ralph	M	23	Caucasian	YSEMO	Assistant to the Football Director
Cadence	F	22	Caucasian	LMF	Marketing Intern
Eva	F	21	Caucasian	AC	Intern
James	M	22	Caucasian	ESJC	Assistant to the Athletic Director
Alberto	M	22	Hispanic	YSEMO	Area Sales Manager
Kacey	F	22	Caucasian	SPSO	Premium and Suites Intern
Kaden	M	23	Caucasian	SVOO	Account Manager
Sarah	F	22	Caucasian	MLBC	Intern
Avelyn	F	22	Hispanic	MLBC	Intern
Bo	M	22	Caucasian	SPSO	Sponsorship Intern
Tyler	M	23	Caucasian	LMF	Promotions Intern

AC—alumni club
CPO—city planning organization
ESJC—east state junior college
LMF—large marketing firm
MLBC—minor league baseball club
SPSO—southern professional soccer organization
SVOO—select volleyball operations organization
YSEMO—youth sport event management organization

Data Collection

Prior to data collection, this study was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). After approval from the IRB, the recruitment letter (see Appendix A) was sent to all potential participants via email. A list of student-intern email addresses was obtained from the Health and Kinesiology advising office. Follow-up emails were sent approximately two weeks after initial contact, and snowball sampling was utilized thereafter due to a low initial response rate. Written informed consent from participants was obtained prior to conducting a face-to-face, semi-structured interview with each student-intern. The average length of the interviews was approximately 22 minutes, ranging from 15 to 43 minutes. A standard set of questions was prepared for the interviews (see Appendix B) which were continually revised based on previous interviews in order to capture the most relevant information (Creswell, 1998). Questions for this interview guide were formulated based on concepts found in Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory (SLT) along with basic tenets of ethical leadership reviewed in Chapter 2.

Participants in this study were afforded the opportunity to express their opinion even if it was not directly related to the interview guide questions. This flexibility provided improved richness and quality of data (Creswell, 1998). Furthermore, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) indicate a semi-structured interview format results in more collaborative dialogue, which prevents the interviewee from withholding information. As the primary researcher and sole interviewer, I actively attempted to connect with each

participant by reflecting on shared experiences in school and work settings. Dunn (2005) backs this technique when suggesting respondents are more comfortable and relaxed if the interview begins with informal dialog. Another measure which was utilized to ensure the generation of quality data was conducting the interviews face-to-face. This format allows the researcher to observe and record non-verbal reactions, which may or may not be congruent with interviewees' verbal responses.

Interviews were held in locations mutually agreed upon by the interviewee and interviewer. A pseudonym was designated for each participant to ensure confidentiality, and names of other individuals, organizations, events, places, and schools were changed as well. Interviews were documented using a digital audio recording device and as the primary researcher for this study, I transcribed all interviews verbatim directly after the conclusion of each session. All of these methods served to enhance levels of trust and receptiveness between the researcher and interviewees throughout the process of collecting data (Creswell, 1998).

Data Analysis

Strauss and Corbin (1990) detail a three step data analysis process which was utilized in this thesis. The first step, known as open coding, aids in developing distinct categories of information. Interview transcripts were segmented into a limited number of categories during the early stages of analysis, as suggested by Creswell (1998). The categories, also known as open codes, were devised based on the theoretical and conceptual framework outlined in this thesis. Original categories such as ethical leadership (EL) and ethical classroom concepts (ECC) were devised prior to data

collection and later utilized as open codes when analyzing data. Ten open codes were assigned a priori, while other codes not directly related to the frameworks emerged as the data was reviewed. In total, 45 open codes were utilized in this study.

The next step involved a process called axial coding, which entailed examining relationships among the categories constructed through open coding. Ten axial codes emerged after categorizing data based on the three research questions. As a specific example, two open codes, ethical code/standard (ECS) and situational ethics (SE) collapsed into the axial theme, *Student-Intern Ethical Standard*, which was formulated to explore the congruence of theoretical and practical dimensions surrounding ethical leadership (see Appendix C).

Selective coding, the final step in this process, necessitates relating the central phenomenon to other categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Selective quotations from student-interns were drawn out to illustrate each theme and the interrelationships among categories. Utilizing relevant quotes is endorsed by Creswell (1998) as a useful technique which enhances the quality of qualitative descriptions. Appendix C depicts the coding scheme developed for this study, and Figure 1 below illustrates a sample of the codes.

Sample open codes   **Axial themes**

Ethical classroom concepts ————┐   Scholastic ethical leadership

Faculty mentoring/counseling————┤

Positive student/teacher relationship ——┤

Practical application of theory ————┘

Win-at-all-costs mentality ————┐   Work experiences

Intern grunt work ————————┤

Pressure to behave unethically ——┘

Ethical standard————————————┐   Theoretical/practical congruence

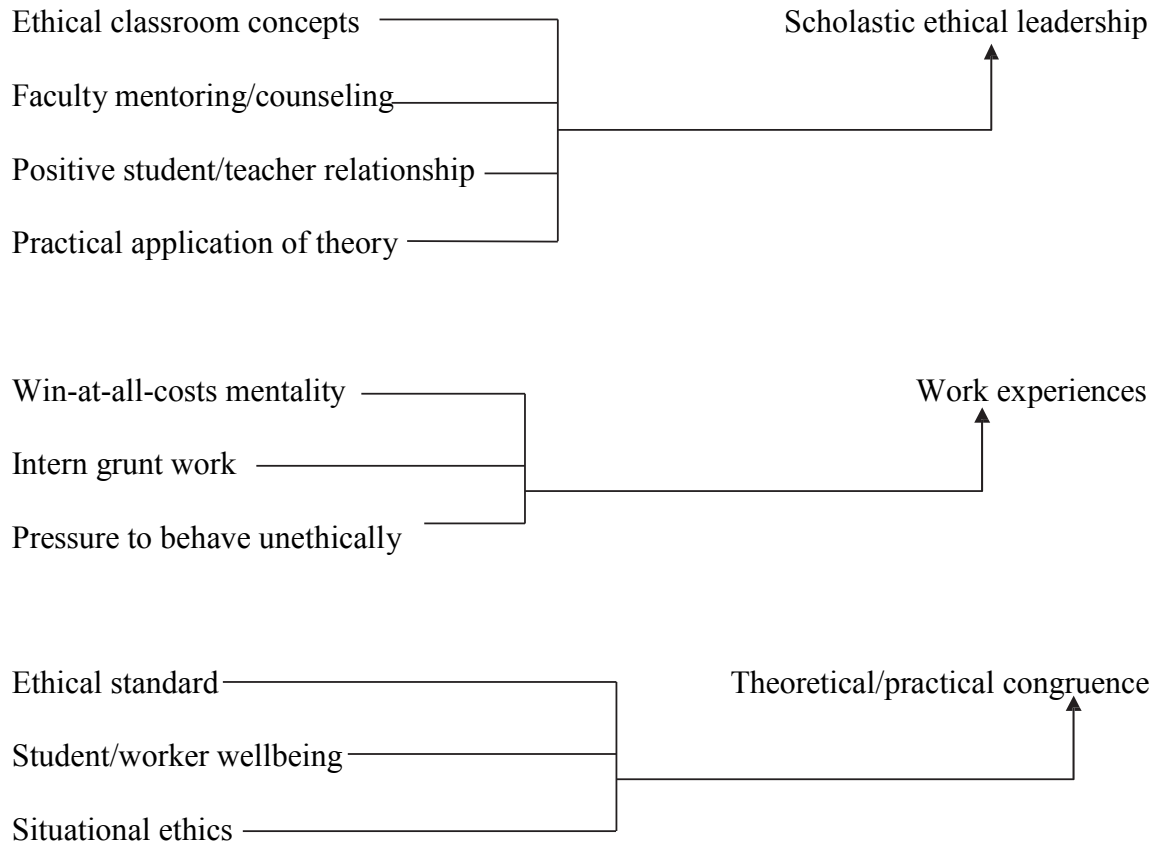Student/worker wellbeing————————┤

Situational ethics ————————————┘

Figure 1: Illustration of sample coding

Data Dependability and Credibility

Triangulation of investigators and member checking were utilized to ensure the dependability and credibility of this research. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), triangulation serves to support findings by demonstrating that independent measures are congruent with the original findings. The codes and interpretations in this thesis were periodically reviewed by the advising chair and committee members. This style of evaluation is one of the four types of triangulation detailed by Denzin and Lincoln (2000). Byrne (2001) advocates member checking in qualitative research because interpretations may be misconstrued or subject to change following data analysis. Therefore, participants received a copy of the interview transcript prior to data analysis to alter or discard data as they saw fit. The overwhelming majority of student-interns confirmed their original transcripts, but a few revisions were implemented in order to clarify accurate intentions expressed by participants.

After feedback was acquired from interviewees, transcripts were adjusted to account for revisions where necessary. Participants also had the opportunity to provide feedback on study interpretations and conclusions following the completion of data analysis. Measures that convey open and frequent communication with research participants reinforce the representation of a valuable and accurate interpretation of findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). By and large, participants were forthcoming and astute with regard to feedback following the conclusion of interviews. Creswell (1998) indicates qualitative studies are often a developmental process for inexperienced researchers, but proficiency is attained by performing each stage of the process and

adapting to frequent barriers that will likely arise. This is an accurate reflection of the data collection process during this study, as the latter interviews were significantly longer and yielded an increasingly thorough understanding of student-intern perceptions and experiences.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings gathered from interviews conducted with 13 student-interns. There are four distinct sections in this chapter, the first three of which address the research questions (RQ's) and are organized as themes based on 45 open codes which were collapsed into 10 axial themes (see Appendix C).

The first section of this chapter focuses on the first research question, and there are three major themes contained in this section. It was found that student-interns perceive and experience ethical leadership in an academic setting through; learning ethical concepts, engaging with faculty members in a mentor/mentee relationship, and reflecting on adverse academic experiences. In the second section, research question number two is addressed through four themes. Findings revealed student-interns observe and emulate ethical leadership in the workplace by; gauging the current ethical climate in the sport industry, drawing on positive and negative experiences with sport industry leaders, and weighing the presence of an organizational trickle-down effect. The third section of the chapter answers the third research question and constitutes three distinct themes. Theoretical and practical elements of ethical leadership were compared in terms of; student-interns' ethical standard at school and work, situational ethics, and the behavioral alignment between faculty members and sport industry managers.

Based on these three themes, ethical leadership was relatively congruent in academic and work settings according to student-interns. Finally, the last section provides a conclusive summary of the findings yielded by this study.

Scholastic Ethical Leadership

The first research question (RQ1) starts from a broad perspective by examining student-intern perceptions and experiences surrounding ethical leadership in an academic context. In other words, to what extent are faculty members teaching and modeling ethics in and out of the classroom according to student-interns?

