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The purpose of this study was to provide a more complete picture of lesbians in sport by investigating the perceptions and experiences of lesbian intercollegiate coaches. Fifty-two self-identified lesbian head and assistant coaches from NCAA Divisions I, II, III, and the NAIA, and representing a multitude of sports, completed online surveys and open-ended questions pertaining to their lives at work and outside of work. The findings showed that lesbian intercollegiate coaches' perceptions of organizational support positively related to their degrees of disclosure of lesbian identity, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Participants reported fairly high scores on the surveys, indicating that the sample worked in supportive environments and also exhibited positive levels of job and life satisfaction. The findings suggested that attitudes towards lesbians within intercollegiate athletics have become more tolerant than was depicted in the previous literature. Coaches explained that they monitored behaviors related to the disclosure of their lesbian identities, and this indicated that coaches remain aware of homonegativism and the potential for facing discrimination due to sexual orientation. The results suggested that organizational support is related to disclosure, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction, and that has implications for coach well-being and effectiveness. This research adds to our understanding of the organizational climate within college athletics, perceptions of coaches, and disclosure of lesbian identity, and how those factors shape the experiences of lesbian intercollegiate coaches.

PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF LESBIAN INTERCOLLEGIATE

COACHES

by

Melissa A. Schreibstein

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This research seeks to advance understanding of lesbians in sport through an

investigation of the experiences of lesbian intercollegiate coaches. Research has

suggested that both gender and sexual orientation will affect vocational experiences for

lesbians, and scholars have concluded that the minority status of lesbians has a powerful

impact on all aspects of their lives (Fassinger, 1996; Garnets, 2002). The previous sport

psychology literature has emphasized the importance of understanding the sport context

and its influence on the experiences of lesbians (Krane, 1996; Vealey, 1997). The present

research re-examines the climate for lesbians in intercollegiate athletics by considering

coaches' perspectives of organizational support. It provides needed empirical attention to

an under-researched population and extends the sport psychology literature by exploring

the impact of the sport context on the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of lesbian

coaches (Griffin, 1992, 1998; Krane, 1996; Vealey, 1997). More specifically, this study

investigates the relationships among lesbian intercollegiate coaches' perceptions of

organizational support, degrees of disclosure of sexual orientation, job satisfaction, and

life satisfaction.

The previous sport psychology literature described a sport climate that can be

hostile for lesbians and documented occurrences of overt and covert discrimination

towards lesbian athletes and coaches (Griffin, 1998; Iannotta & Kane, 2002; Krane, 1997;

Krane & Barber, 2005). Sport scholars have stated that homonegativism, negative attitudes and behaviors that are purposely directed to ostracize and discriminate against non-heterosexuals, is not only tolerated in women's sport, but is so pervasive that it impacts all lesbians involved in athletics (Griffin, 1998, Krane, 1996; Vealey, 1997). One widespread repercussion of homonegativism often discussed in the sport studies literature is the extensive belief that it is not safe for a lesbian to completely disclose her sexual orientation in the sport environment (Krane, 1996; Krane & Barber, 2005). Fear of discrimination and prejudice has lead many lesbian coaches to remain silent and in the closet, hiding their lesbian identity, attempting to pass as heterosexual, and/or avoiding any discussions about sexual orientation (Barber & Krane, 2007; Griffin, 1992; Krane, 1996; Krane & Barber, 2005; Vealey, 1997). Lesbian coaches have expressed concerns regarding even a hypothetical discovery of sexual orientation, including risks to job security and receipt of inadequate support from athletic administrators, colleagues, and athletes (Griffin, 1998; Iannotta & Kane, 2002).

Rationale

Sport scholars have called for further understanding of lesbian experiences in order to promote more positive and inclusive sport environments and to document the existence of social problems, such as prejudice and discrimination (Krane, 1996; Krane & Barber, 2005; Vealey, 1997). Previous research has described athletic environments that are unwelcoming, and even hostile towards lesbians (Barber & Krane, 2007; Gill, Morrow, Collins, Lucey, & Schultz, 2006; Krane, 1996). Institutionalized heterosexism, the societal belief that heterosexuals are superior to non-heterosexuals, permeates the