There are three central themes that follow which illustrate findings related to RQ1. Ethical leadership is explored in terms of ethical concepts taught in the classroom, faculty members serving as mentors to student-interns, and adverse experiences as a student.

Ethical Course Concepts

Overall, student-interns expressed positive attitudes related to ethical leadership throughout their collegiate careers. They firmly believe ethical principles are emphasized in the academic curriculum based on experiences in the classroom setting. As one student-intern, Kaden recalled; "If I remember correctly, every single class I took at Southeast University had some sort of ethical principle to it." This idea was mirrored by most student-interns, as eight referenced specific sport management professors who reiterated the importance of "doing the right thing" while in the workplace. Ralph offered his opinion when asked about the ethical emphasis by sport management faculty:

> I would definitely say that Dr. Barnaby does [emphasize ethics]. He talks
> a lot about what is ethically correct and makes us think about what is right
> and wrong. And Dr. Polasky in sports management would talk about
> certain things. He had us fill out a survey to find out which questions they

can ask you in an HR department … whether it is ethically ok to ask some

of these questions and what not. Then of course Dr. Holcomb was just

full blown with it, just getting us ready as interns. So I think [Southeast]

does a good job, especially the Sports Management Department with

talking to us about it and making us aware.

The overwhelming majority of student-interns claimed faculty members stressed behaving ethically in an implicit manner by relating ethics to various course concepts. For instance, one student-intern, Eva, mentioned the ethical conflict sport marketing professionals endure with regard to fair-market pricing techniques:

I'm not too familiar with it, but the way Dr. Polasky kind of described it

… in marketing he was talking about like filling a stadium and how

you've got to market it certain ways depending on where it is. It is not

necessarily filling their [sport marketing executives] pockets. You know

if you are going to market something cheaper to bring more people in.

Another common theme was the importance of "taking care of your people," which coincides with effective leadership practices in the realm of human resource development. Alberto noted the importance of being a "good manager to the people under you", and Avelyn stressed "treating your people right" when referencing concepts they learned in a particular upper-level business course.

Recalling a specific ethical doctrine or ideology taught in class proved difficult at times for student-interns, but they had little trouble remembering broad course objectives

concerning advantages of behaving ethically. Avelyn expressed the following sentiment when asked to recall ethical lessons from class:

> Yeah, especially in the business classes they get more into that [ethics]. Like we actually have a section on ethics. I think it was [a management course] we talked a lot about ethics in there and they kind of tied it in with human resources … like treating your people right … if somebody is doing something wrong, how to go about handling it the right way. I feel like the Sports Management professors … they kind of touch on it, especially in Law. I think more of it is implied but in some classes they would actually talk about stuff.

Avelyn's comment reveals an important finding which illustrates the relative frequency with which ethics is being taught and the implicit nature of ethical teachings. While student-interns claimed ethics was emphasized in both the sport management and business curriculum, only one participant, Alberto, completed a course directly geared toward ethics. Further, this particular course was classified as an "elective," meaning it was not required to complete a sport management bachelor's degree. He spoke at length about the nature of his elective ethics class and knowledge he gained from this experience:

> I took an ethics class through sports management with Dr. [Sawyer]. It was a race and ethnicity class, so we talked a lot about ethics and stuff like that. I could see that class being mandatory to benefit students going

into a job place. Big topics we talked around were race, sexual orientation

. . . also things like … how do we as employees approach each other and

just how to be professional overall. We would have open discussions on a

lot of ethical topics … it was a pretty good learning experience.

Business courses seemed to embody more of a detailed approach relative to sport

management in terms of ethical content. In total, four participants were able to recall

specific chapters or entire sections dedicated to ethics in upper-level business courses,

while sport management concepts were often indirectly applied as an auxiliary learning

objective. Palladin reflected on this matter when asked if ethical principles were stressed

in the classroom:

I think so. I don't know as much about the sports management classes that

we have taken where they've specifically talked about ethics, they kind of

go over basics. Definitely in my management, like business classes, we

definitely went more in depth into that stuff. In [upper-level management

course] we talked about like saving money on making products and it

ends up being bad for the consumer so they could make money. Basically

businesses would cut back on how much they are spending on making

these products and the products end up being kind of crappy.

While the method of delivery between the sport management and business

curriculum diverged slightly, student-interns clearly believe ethics is an important

learning objective among faculty members at Southeast University.

Faculty Mentors

Student-interns expressed favorable opinions of faculty members outside the scope of the classroom as well. Several statements depict faculty serving as "mentors" due to the amount of time and effort spent improving the personal and professional development of student-interns. Ralph provided his insight in this regard:

> I mean Dr. Holcomb always gave job advice. I would go to his office all the time and speak with him my last semester there. Also I had a government teacher … and it wasn't at Southeast University, it was at Feeder Junior College. He was definitely a mentor. He would give me advice on how to get through school and we talked about relationships and everything. He was a cool guy.

For the most part, participants echoed Ralph's attitude regarding faculty members propensity to provide aid and develop a cordial relationship with students outside of the school setting. This was especially the case when completing upper-level sport management courses, as student-interns noted smaller class size as key to the personable approach faculty provided. As Cadence stated, "Senior year once classes got smaller it was easier to make those connections with professors." Almost every student-intern mentioned engaging in some form of interaction with sport management faculty members outside the scope of class, but this was not necessarily the case in larger business courses. Cadence spoke to this as well after her statement regarding an inclination to a smaller class size. As a freshman, Cadence claimed it was more difficult

to excel as a student due to a lack of personal attention available in "giant courses" which were intimidating and facilitated with a less personable approach.

Large class sizes also contributed to the diminishing likelihood student-interns would interact with faculty members in the business school. Alberto construed interacting with faculty outside a professional setting as a breach or conflict of some kind:

> I would go talk to Dr. Holcomb about internships and he would give me professional advice about my goals and stuff and how that would fit in. But I never went to a professor and put them on the spot to choose to be more my friend or more my professor. I never put them in that situation.

It should be noted he was the only participant to bring up this distinction between professional and personal expectations of faculty members. While Alberto clearly believes the role of faculty should be strictly professional in nature, several other student-interns were comfortable with personal interaction outside of class. Eva reflected on her experiences with sport management faculty members:

> I know all of them and they all know me. They are all like … Eva, HEY! And Dr. Holcomb has definitely served as a mentor, he is the best. I took three classes with Dr. Walther so I ended up really getting to know him. He really enjoyed me being in class. And Dr. Barnaby … I work out at Private Golf Club and you know he plays golf out there all the time.

Eva did not explicitly categorize faculty members as her "friend," but unlike Alberto, she seemed to value interaction beyond the classroom setting. Essentially Eva

and Alberto both believed faculty served as mentors, but their expectations for fulfilling that role varied to a certain extent.

In terms of professional development, the willingness of faculty members to provide job or career advice was a common theme expressed repeatedly by student-interns. The overall opinion was faculty members were approachable and forthcoming when student-interns sought direction as future practitioners in the sport industry. It is important to note student-interns were actively seeking aid from faculty members, as they felt it was their personal responsibility to take a proactive approach. James endorsed this popular opinion when addressing the job hunt student-interns engage in prior to their final academic semester:

> Interviewer: Did your professors or instructors ever go out of their way to give you job or career advice?
>
> James: Nobody really came to me and told me what to do, but I feel as a student you have to go out of your way and ask questions. You can't just expect it to come to you, you got to go out and ask questions.

Again, most student-interns were more inclined to take the lead and initiate contact with faculty members. Bo provided support for this finding in the following statement when discussing his frequent interaction with sport management faculty members:

> I've gone into office hours; I've talked after class with Dr. Holcomb, Dragon, Dr. Barnaby, Dr. Polasky, [and] Dr. Kramer. I mean I was one of the students who would stay after and ask questions. I would try to go

more in depth about certain things and the career advice they gave me I

felt was very well informed because it's one thing to tell a whole class

something about the world of sports but it's another in a one-on-one

personal conversation, it kind of hits home a little more. They were all

real good about it. I say that because at times I would feel really bad for

like … keeping them … holding them up. I know they have a whole

bunch more to do.

He went on to explain specifics regarding help he received from faculty who

composed letters of recommendation for an upcoming scholastic endeavor, which was

another recurring form of aid related to career advancement. Bo was self-admittedly

more extroverted than other student-interns in this sample, but nonetheless, most

individuals believed faculty members were engaging and helpful outside of the

classroom setting.

Findings related to the extent to which faculty members served as mentors to

student-interns demonstrate a clear separation between the sport management and

business realms. While student-interns were satisfied with leadership displayed by sport

management faculty, they were unlikely to develop strong ties with business professors.

Furthermore, the existence and development of the mentor/mentee relationship was

contingent upon student-interns' initiating contact, as faculty members were not prone to

go out of their way to provide aid.

Adverse Student Experiences

As mentioned, frequent interaction was more common among sport management faculty and student-interns, and there was little mention of strong ties with business professors and instructors. Furthermore, the only negative encounters highlighted by student-interns were among faculty teaching business classes. Eva recounted her experience with a particular business professor; "I felt like everything he said was condescending. Oh yeah, 'I'm a lawyer and I'm a'… and I'm like ssshhh, just teach." Tyler further illustrated this point by addressing the detached nature of certain faculty members:

> I mean I've had professors that have said, hey I have these office hours
> but they wouldn't show up to them or you would be there for five minutes
> and they wanted to get you out so I didn't feel like they were as helpful.
> And I understand they have a busy schedule with a million students.

The latter portion of his comments relate to the issue previously noted regarding the detrimental effect large class rosters may have on the learning and developmental process for students. Tyler justified the lack of availability among business faculty, but other student-interns were rather displeased if they felt faculty members were disconnected or unconcerned about their professional and personal development. Basically, participants believed it was a disservice to be unengaged with students during class or remain aloof outside the classroom.

Negative experiences noted by student-interns with certain faculty members

should not be an indictment on all business courses. While there was a resounding endorsement for the sport management faculty and several student-interns experienced adverse conditions at times during business classes, there were student-interns who commended the business faculty for remaining approachable outside of class and providing insightful content while teaching.

Ethical Leadership in the Workplace

The second research question (RQ2) aimed to understand how student-interns are observing and emulating ethical leadership in the workforce. RQ2 essentially builds on RQ1 with a specific focus on the subsequent behavior student-interns are exhibiting based on observation and experience.

The four main themes drawn out to describe RQ2 begin with an examination of student-intern perceptions surrounding the current climate of ethical leadership in the sport industry. The next two themes address both positive and negative encounters student-interns experienced from an employment standpoint. Last, modeled behavior is explored by gauging the extent to which student-interns are influenced by the actions of sport industry leaders.

Perceptions of Ethical Leadership

Student-intern perceptions of ethical leadership in the sport industry were somewhat mixed, but there were broad similarities among several individuals. When asked to reflect on unethical behavior exhibited by current sport managers, most student-interns claimed this trend would either continue or get worse in the future. Kacey talked about the competitive nature of college athletics and the rule-breaking ethos held by

many coaches:

You know college football especially it is just … it is so profitable that I

think people are willing to take the risks just for the money aspect of it

and it they don't get caught they're going to keep going.

Her statement posits unethical behavior exhibited by football coaches will

continue as long as they are not reprimanded for such actions. This was a popular theme

among student-interns, but there was also a significant amount of support for the idea

that sport managers would learn from unethical leadership displayed by other managers.

Tyler referenced two former NCAA football coaches who experienced an

unceremonious departure from their former jobs due to unethical allegations:

They are doing these extreme measures. You know with [Bobby Petrino]

maybe he didn't technically deserve what he got to some people but they

want to give you the most extreme punishment so it doesn't happen again.

Like with [Joe Paterno] he technically didn't do anything wrong in some

people's eyes but he … the school got a harsh, harsh punishment. And I

always wondered why but then it kind of clicked … like oh they don't

want it to happen again. So I think that is going to help and guys are

going to be more cautious about what they do.

Other student-interns mentioned punishment for unethical or rule-breaking

behavior may not result in a positive outcome such as alleviating unethical behavior as

Tyler mentioned. Cadence explained:

I think they [NCAA coaches] are learning about it [punishment for

unethical conduct]. Some of them may be learning how to get around it

and not get caught and others are realizing that it is not worth it. But I

think some of the schools that get caught doing some of these things and

get banned for bowl games and stuff like that, they may be learning how

to not make it as public.

In either case, the majority view reflected unethical behavior continuing at the

same rate or worsening in the future. Moreover, those who claimed unethical conduct

would taper off seemed more hopeful than confident in their prediction. Most references

to unethical conduct pertain mainly to collegiate athletic departments, but student-interns

did not think this behavior was exclusive to the sport industry. Bo expressed his opinion

when comparing the win-at-all-costs mentality in sports and other organizational

settings:

I definitely believe there are people who will step on anyone they have to

just to get to the top. But I wouldn't say it's any more rampant in the

sports management field than any other field. Everything from teachers to

business, you're always going to have those people.

Based on responses from the entire group of student-interns, the win-at-all-costs

mentality is alive and well, particularly within large profitable sport organizations.

Alberto noted an explanation for this discrepancy between large corporations and smaller

structured businesses. He explained smaller companies are more equipped to control and

regulate unethical conduct due to the checks and balances implemented both vertically

and laterally throughout the organization. Tyler weighed in on this topic when asked

about unethical conduct at large sport organizations by stating; "I couldn't tell you why, [unethical conduct occurs more frequently within large sport companies] I mean they have everything they need I don't know why they would try to screw it up like that."

It is important to note these perceptions are formulated around opinions or ideas and not direct experiences student-interns personally encountered. Their comments were formed in-part based on mass media outlets such as ESPN along with prior knowledge obtained in an academic setting.

Positive Leader/Follower Experiences

Data revealed a wide array of findings concerning the leader/follower relationship between student-interns and sport managers. For the most part, student-interns were satisfied with their current role as an intern based on positive recognition they received from site supervisors. When asked if her contribution was valued as an intern, Kacey responded:

> No one really treats you like an intern, they treat you well, they treat you like an employee. Sometimes [managers] may feel like, 'hey I don't want to do this, let's give it to the intern.' They're not like that here. They've been very supportive [because] they know I'm just starting out.

Her sentiment clearly reveals appreciation for managers' willingness to empower subordinates. Others were similarly appreciative of the effort site supervisors put forth to improve their development. Jay revealed his excitement when he talked about his site supervisor's willingness to reach out to contacts for potential job opportunities on his

behalf. This was a common theme, as several other student-interns claimed managers were helpful with job placement. Eva explained several ways in which her site supervisor provided assistance when asked if she had a good relationship with current management at her internship site:

Absolutely, especially with the internship. [Site Supervisor] has gone above and beyond to help me find a job. She sent my résumé places, she has contacted people. So [Site Supervisor] has very much taken me under her wing and said we will find you a job, you will not leave here without one.

Several student-interns spoke to the positive recognition they received when completing tasks. When Tyler was asked if his contribution was valued, he concluded:

Yeah definitely here at [current internship site]. They always give you a pat on the back, like you are trying. A for effort type thing. Even if it is not correct they will tell you what you did wrong. I always appreciate stuff like that, just being noticed. Sometimes you go a couple of weeks without anything being said and then it is like … hey we really need your help. And after you come in and help they come and say thank you very much for helping us out. Whether it is an email or a personal thing. We don't need to hear it every day, that is fine, but once in a while. That is fine with me.

Constructive criticism was well received by Tyler, who conveyed sincere appreciation for any type of recognition he received. Similarly, Alberto revealed a

positive sentiment:

>If I am doing something wrong he [site supervisor] just directs it straight
>to me and everyone else isn't affected. I am the only one affected. So we
>can fix the problem and then ... boom I'm working again trying to get
>better as he is critiquing me.

It was clear student-interns valued honest, straightforward communication along with a willingness for site supervisors to delegate important tasks to them. Along with these variables, remaining personable while on the job and helpful with career advancement were positive managerial characteristics contributing to high levels of job satisfaction among student-interns. They were more comfortable and seemed to perform more efficiently when site supervisors embodied a friendly, serviceable, and sociable work atmosphere.

<p style="text-align:center">Negative Leader/Follower Experiences</p>

As mentioned, the majority of leader/follower relationships were positive, but a few student-interns expressed displeasure with their current internship. A general lack of communication exhibited by site supervisors was the most common theme illustrated by student-interns. Sarah provided a critique of her site superiors:

>Right now there is just not a lot of communication going on between
>management and the interns. You come in and you're like ... I don't have
>much to do. They put a lot of stuff off. Like if we ask questions, it's 'okay
>we will talk about it tomorrow' and then we don't talk about it. She
>[intern] asked them about taking off work during Spring Break, and she

had to come in for like two days where they do nothing. They're like, why am I here?

She went on to explain managers were rarely available when needed and she also noted the "pointless" nature of required staff meetings which contributed to her frustration. Similarly, Avelyn divulged her aggravation with a site supervisor which she chalked up to "failing to communicate or direct appropriately." It is noteworthy Sarah and Avelyn were the only two student-interns who disclosed blatant grievances with site supervisors at their current internship sites.

Most negative encounters among student-interns and sport managers occurred at previous job sites. One organization in particular, Minor League Baseball Club (MLBC) drew a considerable amount of negative attention due to unscrupulous behavior exhibited by managers. Cadence spoke about her experience while working for MLBC as an unpaid intern:

> There were definitely favorites in the organization. I don't know if it had to do with our supervisors not being as professional as they should have been. They were more on our [interns'] level and so that lack of respect happened. They had favorites and that kind of thing. Some people got away with things that others necessarily wouldn't. I mean what bothered me was the people that didn't work hard and they got away with it because they were favorites. You could still be a favorite and work hard but some people took advantage of the system.

Along with an unstructured chain of command and preferential treatment exuded by MLBC management, Tyler noted his displeasure with an executive in the organization based on his failure to identify with subordinates on a personal level. Furthermore, Palladin provided a revealing story related to the dishonest nature of MLBC managers. He claimed they failed to reimburse him financially after completing online job training requirements. Palladin also recounted the lack of discretion among supervisors while working for MLBC:

> During our first few days, like when we started working, the marketing guy there was like dropping the F-bomb like regularly. And not like yelling at people just casually dropping it in there. Then we were having to roll up [a tarp] and he just said "roll it up like a doobie". That's how the MLBC internship was.

Palladin was surprisingly upbeat despite being on the wrong end of several swindling acts contrived by his superiors. He explained such behavior is to be expected at times and complaining about it was not constructive. Also, Palladin claimed shoddy work conditions actually served as a means of bonding MLBC interns together, because they were able to vent shared grievances and make light of the situation. His co-workers similarly conveyed a positive attitude, describing the MLBC internship as "a learning experience."

Eva was another participant who had extensive experience dealing with unprofessional managers prior to obtaining her current internship. She described a precarious work situation when asked about her relationship with management:

At the gym we have [a manager] who is on salary and none of the other managers are on salary. And she doesn't work her 40 hours. Basically she gets paid to work instead of works to get paid. I mean she has already taken like 16 paid vacation days since January. She gets to do whatever she wants when she is not being monitored by [her supervisor]. There is always somebody trying to do the least possible because there is not going to be people that want … they don't have a passion for what they are doing. They are not trying to make the company better, they are there to fill time. They want to get their check and move on.

Eva then explained the manager's whimsical schedule often left her "picking up the slack" which she accomplished with a motivated attitude. As Eva stated; "If she [supervisor] leaves five hours early I better come in two hours early to pick it up because we've got a lot of stuff to do." Like the MLBC interns, this was a learning experience that helped Eva appreciate former jobs she held where discipline and hard work were valued. Furthermore, she expressed an overall high level of job satisfaction due to other positive elements of her work environment.

Data related to negative leader/follower relationships revealed rare cases of dissatisfaction among student-interns that were primarily due to a lack of thorough communication and haphazard availability on the part of managers. Various instances of unprofessional behavior exhibited by managers were also cited as detrimental to the work environment. However, student-interns were neither dismayed nor astonished by

these encounters, and they often demonstrated sound methods of coping and conflict resolution.

Trickle-Down Effect

Student-interns confirmed the presence of an organizational trickle-down effect with regard to ethical and unethical behavior modeled by sport industry practitioners. Findings coincided with the leader/follower relationship in that some managers were setting a positive example while others established a negative standard in the workplace.

There was a near unanimous consensus among student-interns that top-tier leaders in sport organizations are setting the tone for lower-level employees. James weighed in on this issue from a broad perspective:

> I feel like there is always a source. You know your top guys … your head manager or people up in the front office or top CEO's or whatever. I feel like they have an effect on their employees. You know people look up to them and they lead by example.

This statement does not address the likelihood employees will mimic specific types of leader action, but James' attitude confirms popular opinion regarding modeled behavior. Bo spoke more specifically about his current internship and the likelihood employees would emulate certain forms of behavior:

> One of the reasons this organization works so well is because they have very strong leaders. They definitely promote the best in everybody and try to get everybody to do the most they can. You can definitely tell it

does trickle down so I guess in an organization where a leader is acting

unethically it may trickle down to the lower tiers.

While Bo was merely speculating about the tendency of employees to follow

unethical leadership, his experiences demonstrate practical evidence of subordinates'

willingness to follow suit when leaders employ ethical behavior. From a personal

standpoint, Bo claimed he was motivated to "go above and beyond" the specified job

description to complete tasks due to the positive recognition he received from managers

and executives for his efforts. Sarah described her experience with modeled behavior

when asked about managerial influence at her current intern site:

> Yeah I think they [supervisors] have a huge effect on the overall
>
> organization. You know people see the boss acting that way I definitely
>
> think it has an influence on the lower levels, even like the interns. When
>
> we first got here it was tons of information, tons to do the first few weeks
>
> so we were very serious and trying to get it done real fast. Then they
>
> started being a lot more relaxed and a lot more informal. I'm definitely
>
> less like … not that I'm like unprofessional … but I'm a lot more relaxed
>
> than I think I would be if I was in a very professional organization.