sport culture, supports compulsory heterosexuality, and encourages homonegativism (Krane, 1997; Vealey, 1997). In addition, many lesbian coaches feel they must stay closeted to protect themselves and their jobs; however, sport scholars state that their silence also serves to perpetuate negatives beliefs about lesbians (Krane & Barber, 2003; Vealey, 1997). These issues are representative of a systemic and cultural intolerance for diversity (Griffin, 1998). This study adds to the existing literature by offering a more complete picture of the experiences of lesbian coaches and increases the body of knowledge on all marginalized groups within sport and society (Fassinger, 1996; Krane, 1996). This research is needed to advance social justice and advance understanding about lesbians, knowledge that could help to promote more tolerant sport environments (Krane, 1996; Krane & Barber, 2003; Vealey, 1997).

Further, sport scholars have emphasized the importance of examining the context of sport and its influence on all women (Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Krane & Barber, 2005). It is well known that the number of women in sport has increased astronomically since the enactment of the 1972 Title IX legislation that made sex discrimination illegal in federally funded educational institutions (Griffin, 1998). In fact, in their 2008 longitudinal report (from 1977 to 2008), Acosta and Carpenter stated that the number of women participating in intercollegiate athletics has reached its highest levels. Sport scholars acknowledge that many positive changes have occurred in women's sport over the last three decades. There are now more opportunities for women to compete in intercollegiate athletics, and female athletes are given better access to resources, such as top-notch athletic facilities and improved media attention (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008;

Krane & Barber, 2005). However, it is disconcerting that the percentage of female head coaches of women's teams in intercollegiate athletics remains low and has almost consistently declined since the inception of Title IX (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008). Scholars have noted that there is an assumed connection between women's sport and lesbian activity that influences the experiences of all female coaches. Homonegative attitudes have been cited as a barrier to professional opportunities for both lesbian and non-lesbian coaches (Griffin, 1992, 1998; Kilty, 2006; Krane, 1997; Vealey, 1997). Thus, research focusing on the experiences of lesbians is also needed to give insight into the influence of the socio-cultural factors that could impact all women in sport (Kilty, 2006; Vealey, 1997).

Sport Context

Sport scholars have acknowledged that research must consider the influence of the sport environment in order to truly conceptualize the experiences of lesbians (Krane, 1996; Krane & Barber, 2003). The sport context is complex and made up of interacting social forces that impact intercollegiate coaches in a variety of ways (Dixon & Bruening, 2005; Vealey, 1997). This research uses a multi-level framework to explain the sport context and investigate the experiences of lesbian intercollegiate coaches (see Figure 1). The framework was constructed using literature from sport psychology and sport management (Dixon & Bruening, 2005; Krane, 1996; Vealey, 1997). Accordingly, the sport context is divided into three levels: 1) socio-cultural level, 2) organizational level, and 3) individual level (Dixon & Bruening, 2005). For this investigation, the sport context is conceptualized from a top-down perspective in which factors found in upper

levels, i.e. the sport environment, impact those in lower levels, i.e. coaches' perspectives

(Dixon & Bruening, 2007). Therefore, the present study examines the experiences of

lesbian intercollegiate coaches as they are shaped by the sport context.

1) Socio-cultural level
- Heterosexism and homonegativism
- Gender ideologies and norms
- Patriarchy

2) Organizational level
- Climate for lesbians within intercollegiate athletics
- Organizational support