Sarah spoke at length about this "relaxed" aura in relation to the informal dress

code student-interns adhered to at her current internship. One of her fellow co-workers

actually continued to don "business-casual" attire even after it was clear this was not a

requirement for interns. Unlike Sarah, this particular student-intern was reluctant to

wholly submit to what the organization considered appropriate clothing options. Tyler

also revealed a strikingly similar occurrence concerning modeled behavior and clothing regulations when asked about the trickle-down effect:

> Absolutely, oh yeah. Starting here [intern site] with how we dress. If I see people wearing jeans and a T-shirt it is going to want to make me wear jeans and a T-shirt. There are different restrictions however. You know if I saw the boss wearing jeans and a T-shirt I know I may not be allowed to do the same but I know I could be a lot more casual.

In this particular situation, Tyler confirmed the propensity of student-interns to emulate leader behavior to a certain extent, while he was also cognizant of the dress-code variance existing within the organizational chain of command. This was a notable finding which highlights a popular theme regarding the distinct separation between lower-level employees (e.g., student-interns) and mid to high-level managers (e.g., site supervisors). As noted, the majority of student-interns felt empowered and were satisfied with their internships, however there was a certain degree of disconnect between leaders and followers at internship sites. For instance, the extent to which subordinates possessed a comprehensive understanding of all business dealings seemed lacking at times. Student-interns undoubtedly recognized broad organizational objectives and strategic initiatives, but they may not have been completely in-tune with every nuance of the business.

Even though student-interns indicated a willingness to emulate site supervisors partly out of respect for the positional power they held, unbecoming behavior demonstrated by leaders' was unlikely to be replicated. Because Tyler previously

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indicated his disposition to mimic leader behavior with regard to dress-code guidelines, I asked if his attitude was the same when managers engaged in behavior that could be considered inappropriate. He responded:

> In that sense that's actually weird because I don't feel the same way about my [former internship]. If they were not communicating with me I would try to communicate with them so they could see how it should be done. Not to show them up, but this is how it should be done.

Numerous student-interns echoed Tyler's attitude, thereby confirming the situational circumstances of modeled behavior among leaders and followers. Kaden referenced this issue along with the aforementioned positional power leaders maintain in certain organizational contexts:

> It depends on the situation and it depends on the work environment. If it is a very strict work environment, or if there is not much structure it [modeled behavior] might happen more often than not. You see somebody in a position of power and you naturally want to emulate what they're doing because whatever they did they got to that position and that is eventually where you are going to want to try and get to.

In his statement, Kaden uncovers upward career advancement as one of the reasons student-interns would be likely to mimic their superiors. It was clear most student-interns in this study were unwilling to sacrifice personal ethical standards by succumbing to the pressure to behave unethically. Although Alberto did mention certain individuals may be willing to do whatever it takes to move up in the sport industry:

Like if my boss would use foul language in front of me a lot then I would

think like that is the type of attitude I need to succeed in this business. I

need to have the I don't give a blank kind of attitude and that might work

in some businesses where it is cold cut. Like you are either on or you are

off, I don't care about anything in the middle.

In this case, Alberto did not necessarily think cursing constituted unethical

action, but a hard-nosed attitude was critical to career success and therefore profanity

was justified. The following comments made by Avelyn sum up the inconclusive nature

of findings concerning modeled behavior:

I feel for the most part they [intern site supervisors] try to set a good

example. At least in the Paramilitary Student Organization because we

have [mentors] which is people in the military who are older now and

they kind of like oversee us. Some of them are really nice and really care

for our wellbeing but some of them are not very approachable at all. It's

kind of like … you get a mix.

Avelyn continued by explaining her role in this organization and expressed her

desire to set a positive example for students whom she was leading. Other student-

interns who held leadership roles concurrently articulated their responsibility to uphold

an exemplary ethical standard in the workplace.

Thus, there was strong evidence to support the notion a considerable managerial

influence exists among sport industry leaders, who wield extensive power particularly

when engaging in ethical conduct. By and large, student-interns were apt to follow such conduct provided it was aligned with their personal and professional ideals.

Ethical Leadership Congruence

Finally, the third research question (RQ3) focused on exploring the level of congruence between theoretical and practical elements of ethical leadership in the sport context. The following three themes emerged as the most pertinent to RQ3. Parallels between ethical leadership in the classroom and the workforce were found after exploring; the ethical standard held by student-interns, situational ethics, and similarities between faculty members and sport industry practitioners.

Student-Intern Ethical Standard

The first theme relating to the connection between the theory and practice of ethical leadership was centered on the ethical code or standard student-interns embraced. A large majority of participants indicated their ethical ideals were reinforced in school settings and relevant in the work context. Honesty and integrity were among the most common traits of student-interns ethical standards which they claimed to uphold. Throughout the data collection phase of this study, it became clear student-interns valued these traits in large part due to the frequently stressed and unique "honor code" emphasized at Southeast University. Participants explained that students are expected to understand and observe the honor code at all times while in school. Moreover, faculty members at Southeast often require students to sign a pledge prior to submitting assessments which dictates the terms and expectations surrounding this code. When Eva, a transfer-student, was asked about the honor code, she explained:

When I first got here [Southeast University] I was like … wow. I mean these must be a bunch of bad kids if they have to tell me [about the honor code] in every class, in every syllabus, every semester. Then I'm like, no it is because that underlying and reminding students … this is important. The things you remember are the things that are drilled into your head. It is kind of like if you are playing a sport, you pitch and pitch and pitch and it is drilled into your head to do it this way because it is the right way. The honor code sets that backbone.

The frequency Eva noted with which the honor code was stressed was confirmed by the majority of participants. One individual insinuated the honor code became redundant and unnecessary during the latter years of college, but it was nonetheless an important factor contributing to the ethical standards among student-interns.

It was found that student-interns' ethical standards stemming from the honor code often transferred to the work environment. Jay provided his thoughts concerning foundations of the honor code and how it was relevant to his current internship:

People know about it [honor code] too, from all over. Even my co-workers they're like, oh you've got your Southeast honor code. But I think there is a high ethical standard. They [faculty members] expect us to go out to the workplace and really make a difference. I like having a structured organization, I guess I'm a rules follower. I like knowing what is expected of me and being held to a high standard. It is the same at

[current internship] where we have strict rules and regulations, everybody

knows us, they know our personality.

Several student-interns talked explicitly about the link between their personal

ethical standard and the Southeast honor code along with the extent of the code's

transferability in an organizational context. There was considerable agreement

concerning the relative value student-interns placed on the honor code while attending

Southeast University, and it was apparent the code was applicable while individuals were

completing the internship requirement.

Situational Ethics

The next theme explores the subjective interpretation of certain rules and how

student-interns' ideals formulated in the classroom transferred to their internship

experience. The behavior of student-interns is then compared from an academic and

employment standpoint in order to determine the level of congruence between the two

settings.

Maintaining clear boundaries and adhering to systematic procedures as a worker

was held in high regard among most student-interns. Nevertheless, not all participants

were in complete agreement with Jay, who supported a stringent or rigid organizational

structure. Bo gave his account on the matter:

You definitely want a strong structure. You don't want to have a laissez

faire attitude. It is nice knowing what to do and what not to do but not

making it so detailed to the point where you have to worry about every

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single action. Just having a broad knowledge of right and wrong and yes and no and things like that.

While there is minor variation between philosophies outlined by Bo and Jay, the majority of student-interns were in agreement that adhering to certain fundamental rules is important as a worker in the sport industry. As mentioned when outlining *Ethical Course Concepts* earlier in this chapter, sport management faculty members stressed "doing the right thing" as a future practitioner in the sport industry. Their emphasis may be a contributing factor in student-interns being partial to rule-following behavior. Eva articulated her opinion about rule-following behavior which was not necessarily based on a concept learned in class, but rather, emerged while working in the sport industry:

> Due to working in an environment where the rules are constantly broken by upper management, it has opened my eyes. My eyes have very much been opened to doing the right thing and doing exactly what the rules are.

There was no mention of blatant rules violations by student-interns, but a few individuals mentioned it may be necessary to go beyond the scope of certain work-related regulations in some cases. Cadence spoke to this in general terms when describing her propensity for structure:

> I'm definitely more of a structured person. I like to know what you can and can't do. I think there are instances that … you know … stuff has to be a certain way for a certain reason but you have to go through procedures to get to do that. I don't think you can just go off on your own

and make a decision when it comes to different ethical issues. You have to go through the right channels to change it.

When asked if her opinion was based on a specific work experience she encountered, Cadence refrained from mentioning details but reiterated the importance of "going through the proper channels." This response reveals there are often conflicting objectives when attempting to achieve organizational tasks while following all company policies simultaneously. Alberto claimed the importance of following rules "to the T" is contingent upon the size of the company:

Like at this company it's a small business so I could see the rules being a little more lenient because you have the ability to [help] an employee if they mess up. Say I am making phone calls and he [supervisor] wants me to make 60 dials an hour and I am not able to do it. He is not going to fire me because I didn't follow the rules. But like in a bigger corporate place, if you don't meet it then … on to the next person because if you are not going to work hard someone else will.

Earlier in this chapter, it was mentioned student-interns perceived unethical behavior was occurring more frequently at larger sport organizations, and this idea was formulated based on media consumption along with concepts student-interns learned while enrolled in sport management classes. As such, Alberto's comparison above may be a product of former scholastic knowledge gained as a sport management student. Similarly, Sarah claimed companies may benefit from a liberal interpretation of certain rules. She noted that it would behoove organizations to be "flexible" with the

enforcement of company regulations at times. James spoke more directly when reflecting

on the pressure and scrutiny managers are under:

> Putting myself in their [managers'] shoes, in some cases you're going to
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> … I don't want to say cheat but you're going to bend the rules or go
>
> around them and eventually find a way to do what you're going to do the
>
> easiest and quickest way. But you know ethically, maybe there is a time
>
> table you should follow.

Participants did not mention one instance in which they disregarded obvious rules

as interns, but responses indicated certain organizational policies and tendencies were

held in higher regard when compared to others. Cadence became somewhat

uncomfortable when asked if she would be likely to mimic poor managerial behavior:

> Oh man putting me on the spot. Yes and no, it depends on the
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> circumstance. If it is something little like … you know you have your
>
> own moral standards about stuff that is happening but if it is a rule like
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> dress code. That kind of stuff is…

This study yielded significantly more data related to situational ethics from an

employment perspective, as student-interns propensity to interpret scholastic policies in a

subjective manner was not gauged. It should be noted violations of scholastic policies

among student-interns were almost as infrequent as those mentioned in work contexts.

Only one student-intern, James, admitted to breaching the Southeast honor code at any

point during college:

Don't get me wrong, I've probably broken that code in some manner. I mean you know you go online and maybe you don't cite your reference like you should and you plagiarize. In some ways it could be intentional. If it says you can't have more than such and such sources and you only put three in there but you really use four. But with some others, maybe you're doing research and you read a whole page and then you kind of put it in your own words.

Overall, James firmly believed he was taught to follow rules as a student and he was behaving appropriately in the workplace based on the ethical model set by his site supervisors. His mention of violating the honor code was viewed as a brief lapse in judgment and a rare occurrence rather than an indictment on his entire ethical repertoire, which he considered to be in-tact.

Student-interns tendency to abide by rules in a work environment derived in part from faculty members' emphasis on appropriate behavior. Furthermore, the honor code that was in place while student-interns were attending classes at Southeast contributed to their inclination toward a structured work environment. That being said, there was mention of certain exceptions to the strict adherence of rules in an organizational context, whereas school policies were clearly delineated and understood by student-interns.

Faculty/Manager Congruence

Another emerging theme relating to the congruence between theoretical and practical elements of ethical leadership is illustrated by drawing parallels between

faculty members and internship site supervisors. Student-interns expressed a resounding endorsement of sport management faculty members, and while sport industry leaders were held in high regard as well, there were slight discrepancies which came to light.

A common positive attribute among faculty and practitioners was their willingness to provide career advice and aid with the job search when approached by student-interns. Kacey referenced a particular faculty member as being extremely helpful in this regard:

> Like I can go ask Dr. Holcomb for resume advice, cover letter advice, internship searching advice. He has been really helpful with that, he explained things very well. Ever since I was a freshman he has been very helpful in and out of class.

Student-interns mentioned various sport management faculty members in a positive light, and Dr. Holcomb was among the most frequently cited. Another sport management faculty member, Dr. Barnaby, was recurrently cited as well. James recalled a specific instance in which Barnaby painted a realistic picture for student-interns as future practitioners in the sport industry:

> I remember like Barnaby saying, hey you're in sports management; you're not going to be making $100,000, $200,000 a year. You're in this because you love sports and you love this feeling and degree study. I mean there is always ways to move up and make money, but you're in this because it is what you love to do.

Like James, several student-interns alluded to faculty members' willingness to explain both positive and negative aspects of working in sports. Dr. Holcomb made it clear student-interns would have to endure hardships when working their way up through the organizational ranks. Several student-interns explained Holcomb was helpful in this regard, and most participants remained positive when tasked with menial work projects that did not directly contribute to their professional development. Palladin provided his opinion based on previous and current work experience:

> I guess that's how I feel now just because I understand that [interns are viewed as expendable] with internships I've had. Definitely the [former internship] last year I don't think it was an internship it was more like free labor. I know my supervisor here [current internship] was an intern and he said he went through the same exact thing. So I guess you have to experience it. That's how I feel about it, you have to earn your stripes.

Site supervisors were equally likely to aid with the job search. Sarah revealed her excitement when talking about a potentially lucrative opportunity her current internship could yield:

> Yeah, that has been one thing they have been really helpful with. They talked with three of us [interns] about potential jobs because they also run an online client-based service so they have tons of clients. And they are like if any of those interest you just write them down and we can talk to them for you. So that was pretty awesome. And I know in the past I've

had friends that worked for [current intern site] and they said they are

very helpful with finding a job afterwards.

These statements made by Kacey and Sarah reflect the majority experience

regarding the helpful nature of faculty and managers when student-interns were seeking

professional advice. Student-interns also valued an interactive and friendly atmosphere,

which most faculty members and site supervisors provided. For the most part,

participants felt faculty members were approachable outside the scope of class and site

supervisors were engaging in personable interaction. When asked about his experiences

with management at the internship site, Kaden disclosed the benefits site supervisors

were modeling in terms of personable communication:

Our sales manager and site supervisors, they are all very much a people

person. They can sell almost anything. [Site Supervisor] can sell ice to an

Eskimo. And it is something I've picked up on, they are very honest and

people-oriented. They communicate with honesty. [Site Supervisor]

doesn't meet anyone that is a stranger. So that is something that I've

definitely wanted to learn or engage more in.

Based on responses gathered from student-interns, sport management faculty

members were comparably accommodating in terms of open and frequent

communication. For instance, several student-interns claimed they could talk to faculty

about "anything," especially while enrolled in upper-level sport management classes.

Another parallel drawn between faculty and supervisors relates to the recognition of student-interns contribution and personal well-being. Bo concluded his well-being was taken into consideration at both his current internship and in the classroom:

> In most of my experiences, at Southeast University and here at the intern site I've felt very appreciated. I've been working for [current internship] doing game-days for like two years now and then they invited me into the office for my internship. And Southeast has been great about it too. I've never felt that I shouldn't ask questions or that I shouldn't go after class and talk with the professor. Everyone was real approachable, you know they took my comments or criticisms for what it was worth.

Bo's statement provides an accurate account of student-interns' high level of overall satisfaction with sport management faculty members and internship site supervisors. It is noteworthy that among student-intern interactions with faculty, there were not any instances in which participants held an unfavorable opinion of a particular professor or instructor. In slight contrast, there were a few circumstances where student-interns were critical of managerial tendencies and conduct. Bear in mind this finding was revealed only after specifically comparing sport management faculty to internship supervisors, as there were critical accounts of faculty and management in other contexts.

The parallel between faculty members and sport managers was apparent with regard to their capacity for helping student-interns. Participants' professional and personal development was taken into consideration at both an academic and organizational level, and satisfactory collaboration among leaders and followers was

evident in each setting. Lastly, after detailed examination of specific student-intern experiences, there was a remote contrast in the positive nature of the leader/follower relationship when comparing theoretical and practical settings.

Summary

Overall, findings were relatively consistent regarding the prevalence of ethical leadership in the sport environment. Student-interns indicated a strong emphasis on ethics within the sport management curriculum, and experiences of ethical leadership as displayed in the workforce were notably favorable. It is apparent student-interns hold ethics in high regard and they were highly committed in terms of adhering to their personal ethical ideals. Data from this study suggest student-interns will likely follow the example set by faculty members and sport practitioners, especially if leadership behavior coincides with the personal ethical standards held by student-interns.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of this thesis was to explore ethical leadership in the realm of sport through the eyes of student-interns. First, viewpoints and experiences were gauged concerning ethical standards and practices of sport management faculty members. Next, an investigation was undertaken to determine how ethical ideals expressed by leaders translate as modeled behavior exhibited by followers in work contexts. Finally, the degree of consistency between the theory and practice of ethical leadership in the sport environment was examined.

In order to facilitate a comprehensive and systematic understanding of this study, this chapter is divided into five sections. The first section entails a discussion of findings outlined in Chapter 4 as they relate to the Review of Literature. In the second section, the limitations of this thesis are assessed, followed by an examination of implications in the third section. The fourth section lends recommendations for future research. The fifth and final section provides closing thoughts.

Scholastic Ethical Leadership

The first subsection of this chapter discusses the first research question, which explored student-interns' perceptions and experiences of ethical leadership from an academic standpoint. The following content lends analysis of ethical concepts being taught in the classroom, faculty members' propensity to serve as mentors or role models outside of the classroom, and the influence of academic experiences on the future

development of student-interns. Comparisons between the sport management division and business school are drawn within each of these topics in order to provide an inclusive understanding of student-interns' perceptions and experiences in an academic setting.

For the purposes of this study, leadership was defined broadly as "some kind of process, act, or influence that in some way gets people to do something" (Ciulla, 1995, p. 12). Ethical leadership was similarly broad and viewed in terms of how leaders "ought" to behave (Ciulla, 2004). Findings revealed sport management faculty members fit the mold of ethical leaders because they were influencing student-interns to "do the right thing" and "take care of your people". This emphasis denotes an obvious focus on ethical behavior among followers, which faculty stressed in and out of the classroom. The propensity to "take care of your people" relates to effective practices of human resource development (HRD) highlighted earlier in this study (Gibson, 2004). Also, professors and instructors frequently emphasized drawbacks of unethical leadership in the sport industry. This corresponds with the popular belief that unethical leadership is widespread among sport leaders (Mondello, 1999). In relation to sport management faculty, business courses were increasingly focused on relaying specific ethical concepts, as student-interns indicated entire sections or chapters were dedicated to ethics. In either case, it was clear members of academia were emphasizing ethics. This confirms the shift from focusing primarily on outcome-oriented objectives toward a more human element of leadership in an academic setting (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005).

Bandura's (1977) SLT indicates people learn from observing behavior of dependable models. Sport management faculty members were undoubtedly dependable due to their role as mentors, or role models aiding student-interns outside the classroom. As noted, having an ethical mentor is positively associated with ethical leadership (Weaver, Treviño, & Agle, 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006). While faculty members were concerned about the personal and professional development of student-interns, they were not exhibiting behavior synonymous with servant leadership. As Greenleaf (1977) describes, servant leaders are individuals displaying a sincere and isolated focus on follower development and well-being. Student-interns were receiving direction in the form of job advice and career support, but this aid was contingent upon their willingness to seek help. In other words, faculty members were not going out of their way to engage in selfless acts which would improve the development of student-interns.

In contrast to the sport management academic division, members of the business faculty were not as focused on mentoring student-interns partly due to the sheer volume of students enrolled in business courses. As noted in Chapter 4, there was a telling disconnect between student-interns and business faculty members in terms of interactive engagement occurring outside of the classroom setting. The modeling process described by SLT indicates four elements (attention, retention, motivation, reproduction) are required in order for behavior to be emulated (Bandura, 1977). Moreover, research indicates followers are unlikely to emulate behavior if leaders are not perceived as role models (Bandura, 1986). Based on reflection from student-interns which revealed they were cognizant of the detached nature of certain business faculty members, it can be

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concluded elements of attention and retention were well-established. In other words, student-interns were focused on behavior exhibited by members of the business faculty, and they were able to remember and process personal interactions. However, this study did not examine in detail the extent to which student-interns were motivated to follow the example modeled in the business school. There are external factors within the modeling process that indicate it is not a forgone conclusion behavior will be emulated even if the first three elements are present (Bandura, 1977). As such, it may be student-interns were influenced by factors not directly related to the viewpoints expressed during this study. For instance, previous mentor/mentee interactions could shape student-interns' perceptions concerning the relative obligation of mentors in an academic setting. In this sense, the propensity to emulate modeled behavior is contingent upon business faculty members meeting the preconceived criteria held by student-interns. In all, it is clear student-interns possessed the ability to process observable behavior, but their willingness to replicate actions cannot be determined with utter certainty.

Ethical Leadership in the Workplace

The following subsection addresses the second research question, which relates to ethical leadership as observed and emulated by student-interns in the workplace. First, student-interns' views concerning the current ethical climate in the sport industry are gauged. Next, the leader/follower relationship among student-interns and internship site supervisors is discussed. Finally, the relative influence of leader behavior on subsequent action displayed by followers is considered by examining the presence of an organizational trickle-down effect (TDE) in the work environment.