3) Individual level
- Degree of disclosure of lesbian identity
- Job satisfaction
- Life satisfaction
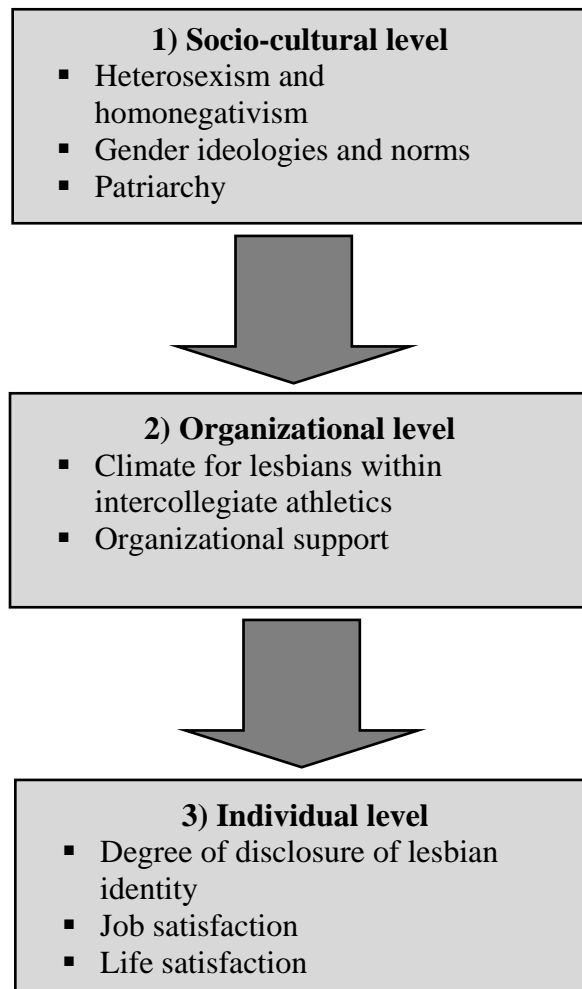
Figure 1. Multi-level framework to conceptualize the sport context.

The multi-level framework helps to explain how the experiences of lesbian intercollegiate coaches are affected by the organizational climate in their institutions and also how that climate is influenced by society overall. This research focuses on the interaction between organizational level climates of intercollegiate athletic departments and coaches' attitudes and behaviors at the individual level. Of particular interest are the relationships between the organizational level factor of organizational support and the individual level variables of disclosure of sexual orientation, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction for lesbian intercollegiate coaches. The following sections of this chapter describe the factors that may influence lesbian intercollegiate coaches within the multi-level sport context and highlight the previous research that served as a guide for this study.

Socio-Cultural Level

The top level of the multi-level framework, the socio-cultural level, includes those societal and cultural factors that influence the culture of sport. Much of the previous literature in sport studies has focused on illuminating factors at the socio-cultural level that influence the experiences of lesbians (Krane, 1996; Vealey, 1997). Sport is an important part of life for women and girls in today's society. In the United States, female participation in sport is the highest that it has ever been (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008). According to sport scholars, sport is a social institution, and as such, part of its purpose is to maintain dominant ideologies and reinforce socio-cultural values (Eitzen & Sage, 2003). In the United States, sport upholds patriarchal culture and reproduces socio-cultural values that mandate male hegemony and compulsory heterosexuality (Fusco,

1998; Vealey, 1997). Traditionally, sport is considered a domain for teaching positive masculine characteristics and culturally prescribed male gender roles through images of "true" male athletes that are strong, competitive, and aggressive (Fusco, 1998; Griffin, 1998). Further, successful male athletes are assumed to be heterosexual because they represent a cultural ideal that is linked to masculinity (Griffin, 1998).

Sport scholars state that women who choose to participate in sport challenge socio-cultural values and threaten male dominance (Fusco, 1998). The socio-cultural values that dictate acceptable characteristics for female athletes imply that although women are allowed to play sports, they must maintain qualities deemed appropriate for their gender (Fusco, 1998; Griffin, 1998; Harry, 1995). In sport, women demonstrate characteristics that are culturally prescribed to masculinity; therefore, their appearances and behaviors are scrutinized (Krane & Barber, 2005). Women who do not follow the implicit sets of rules, who do not look and act traditionally feminine and heterosexual, are ostracized. Fear of receiving the "lesbian label" is used to discourage all women, both lesbian and non-lesbian from participating in sport altogether or in certain sports deemed too masculine (Fusco, 1998; Krane, 1997). This allows for the preservation of the gender hierarchy in sport as well as the socio-cultural values of male hegemony, patriarchy, and heterosexuality (Fusco, 1998; Harry, 1995).

Sport scholars have documented the media's involvement in the maintenance of this sport culture and gender hierarchy. Media coverage of female athletes and women's sports widely publicizes images of traditionally feminine sportswomen, and these images are used to market fitness magazines, beauty products, and women's professional sports

(Krane & Barber, 2003). Media coverage also emphasizes how well female athletes juggle their personal lives as mothers, wives, and girlfriends (to men only). Any connections to men are highlighted, promoting compulsory heterosexuality, thus linking female athletes to traditional femininity (Krane & Barber, 2003). Women who find success in sport are often sexualized and may have their accomplishments marginalized. This helps to maintain the gender hierarchy in sport and reinforces socio-cultural values (Fusco, 1998; Griffin, 1998; Harry, 1995; Vealey, 1997).