SLT's central tenet states human behaviors are influenced by observation and direct experience (Bandura, 1977). In regard to the observational element, student-interns indicated the ethical climate in the sport industry will either remain substandard or worsen in the future. Their perception was largely based on media consumption, which coincides with the symbolic model in the observational learning process (Bandura, 1977). Punishment for engaging in unethical behavior was viewed as a significant factor that may curb this disturbing trend among sport industry leaders. This relates to what Bandura (1977) referred to as a reinforcer, or consequence that follows behavioral tendencies. As student-interns indicated, it may take a harsh punishment resulting from unethical behavior for sport industry leaders to embody ethics. Latham and Sarri (1979) referenced a heightened reasoning among individuals who truly understand the consequences which follow their actions. In this sense, findings show student-interns perceive a lack of reasoning among sport industry professionals. The potential financial benefits sport managers garner from unethical leadership could outweigh the possible punishment for behaving unethically. Support for this notion was found when examining student-interns' opinions concerning the relative strength of the win-at-all-costs mentality currently embodied by intercollegiate athletic coaches. While this partially confirms Mondello's (1999) claim regarding the negative public perception of sport industry leaders, student-interns did not necessarily think unethical leadership was exclusive to sport management. Instances of unethical leadership were cited among politicians, educators, and corporate executives to illustrate this point.

The overall positive relationship between student-interns and internship site

supervisors relates more to the direct experience element of SLT (Bandura, 1977). Student-interns who expressed satisfaction with their internships were led by ethical managers, thereby confirming the link between ethical leadership and high levels of job satisfaction (Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko, 2009). Findings revealed student-interns' perceptions of a positive leader/follower relationship stemmed mainly from; open and frequent communication, a personable work atmosphere, and receiving direction from a personal and professional standpoint. There was also an explicit link to the servant leadership characteristic identified as humility among ethical site supervisors. As described by Van Dierendonck (2011), humility is when leaders understand the value of followers' contributions, and then provide support for followers to reach their potential. Humility is particularly relevant because it is one of the three core servant leadership characteristics directly linked to ethical leadership. The extent to which student-interns felt valued for their contribution and received constructive feedback largely determined their depiction of site supervisors as ethical leaders. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude site supervisors embodied at least one of the three elements of servant leadership. Another positive attribute surrounding servant leadership relates to favorable job outcomes, namely satisfaction, performance, and commitment, obtained by followers working under servant leaders (Chung, Jung, Kyle, & Petrick, 2010; Van Dierendonck, 2011). In this study, however, even among satisfactory accounts of the leader/follower relationship, it is unclear whether student-interns were highly committed to their organization, or if their performance was significantly improved due to servant leadership elements embodied by site supervisors. Therefore, the positive influence of

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servant leadership on job outcomes cannot be wholly confirmed based on findings revealed in this study.

Instances of negative leader/follower relationships were rare, but the most common complaint among student-interns was leaders' lack of communication. All six key characteristics of servant leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011) were notably lacking among site supervisors who failed to communicate appropriately. Further, disgruntled student-interns were unlikely to express positive attitudes and OCB which are two positive follower-related outcomes stemming from servant leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Among critical accounts of site supervisors, student-interns were reluctant to diminish the entire internship experience based solely on the shortcomings of certain leaders. Instead, participants were more inclined to focus on positive aspects of the learning experience when dealing with unethical managers.

The considerably high levels of job satisfaction expressed by the majority of student-interns bring up two points that should be addressed. First, there are various reasons student-interns may have been reluctant to divulge negative internship experiences. Participants were currently working for the company and internship site supervisors during interviews for this study. As such, interns may have perceived disapproving of certain managerial methods or tendencies as resulting in tarnishing their personal or professional reputations if comments were not kept confidential. On the other hand, providing a critical account of a previous job experience may not result in similar detrimental consequences. Findings support this conclusion, as student-interns were much more likely to express disapproval of former bosses and companies. As mentioned

when outlining the rare occurrences of poor leader/follower relations, student-interns had the tendency to spin negative accounts as "learning experiences." Their positive outlook essentially serves to skew the extent to which unethical leader behavior influenced job satisfaction in a negative manner. Second, the lack of unethical leadership as perceived by student-interns could be related to the lower standing student- interns held in their respective organizations. Unethical leadership may have been occurring, but student-interns were not privy to this information because their entry-level job description did not entail a thorough understanding of every aspect of the company. Therefore, student-interns cannot be expected to reveal information to which they were not exposed in the first place.

The discrepancy between predominately favorable student-intern experiences and widespread unethical conduct in sport is notable. As mentioned in the first two chapters of this thesis, ethical leadership has become increasingly important in the sport context in large part due to unethical behavior frequently exhibited by sport managers (Aronson, 2001; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Mondello, 1999; Lumpkin, Stoll, & Beller, 1999). However, findings from this thesis indicate unethical conduct in the sport industry is relatively nonexistent according to student-interns. Whether student-interns were simply not in the position to observe instances of unethical leadership or sport industry leaders were remarkably principled individuals, there is a large gap between findings from this study and the commonly-held perception surrounding ethical leadership in sport. This is not to say ethical leadership is a complete anomaly in sport organizations, and it is entirely reasonable to assume internship sites examined in this study embodied virtuous

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ethical ideals. While an examination of ethical leadership from other stakeholder perspectives (e.g., full-time employees, volunteers, senior staff) would aid in our understanding of this matter, student-interns outlooks and experiences are nonetheless valuable for the purposes of this study.

Student-interns confirmed the presence of an organizational TDE, whereby leader behavior has a direct influence on followers (Aryee, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006; Tepper & Taylor, 2003). As mentioned by Mayer et al. (2009), the most influential person in this process is often an immediate supervisor. This was certainly the case in this study, as student-interns frequently referenced site supervisors as models they would be most likely to emulate. In essence, the TDE is a form of modeled behavior within Bandura's (1986) SLT; and findings indicate site supervisors were serving as models toward student-interns. Supervisors were emulated partly due to their positional power, or advanced standing in the organization, thereby confirming leaders' propensity to gain recognition simply by possessing an advanced job title (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Site supervisors were also followed because student-interns genuinely believed they were setting a positive example. Thomas, Schermerhorn, and Dienhart (2004) claim setting a positive example of leadership at the executive level is imperative for organizations to recognize the benefits of ethically-sound behavior. Based on findings from this study, it is unclear whether internship site supervisors were directly influenced by top-tier leaders in the organization. Because interaction between student-interns and upper-level executives was rather limited, the far-reaching effects of an organizational TDE can neither be confirmed nor denied.

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The TDE found in this study speaks to the impressionable yet autonomous nature of student-interns as followers in an organizational context. For example, student-interns were likely to follow the positive example set by sport industry leaders, but they were hesitant to imitate conduct deemed as unprofessional or inappropriate. In this sense, the TDE applies as a model of both what to do and what not to do among student-interns, and the likelihood behavior will be imitated is contingent upon followers' sense of right and wrong. Insofar as student-interns continue to emulate positive leader attributes and refrain from following poor behavior, the ethical climate will likely improve under their direction. If and when student-interns become leaders in the sport industry, it would be valuable to reflect on what they perceived to be the most effective ethical leadership practices based on their experience as followers. In turn, it is reasonable to conclude student-interns will serve as ethical leaders whose positive example will trickle-down to followers.

Ethical Leadership Congruence

The third research question in this study addressed the alignment and dissonance of ethical leadership in school and work settings. Discussion in this subsection begins with a comparison of the manner in which student-interns interpret company policies and academic regulations. The situational nature of ethics is then explored, followed by relaying suggestions that could serve to bridge the gap between the theory and practice of ethical leadership.

As noted earlier in this study, both scholars and practitioners in the sporting realm place importance on ethical leadership (Komives et al., 2005; Malloy, Ross, &

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Zakus, 2003; Mondello, 1999). Findings from this study uncovered student-interns are applying ethical concepts and principles learned in the school setting toward their work endeavors in some respects, but there were also underlying discrepancies when comparing each setting. Essentially, student-interns perceptions of upholding ethical standards in an academic context are black and white, whereas workplace etiquette yielded some grey areas. For example, student-interns held the Southeast University honor code in high regard, but sidestepping company policies was deemed acceptable as long as actions improved organizational performance or were not egregious in nature. This disconnect could be explained by examining a recurring theme: Bandura's (1977) reinforcer element of observational learning. It is probable student-interns could not justify breaking the honor code because doing so would likely result in harsh punishment, while eluding a rarely enforced or seemingly unimportant internship policy may not yield the same negative attention. From an academic standpoint, this confirms observational learning is heightened when the outcome is either a positive reward or the removal of some type of punishment (Latham & Sarri, 1979).

Student-interns were clearly in-tune with the consequences and negative stigma which followed violating the honor code policy, which dictates students never "lie, cheat, or steal" while enrolled at Southeast University. There is, however, another common phrase among the student body which contradicts the notion that lying, cheating, and stealing are never tolerated. While it was not mentioned by participants in this study, Southeast students often justify bending the honor code by "elaborating, collaborating, and borrowing." This nomenclature is noteworthy because it speaks to the

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situational circumstances surrounding ethical behavior from an academic standpoint. Furthermore, the implied meaning of this justification could be the reason student-interns value flexible company policies in the work environment. Brown, Treviño, and Harrison, (2005) posit normatively appropriate conduct may constitute completely different actions depending on the context. When comparing student-interns' sentiments regarding the strict adherence to academic regulations and the relative fluidity enjoyed in organizational contexts, it is apparent normative conduct is not completely aligned from a school and work standpoint. Therefore, based on student-interns' perceptions and experiences in this context, it can be concluded there is minor variance with regard to ethical leadership between the school and work setting.

From a broad perspective, a significant divide exists between theoretical and practical dimensions of ethical leadership. As previously noted, student-interns are well-informed of ethics based on academic knowledge acquired in the classroom and faculty members serving as ethical models outside of class. Further, internship site supervisors are held in high regard due to their propensity to engage in ethical conduct. In essence, there is a notable lack of unethical experiences encountered by student-interns, but contemporary sport is riddled with accounts of unscrupulous conduct displayed by leaders. It may be the case that ethical concepts taught in the classroom are not transferrable, or practical in work settings. For example, sport management faculty members emphasize "taking care of your people," while internship site supervisors primary focus is geared toward achieving organizational objectives or maximizing profit. It may not be feasible for sport industry leaders to fully immerse themselves in leading

and developing followers, as this could shift focus away from the primary objective. This brings up a fundamental distinction between academic institutions and sport organizations that should be addressed. While sport companies are often tasked with satisfying multiple and incongruent demands of stakeholders in an attempt to achieve organizational objectives, (Friedman, Parent, & Mason 2004; Parent, Olver, & Séguin, 2009) the overarching goal of higher education is to foster and develop knowledge among affiliate members. As such, unethical leadership is likely to occur more frequently in practical settings, as this conduct may provide a strategic advantage toward organizational goals such as maximizing profit. Moreover, unethical conduct could be viewed as contradictory to the people-oriented approach held by institutions of higher education. Based on the intrinsic difference in mindset between the academic setting and business environment, it is reasonable to assume student-interns' inclinations to engage in unethical conduct stem mainly from work experiences. It would be naïve to postulate higher education is completely void of unethical behavior, but impressionable individuals such as student-interns are apt to conform to their surroundings, whether they endorse altruism and open-mindedness or serve to promote individual achievement and financial prowess.