Organizational Level

Socio-cultural level factors, such as the dominant ideologies discussed above, impact the middle level of the sport context, the organizational level. The organizational level includes those organizational policies and structures that may influence the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of intercollegiate coaches (Dixon & Sagas, 2007). Research from sport psychology and sport management has suggested that "contextual conditions" in the workplace have the power to affect coaches' experiences (Dixon & Bruening, 2007, p. 383; Krane & Barber, 2005). One factor of much importance to this research and to lesbian coaches is the work culture, or organizational climate. Organizational climate has been defined as the "perceived internal state of the department that arises from the interaction between the worker (i.e. coach) and the work environment" (Snyder, 1990, p. 60). Sport scholars agree that socio-cultural level factors lead to sport environments that lesbians perceive to be threatening (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1996; Vealey, 1997). The previous sport psychology research has provided evidence that socio-cultural values are reinforced by the sport culture, resulting in the promotion of

heterosexism and homonegativism in the social climate of intercollegiate women's sport (Kauer & Krane, 2006).

In a study conducted by Krane and Barber (2005), lesbian intercollegiate coaches revealed the overwhelming perception of hostile sport climates in their athletic departments. For these coaches, the presence of negative attitudes was mainly covert, meaning they did not report dealing with discriminatory and prejudiced acts. Instead, they described an atmosphere wherein homonegative behavior was displayed by other coaches and administrators through a complete avoidance or acknowledgement of lesbian presence and issues. However, some coaches did report the awareness of processes that denoted obvious prejudice against hiring lesbians. Such practices included questioning applicants about their personal lives or their plans for marriage and/or children, with a goal of confirming a suspected lesbian identity.

Recruiting practices in intercollegiate athletics also provide evidence of homonegativism and non-supportive climates. Intercollegiate coaches have described rampant negative recruiting (Krane & Barber, 2005). Negative recruiting occurs when coaches (both male and female) "forewarn" recruits and their parents of a lesbian presence at rival universities, even in cases when this is not the truth. By using negative recruiting, coaches exploit the heterosexist nature of society and the homonegative climate of sport to gain an advantage on the job. It should be noted that negative recruiting is harmful for all female coaches, whether lesbian or non-lesbian (Krane & Barber, 2005). All female coaches are subject to assumptions about their sexuality, simply because they are involved in sport (Griffin, 1998). The current study is needed to

enhance understanding of the experiences of lesbian intercollegiate coaches through a specific focus on the interaction between organizational level factors and individual level experiences.

Perceived organizational support. In previous sport management studies that have investigated the influence of the organizational level factors on coaches, perceived organizational support (POS), a variable of interest in this research project, has been employed to assess the sport climate (Kim & Cunningham, 2005; Dixon & Sagas, 2007). POS is defined as an evaluation of employees' global beliefs regarding the supportiveness of their organization, including support for socio-emotional needs (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986). Previous research has explained that POS is an appraisal of affective support, the amount that an organization cares about their employee's well-being and values their contributions. Thus, according to the Organizational Support Theory that underlies POS, institutions that are more concerned about their coaches' work conditions and their welfare may be more likely to promote more positive work climates for coaches (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Kim & Cunningham, 2005). The research has also shown that employees' perceptions are generally based on the actions of a few key individuals within the organization. Researchers have suggested that coaches' perceptions of organizational support may be a sign of the quality of their interactions with their athletic administrations and that coaches may interpret positive or negative actions toward them as representing support and favor or disservice and disfavor on the part of their institution (Kim & Cunningham, 2005; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Based on the previous sport studies research, it is imperative to consider that perceived negative actions that result in lower POS for lesbian coaches may actually be reflective of homonegative climates and experiences with discrimination in intercollegiate athletics (Driscoll, Kelley, & Fassinger, 1996; Griffith & Hebl, 2002). Indeed, research conducted with gay and lesbian populations has indicated that perceptions of organizational supportiveness do reflect employees' assessments of the safety or hostility of their workplace climates (Griffith & Hebl, 2002). For lesbian intercollegiate coaches, POS may be indicative of perceptions of tolerant sport climates or discrimination within athletic departments. The present research furthers the sport psychology literature by measuring lesbian coaches' perceptions of organizational support and investigating the effect of POS on individual level variables that are central to coaches' experiences.