Limitations

While this thesis provides a unique understanding of ethical leadership in sport by examining perceptions and experiences of student-interns, it is by no means a comprehensive representation of the presence of ethical leadership in academic and practical settings. The scope of this study was relatively limited in terms of sample size

due to economic and time constraints. The limited sample size was partially a reflection of the voluntary nature of this study, as only 15 out of 41 individuals enrolled in the internship class were willing to participate in this study. Time and monetary considerations led to the omission of two student-interns, leaving a final sample of 13 participants. As mentioned, all participants were enrolled at the same academic institution, and several student-interns worked at the same internship site. Therefore, findings should not be generalized across broad contexts, since views from this sample may not necessarily reflect the majority viewpoints of sport management students who hold entry-level positions in the sport industry. Also, while participant demographics were representative of the internship pool at Southeast University, this sample was rather homogeneous in terms of age, gender, and ethnicity.

As the primary researcher for this study, my knowledge and experience concerning data collection methods were rather limited before undertaking this thesis. Measures were taken to circumvent my shortcomings as a novice researcher, but interviews proved cumbersome at times. By and large participants seemed comfortable and were quite forthcoming during the interview process, but there were instances in which they were hesitant to divulge information related to personal unethical conduct and recent negative encounters with faculty members or internship site supervisors. A potential determining factor of their reluctance could be fear of reprisal, as student-interns had yet to complete scholastic and internship requirements at the time of this study. While it was clearly explained participation in this study would not influence academic standing and all interview transcripts would remain confidential, student-

interns may not have been completely content with divulging sensitive topics such as unethical behavior.

Beyond the natural tendency to withhold personal or delicate information, another limitation was the location of certain interviews. While most interviews were conducted in a private area with minimal interruption, several student-interns were unable to leave the job site for interviews. As such, data was collected in public locations subject to distraction from co-workers, managers, and bystanders. Moreover, in a few rare cases the interview process was disrupted by site supervisors and faculty members. This caused a considerable change in tone and content among student-interns, who seemed somewhat uncomfortable with their presence.

Another element that may have contributed to a lack of holistic data was participants tendency to shy away from specific questions. Miles and Huberman (1994) note social desirability bias, or participants desire to provide socially acceptable or favorable responses, is a key threat to validity of data. This is particularly relevant for this thesis, as the topic of discussion is somewhat controversial and elicits a rather subjective interpretation. At times student-intern responses were vague or mundane and they chose not to elaborate after being asked to clarify the specific meaning of the point being made. Again, their reluctance to communicate openly could be attributed to the sensitive nature of ethical leadership or fear of reprisal. Overall, instances of turbulence during data collection were rare but nonetheless should be cited as a limitation of this study.

Analyzing data presented certain limitations that are noteworthy as well. At times

it was difficult to draw broad conclusions when relating my findings to previous research partly because student-intern responses could be somewhat contradictory. For example, several student-interns explicitly referenced high levels of job satisfaction but would later express displeasure with job-related elements. Discrepancies such as this made it difficult to generalize the popular opinion among the collective group of student-interns, as there was often an equal amount of data to support each side of a particular point.

The interview format and limited sample size for this study influenced the extent to which general conclusions were reported to a certain degree. Because certain topics were only addressed with a few student-interns in the latter interview sessions, this data was insufficient to conclusively explain the overall sentiment among participants. It is important to note the same set of general questions were utilized for all interviews, but certain follow-up topics emerged and were discussed in more detail during the data collection process. Also, findings were conveyed in broad terms (e.g., the majority of student-interns, most participants, several instances, etc.) in order to reflect the overall sentiment of participants. As such, there is a lack of detailed quantifiable evidence to support general findings uncovered in this study.

One final limitation relates to researcher bias, whereby my experiences and opinions influence the process of data collection and analysis. As noted by Creswell (1998), qualitative researchers hold certain philosophical assumptions which affect the interpretation of findings. In an attempt to mitigate this subjective interpretation, triangulation of investigators and member checking were utilized (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This process is outlined in detail in the third chapter. All the aforementioned

limitations are noteworthy, and while several measures were enacted to mitigate potential barriers, some constraints were unavoidable.

Implications

The third section of this chapter is focused on exploring theoretical and practical implications of ethical leadership. First, implications for theory will be discussed in terms of the extent to which this study contributes to SLT and ethical leadership scholarship. Next, the underlying practical implications are examined in an attempt to uncover a means of improving ethical leadership in scholastic and organizational contexts.

Theoretical Implications

One of the main contributions of this study is to connect literature related to ethics and leadership in the context of sport. Research has demonstrated there is not a blanket leadership approach which can be applied in all settings (George, Sims, McLean, & Mayer, 2007). However, ethical behavior is becoming increasingly valued in contemporary leadership research, as seen through ethical components embodied by numerous leadership theories (Brown et al., 2005). To date, theory-based research exploring ethical leadership as a distinct construct in the sporting realm from the perspective of student-interns has not been conducted. Findings from this study suggest that scholarship aimed at developing substantive level theories is needed.

As mentioned, ethical leadership is particularly relevant in sport due to widespread unethical behavior displayed by sport managers (Mondello, 1999). Findings from this thesis revealed a discrepancy in this regard, as instances of unethical leadership

were relatively nonexistent according to student-interns. Research also indicates ethical leadership can have a positive impact on job-related outcomes among followers (Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko, 2009). However, there is little research in the sport context which has undertaken an in-depth analysis of ethical leadership as perceived by followers. This study goes beyond examining job-related outcomes among followers to explore the present-day constitution of ethical leadership in sport organizations and academic institutions.

Because ethical leadership holds such a subjective interpretation and therefore is subject to considerable variance, (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005) findings from this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the current ethical climate in sport. Essentially, the unique perspective of student-interns provides insight into what the future generation of sport leaders considers right and wrong. Lumpkin, Stoll, and Beller (1999) found that unethical or rule-breaking behavior exhibited by leaders can result in turmoil for sport organizations. As such, student-interns' interpretation of ethical leadership could determine the extent to which widespread unethical behavior in sport will continue at an alarming rate or subside in the future.

This study also contributes to servant leadership scholarship in the context of sport. As noted, servant leadership entails selfless leader conduct which transcends organizational objectives (Greenleaf, 1977). Van Dierendonck (2011) highlights various ethical components of servant leadership, all of which are geared toward a sincere and isolated focus on the welfare of followers. Similar to ethical leadership literature, servant leadership has been shown to have a positive impact on job-related outcomes among

followers. Research indicates subordinates working under servant leaders exhibit increased levels of satisfaction, commitment, and overall performance (Chung, Jung, Kyle, & Petrick, 2010; Van Dierendonck, 2011). While these findings are noteworthy, the existence and feasibility of servant leadership in sport is relatively underdeveloped. This study, therefore, served to strengthen research in this area by exploring the extent to which faculty members and sport practitioners embody principles of servant leadership. Findings were somewhat mixed, as internship site supervisors exhibited certain behaviors synonymous with servant leadership, yet there was a notable lack of selfless conduct displayed by sport management faculty members.

Van Dierendonck (2011) notes servant leadership is particularly difficult to categorize due to the continual refinement of various measurement instruments utilized to explore this construct. This often results in a lack of unanimity regarding the explicit classification of servant leadership among scholars. In an attempt to bridge this gap, this thesis explored distinct interactions among leaders and followers in school and work settings. Examining servant leadership from a unique follower perspective in two different environments not only broadens measures of classifying this construct, but comparisons can be drawn across boundaries as well.

Practical Implications

There are various implications which can be drawn from this study from an academic perspective. Findings revealed student-interns were well-informed of ethical concepts and held faculty members in a positive light for the most part. However, there is room for improvement on both fronts which could enhance student's knowledge base

and improve relations among students and instructors within institutions of higher education. The following content yields suggestions to create a heightened awareness and understanding of ethical leadership in academic settings.

From a classroom standpoint, sport management academic departments should consider explicitly emphasizing ethics by requiring courses or textbooks directly geared toward ethical leadership. Faculty members could stress effective leadership practices or benefits of ethical behavior in order for students to gain a thorough understanding of their responsibility to embody ethical leadership. Topics such as corporate social responsibility, business ethics, or various other ethical principles would serve to enhance the notion that good or bad behavior can have a profound impact on one's personal well-being and society at large. Moreover, an in-depth analysis of ethical leadership would provide a platform for examining not only the drawbacks of unethical behavior, but benefits of "doing the right thing" could be covered at length. Not only would this serve to balance out widely-held cynical views of sport managers, but an increasingly comprehensive awareness concerning ethical leadership in sport would materialize.

Business departments could enact certain measures which would foster ethical leadership beyond the scope of the classroom. If class sizes were considerably smaller, faculty members would be more likely to develop valuable interpersonal relationships with students and serve as mentors. In turn, this would benefit students' aptitude for engaging in mentor/mentee exchanges among various academic domains. Creating a personable and interactive learning environment would contribute to students' personal and professional development regardless of class size. Faculty members in the business

school could start by establishing pliable office hours and clearly conveying a willingness to provide constructive aid consistently throughout the course of the academic term. A receptive gesture such as this would increase the likelihood students would reach out and learn from faculty members' knowledge and experience beyond the classroom setting. Faculty members' approachability is particularly relevant to introverted students, who may not be willing to take the first step in meeting professors and instructors halfway. As mentioned, followers would likely replicate compassionate behavior in other settings if faculty members demonstrate a genuine concern for their well-being.

Practical implications of ethical leadership can also be drawn from an organizational perspective. The following content addresses measures which can be taken by leaders and followers to foster ethical leadership in the work environment. In addition, the transferability of academic knowledge in practical settings as it relates to this study is illustrated.

Because student-interns are inundated with a doctrine that focuses primarily on wrongdoings of sport managers, a win-at-all-costs mentality may be viewed as a necessary evil if one is to achieve upward career advancement. It would behoove student-interns to seek information from secondary sources which yield a more accurate representation of sport managers as a whole. Moreover, student-interns should critically analyze news-related information and develop a well-informed opinion before accepting widely-held cynical perceptions of sport industry leadership at face value. As future sport industry leaders, student-interns can actively seek knowledge and foster a

constructive attitude regardless of what is being reported by the sport media. In turn, student-interns would have a realistic perception of the ethical climate in the sporting realm.