Individual Level

As previously discussed, sport scholars have indicated that socio-cultural level factors may influence sport environments and the ways that individuals develop their identities, attitudes, self-perceptions, and behaviors (Vealey, 1997). This research addresses the need for more critical examination of the structure and culture of sport and also investigates the impact of the sport environment on individual experiences (Dixon & Bruening, 2007). The previous sport psychology research has described a negative climate for lesbians in sport and has only suggested potential negative psychological outcomes of working within heterosexist and homonegative environments. These have included decreased self-esteem, decreased confidence, decreased performance, and

increased stress levels (Krane, 1997; Krane & Barber, 2003). Using a multi-level framework to explain influential forces within the sport context, this study inquires into the impact of the organizational level variable, POS, on specific individual level work and personal variables for lesbian coaches. The individual level variables of interest in this study are degree of disclosure of sexual orientation, job satisfaction, and satisfaction with life. The remainder of this section will discuss findings from previous literature that illustrate the interactions among the variables examined in this study.

Degree of disclosure of lesbian identity. When investigating lesbian experiences, researchers from in and out of sport emphasize the need to understand social and environmental contexts. Literature in sport psychology, sport sociology, and psychology also highlight the importance of research that acknowledges the complexity of lesbian identity, the effects of minority group status, and the diversity of disclosure behaviors amongst lesbians (Fassinger, 1995; Garnets, 2002; Krane, 1996; Vealey, 1997). In research from vocational psychology, identity and work are thought of as interrelated components of self; therefore, career issues of lesbians are looked at in relation to their stigmatized identities. Sport scholars have also suggested that research should analyze lesbian identity development in sport to understand how lesbians deal with homonegative attitudes and develop positive identities (Krane, 1996; Krane & Barber, 2003; Vealey, 1997). For this research, it is important to provide insight into the ways that lesbian identity development occurs within the social context of sport (Garnets, 2002; Krane & Barber, 2003; McCann & Fassinger, 1996; Vealey, 1997).

Theories of identity development promote understanding of the common experiences of lesbians throughout the sometimes-arduous process in which self-identity as a lesbian becomes an "important, acknowledged, and integrated part of the self" (Fassinger, 1995). Most, if not all, theories view disclosure of sexual orientation as a very important aspect of identity development (Garnets, 2002; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). Disclosure of lesbian identity, also called coming out, includes both self-acceptance of lesbian identity and disclosure to others (Mohr & Fassinger, 2003). The development process involves managing the challenges and the difficulties that may be associated with self-disclosure and public disclosure in social contexts (McCarn & Fassinger, 1996; Mohr & Fassinger, 2003). The decision to disclose sexual orientation is one that most lesbians will have to face throughout their lives and is also a prominent issue in the workplace (Fassinger, 1995; Garnets, 2002; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996).

As previously mentioned, the tendency to remain silent about lesbian identity is a behavioral norm for lesbian intercollegiate coaches (Griffin, 1998; Krane & Barber, 2005; Vealey, 1997). Fearing discrimination and prejudice, coaches feel forced to monitor their behaviors to avoid complete disclosure of their sexual orientations (Griffin, 1998; Krane & Barber, 2005). Theories and research have shown that it is possible for lesbian coaches to maintain integrated lesbian identities, even when faced with intolerant environments. Often, lesbian coaches employ behavioral techniques, termed identity management strategies, to protect their lesbian identities (Fingerhut et al., 2005; Griffin, 1998; Krane & Barber, 2005). Griffin (1998) described identity management strategies as the "decision-making processes lesbians go through everyday in determining how much

of their lesbian identities to reveal or conceal." (p. 135). Using identity management strategies, coaches control how they express their lesbian sexual orientations, as well as to whom they disclose. Research has confirmed that the disclosure behaviors of lesbians in sport (and in other work environments) vary and range along a continuum from complete concealment to complete disclosure (Croteau, 1996; Griffin, 1998; Krane & Barber, 2005).