It is reassuring student-interns are utilizing concepts learned in school while in the workforce, but there are several ways to further bridge the gap between theoretical and practical elements of ethical leadership. Faculty members should make a concerted effort to explain how honor code characteristics such as honor and integrity can serve to benefit student-interns in work settings. Reflecting on personal endeavors concerning ethical or unethical behavior may have a stronger impact than facilitating a learning environment strictly based on textbook information or abstract knowledge. If faculty members can relay first-hand experiences related to ethical leadership effectively, student-interns will garner tangible evidence that could be drawn upon if they encounter a similar situation in the work environment. Also, student-interns should understand that not all academic content is directly transferrable to organizational settings. For example, facilitating a service-oriented approach toward follower development is an admirable trait among leaders, but a highly performance-oriented organization may not have the wherewithal to enact such measures. Therefore, faculty members should relay the overall importance of "taking care of your people" in work environments, but they should also explain that an isolated focus on follower development may be unlikely within certain sport organizations. Citing the strategic differences between large and small sport companies or conveying the distinction between for-profit and not-for-profit businesses may be helpful in this regard. Again, student-interns would be more likely to understand

and apply course-related information if firm practical evidence is disseminated by faculty members.

With regard to situational ethics, it is important for student-interns to grasp an understanding of the organizational culture that exists in any particular sport organization before asserting their values in a careless manner. This is not to say student-interns should succumb to flagrant unethical behavior simply because "everybody else is doing it," but the fact is certain company policies are held in higher regard than others, and there may be detrimental effects if student-interns assume the role of ultimate moral authority. For instance, deliberately misrepresenting products or services to make a sale may contradict an individual's personal ethical standard; student-interns may be alienated or even terminated if they disregard this policy as unprofessional. Student-interns could stay informed of company policy by reviewing written rules and seeking advice from supervisors when confronted with ambiguous situations in which there is not a clear means of resolving the issue.

Recommendations for Future Research

This thesis provides an account of ethical leadership in sport from a unique perspective of the student-intern, which elicited several future research directions that warrant further attention from scholars. Because this particular study adopted such a broad approach toward ethics and leadership, it would be helpful to examine specific characteristics that comprise ethical leadership as a measurable construct. Determining the distinct behaviors or attitudes that constitute normatively appropriate conduct in the sport context would serve to objectify ethical leadership to a certain extent. This could be

achieved by comparing and contrasting written ethical standards set forth by sport organizations and academic institutions. Further, the practicality of written policies could be measured by examining the extent to which constituents (e.g., students, employees) are adhering to ethical regulations on a daily basis.

Weighing perspectives from individuals at various levels of a sport organization or academic department would also contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of ethical leadership. Due to the fact this study was solely focused on followers, it would be valuable to ascertain perspectives and experiences of business owners, general managers, and front-line supervisors in an attempt to reveal the overall propensity of a given business to comply with ethical standards. Furthermore, gathering multiple perspectives may shed light on obscure instances of unethical conduct lower-level employees are not experiencing due to the limited scope of their employment. In order for a truly authentic representation of ethical leadership to materialize, it may be necessary to conduct ethnographic research due to the controversial nature of this topic. An individual immersed in the daily activities of a particular sport organization would be more likely to gain insight into unethical behavior than would an outside researcher with limited or no connection to the company under observation. Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume unethical conduct would transpire in the form of behavioral activity more than post-verbal expression, in large part because of the negative stigma associated with admitting to unscrupulous actions. As such, insider knowledge and experience would be a valuable asset for future research endeavors geared toward exploring the ethical climate in sport organizations.

Ethical leadership could also be researched horizontally, perhaps by focusing on a particular group of undergraduate students across various academic departments. In this scenario, it may be helpful to obtain ratings of ethical leadership from students and faculty in an attempt to discern the relative congruence. There is a multitude of avenues for future studies, but the overarching objective should entail developing a uniform model for ethical leadership that could be applied in scholastic and organizational contexts.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to explore ethical leadership in the current sport environment from an academic and practical standpoint. Perspectives and experiences were drawn from individuals holding a somewhat dichotomous role as students enrolled in a sport management curriculum and entry-level workers in the sport industry. Findings revealed ethical leadership is being stressed by faculty members and modeled by practitioners to a large degree. The following section offers concluding thoughts related to the overall scope of this study.

As graduating seniors and entry-level workers in the sport industry, student-interns are in an extremely unique position to gauge the future of ethical leadership in sports. Their perceptions and experiences as the next generation of leaders could very well reveal the extent to which the ethical climate will improve or deteriorate in the near future. It is incumbent upon current leaders in academic and sport business communities to not only stress the importance of ethical leadership through their words, but also to model these ideals by behaving in an ethical manner. Findings from this thesis indicate

faculty members and sport industry practitioners are placing a strong emphasis on ethical leadership, but measures can be taken to increase the likelihood student-interns will fully embody these principles and replicate this positive example. It is also the responsibility of student-interns to heed the advice of reputable leaders at school and work. A great deal could be learned from gauging the experiences of accomplished professionals, and it is up to student-interns to develop a strong ethical framework and live by this code in their personal and professional endeavors.

Because we live in a society heavily influenced by capitalistic ideals, it is unreasonable to assume the ever-present win-at-all-costs mentality among sport leaders will completely vanish in the near future. On the opposite end of this spectrum, it may not be feasible for leaders to fully encapsulate a completely selfless disposition such as Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership approach. It is, however, conceivable that measures can be taken to find balance between remaining socially responsible and seeking upward mobility from a personal and professional standpoint. Finding this happy medium could serve to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical dimensions of ethical leadership in the sporting realm. This is admittedly a challenging and ongoing struggle that requires considerable time and effort on the part of academics and practitioners, but if we continue to analyze and interpret unique characteristics of ethical leadership within each realm, reciprocal gratification among sport industry leaders and scholars can be obtained.

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Recruitment Letter

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Department of Health and Kinesiology

Dear sport management student-intern:

We are writing to invite you to be part of a research project on ethical leadership. The purpose of this study is to examine the sources of leadership and ethics and to explore the process of ethical leadership in a work setting and scholastic environment. Your time involvement would be one 30- to 45-minute interview sometime between January and March, 2013.

We believe the risks to you are minimal. Every attempt will be made to insure confidentiality of the interview and transcripts though the use of pseudonyms and removing any individual identifying information. Thus, your identity will be kept confidential from the general public and others at Texas A&M University.

Your assistance is entirely voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect your relations with Texas A&M University, researchers of this study, or

the Department of Health and Kinesiology. We think participation in this study will be of value to you as you share your experiences with leadership in the classroom and work settings.

If you would like to participate in this study, or have any questions, please contact Justin Clack at (979) 450-8019 or email to jclack@hlkn.tamu.edu. Also, please contact Justin if you would like a copy of the results.

This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact these offices at (979) 458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

Sincerely,

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APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

1) Please tell me about your educational and work background.

2) Are faculty members (professors/instructors) teaching about ethics and ethical leadership in the classroom?

a) If so/not, then how? Prevalent or not?

3) Can you remember learning course concepts while in college that emphasized "doing the right thing" instead of being solely focused on maximizing profits?

a) In other words, were classes focused more on teaching you how to be the highest earner or the best in your field OR was there an emphasis on treating others' fairly and not winning at all costs? Could be a combination of both winning and having a positive impact on others.

4) Do you think professors view students as potential assets to companies?

a) How so?

5) Have professors ever done anything (mentoring, career advice) to help prepare you for a job/career in the sport industry?

a) How did/would you respond to this?

6) It seems like schools and coaches are constantly getting in trouble for violating NCAA regulations (e.g., Penn State, Bobby Petrino). Do you think this will change in the future? Will sport managers be reprimanded for poor conduct as much 5-10 years from now or will it be similar to today?

a) Why/why not?

7) How important is it for you to work in a setting where the rules are not bent or broken even if doing so would improve the performance of the company? Please explain.

8) Based on your experience working in the sport industry, are managers focusing on achieving organizational objectives?

a) Are they doing so with concern for the well-being of employees in mind? How?

9) Do you believe most managers in the sport industry engage in poor conduct?

a) Are their boss's (upper-level managers, owners) setting the tone for this behavior? Please explain.

10) Has the attitude of sport organizations changed in the past with regard to ethical and unethical conduct? How?

11) If employees see their boss behaving poorly, do you think they will be more likely to mimic this behavior?

a) In other words, do workers justify poor conduct based on their boss's actions?
Please explain.

12) Are you learning to conduct yourself in an ethical fashion while working in the sport industry?

a) If so, then how…from who?

Coding Scheme

Open Codes		
1. Benefits of Personal Care (BPC)	2. Career/job Aspirations (CjA)	3. Consequences (C)
4. Ethical Classroom Concepts	5. Ethical Code/Standards (ECS)	6. Ethical Leadership (EL)
7. Ethical Student-Intern Conduct (ESC)	8. Ethical Upbringing (EU)	9. Experience Working in Sport Industry (EWSI)
10. Faculty Mentoring/Counseling (FMC)	11. Heightened (more) Unethical Behavior (HUB)	12. Intern Grunt Work (IGW)
13. Job Satisfaction (JS)	14. Job/Task Accomplishment (JTA)	15. Leader/Follower Relationship Negative (LFRN)
16. Leader/Follower Relationship Positive (LFRP)	17. Learning from Unethical Behavior (LUB)	18. Modeled Behavior (MB)
19. Manager Delegation (MD)	20. Manager Mentoring/Counseling (MMC)	21. Networking (N)
22. Not Following Unethical Example (NFUE)	23. Organizational Citizenship	24. Organizational Fit (OF)
25. Performance/Goal-oriented	26. Pressure to behave Unethically (PtbU)	27. Reduced (less) Unethical Behavior (RUB)
28. Same Amount of Unethical	29. School Background (SB)	30. Situational Ethics (SE)
31. Social Media Influence (SMI)	32. Setting a Negative Example (SNE)	33. Setting a Positive Example
34. Support System/Network (SSW)	35. Student Teacher Relationship Negative (STRN)	36. Student Teacher Relationship Positive (STRP)
37. Student Worker Dynamic (congruence) (SWD)	38. Student/Worker Wellbeing (SWW)	39. Teacher/Student Relationship (T/SR)
40. Theory to Action (TA)	41. Unethical Leadership (UL)	42. Unethical Student Conduct
43. Win-at-all-costs Mentality (WACM)	44. Work Background (WB)	45. Work-Life Balance (WLB)

Axial Codes		
1. Ethical Course Concepts	2. Faculty Mentors	3. Adverse Student Experiences
4. Perceptions of Ethical Leadership	5. Positive Leader/Follower Experiences	6. Negative Leader/Follower
7. Trickle-Down Effect	8. Student-Intern Ethical Standard	9. Situational Ethics
10. Faculty/Manager Congruence		