Although many recent theories of identity development state that complete disclosure is not indicative of a positive lesbian identity, researchers examining lesbian behaviors have suggested the negative impact of complete or partial concealment of sexual orientation (Croteau, 1996; Driscoll et al., 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996; Mohr & Fassinger, 2003). Also suggested are personal and social outcomes of lesbian identity management and varying degrees of disclosure (Croteau, 1996; Driscoll et al., 1996; Ellis & Riggle, 1995; Griffin, 1998; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Krane, 1996). This research asks lesbian intercollegiate coaches' about their levels of disclosure in and out of the workplace in order to examine its impact on work and life. It also investigates a connection between disclosure behaviors and the sport climate exists by examining the relationship between POS and disclosure.

POS and disclosure of lesbian identity. Researchers agree that lesbian intercollegiate coaches actively pursue careers in potentially threatening environments and within a sport culture that stigmatizes and marginalizes them (Krane & Barber, 2005; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). This research helps to clarify the impact of that sport environment on disclosure for lesbian coaches. The previous research from vocational

psychology has suggested that POS is related to disclosure. In their sample of employed

lesbians, Driscoll et al. (1996) found that degrees of disclosure for workers were

significantly related to the perceived climates of their organizations. In this study,

lesbians who perceived more tolerant climates were more open in the workplace. Day and

Schoenrade (1997) also illustrated a positive relationship between disclosure and

perceptions of management support. Their results suggested that the decision to come out

was influenced by individual perceptions of the emotional costs of hiding one's sexual

orientation as well as an assessment of workplace climate. Additionally, results from a

study conducted by Griffith and Hebl (2002) found that higher perceptions of gay

supportiveness in the workplace were positively related to degrees of disclosure.

However, sport psychology research has yet not specifically examined POS among

lesbian coaches and has not investigated the possibility of a relationship among POS and

disclosure of sexual identity.

   POS and job satisfaction. In the coaching literature, job satisfaction is referred to

as the affective condition that results from a complex evaluation of the coaching

experience, involving the structures, processes, and outcomes of the coaching work-role

(Kim & Cunningham, 2005). Significant positive relationships between POS and job

satisfaction have been found in sport psychology research on intercollegiate coaches and

in samples of lesbian workers from vocational literature (Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Griffith

& Hebl, 2002; Kim & Cunningham, 2005). Driscoll et al. (1996) found that perceptions

of workplace climate significantly influenced job satisfaction. Previous research suggests

that low POS can impede job satisfaction, and this may be especially true for lesbian

coaches when concealing their sexual orientation forces them to completely separate their personal and professional lives, resulting in interpersonal and intrapersonal discomfort, leading to poor relationships with co-workers, and lessening job effectiveness (Driscoll et al., 1996; Sagas & Cunningham, 2004). While distancing themselves from co-workers might help lesbian coaches to reduce discomfort and stress on the job, researchers have concluded that it might simultaneously disturb those relationships that improve job satisfaction and foster negative perceptions of organizational support and of the sport environment (Pastore, 1993; Sagas & Cunningham, 2004; Snyder, 1990). Further, because job satisfaction is related to effectiveness, ambition, effort, and commitment, understanding lesbian intercollegiate coaches' perceptions of organizational support and degrees of disclosure may have important implications for understanding the decreasing number of female coaches in the NCAA and the specific demands for all minority groups (Acosta & Carpenter, 2004; Davies et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2004).

Degree of disclosure and job satisfaction. In the analysis of their results, Driscoll et al. (1996) posited that lesbians with higher degrees of disclosure might have more positive self-concepts because they feel more "integrity" and "wholeness," enhancing their positive perceptions of work (p. 239). Overall, disclosure was not significantly correlated with job satisfaction, but when only looking at individuals with high disclosure scores, a significant relationship to job satisfaction became apparent. Similarly, Day and Schoenrade (1997) found that disclosure was positively related to job satisfaction.

POS, degree of disclosure, and life satisfaction. Vocational literature indicates

that concealment of sexual orientation has a negative impact on the general mental health

of lesbians and on their personal lives outside of work. Partial or complete concealment

can lead to guilt, self-doubt, and feelings of personal inadequacy caused by a lack of

fighting against discrimination and due to internalized homonegativism (Fassinger, 1996;

Garnets, 2002).

There is little research empirically examining the life satisfaction of coaches.

Among intercollegiate coaches and in research specifically examining lesbian workers, a

positive relationship between POS and satisfaction with life has been displayed (Dixon &

Sagas, 2007; Griffith & Hebl, 2002). Analyzing the responses of their sample of mainly

closeted lesbian intercollegiate coaches, Krane and Barber (2005) discussed the stress

caused by their silence and the compartmentalizing of their personal and professional

lives in order to manage conflicting social identities. Lesbian coaches in this study

expressed satisfaction in their jobs but also dealt with daily tension due to internal

identity conflicts. Sport psychology literature has pointed to the internal conflict (e.g.,

stress) and emotional costs (e.g., depression) that can be present for lesbian coaches.

However, empirical evidence provided by a quantitative assessment of job satisfaction

and life satisfaction as psychological constructs is nonexistent (Krane & Barber, 2003).

Understanding how job-related behaviors and perceptions impact the life satisfaction of

lesbian coaches provides a more complete picture of their experiences.

Job and life satisfaction. Considering the amount of time and energy dedicated

to successful careers, it is not surprising that research from vocational psychology has

looked at the influence of job satisfaction on life satisfaction (Fassinger, 1995). Rain, Lainer, and Steiner (1991) identified a positive relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction in a review of vocational literature. This phenomenon is typically explained by the spillover hypothesis, which assumes that satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the job will "spill over," or correspond with a similar sentiment with life outside of the job, and vice versa (Ellis & Riggle, 1995; Rain, Lainer, & Steiner, 1991). The correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction for lesbian workers has been demonstrated in empirical research outside of sport. In their study of 167 gay men and lesbians, Ellis and Riggle (1995) found that workers with higher disclosure scores expressed higher levels of job satisfaction, and job satisfaction was positively related to satisfaction with life. Although the disclosure of lesbian sexual orientation is acknowledged to be a stressor, research has repeatedly shown that those who remain closeted report lower levels of psychological well-being and increased health risks (Griffith & Hebl, 2002).

Purpose and Research Questions

This research is driven by the need to expose heterosexism and homonegativism in sport. In order to do so, the perceptions of lesbians must be clearly delineated. Gaining understanding of the experiences of lesbians in sport is difficult because of their purposeful lack of visibility. While lesbians are identified as a minority group in all organizations, there is a lack of empirical evidence to describe their actual experiences (Ward & Winstanley, 2005). Research on coaches' perceptions and on the experiences of minority groups has rarely included lesbians. This research specifically seeks to advance

our understanding of the experiences of lesbian coaches in intercollegiate athletics by empirically examining the relationships among these psychological constructs: perceived organizational support, degree of disclosure, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The primary purpose of the current study is to investigate whether lesbian intercollegiate coaches' perceptions of the organizational support within their intercollegiate athletic departments relate to their degrees of disclosure, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. The following specific research questions are addressed.

1. Does perceived organizational support (POS) relate to degree of disclosure?

Findings from research in vocational psychology have indicated the existence of positive correlations between POS and degrees of disclosure amongst homosexual workers (Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Griffith & Hebl, 2002).

> **Hypothesis 1.** Perceived organizational support will be positively related to degrees of disclosure.

2. Does perceived organizational support (POS) relate to job and life satisfaction?

Empirical studies in various contexts have consistently shown positive relationships between POS and job satisfaction and POS and life satisfaction (Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Kim & Cunningham, 2005).

> **Hypothesis 2a.** Perceived organizational support (POS) will be positively related to job satisfaction.

> **Hypothesis 2b.** POS will be positively related to life satisfaction.

3. Does degree of disclosure relate to job satisfaction?

Previous research illustrates a complex relationship between disclosure and job satisfaction. Some studies from vocational psychology have found significant positive relationships between disclosure and job satisfaction (Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Griffith & Hebl, 2002). In other studies, job satisfaction measures were divided into subscales, such as satisfaction with pay or with co-workers, and results showed both positive and negative relationships between disclosure and job satisfaction. These findings seemed to relate to differences in aspects of job satisfaction conceptualized by perceived organizational support (Driscoll et al., 1996; Ellis & Riggle, 1995). Previous research has also noted that the hostile climate in intercollegiate athletics tends to silence lesbian coaches (Griffin, 1998). Therefore, higher degrees of disclosure might reflect other factors, including more positive perceptions and work attitudes.

Hypothesis 3. Degree of disclosure will be positively related to job satisfaction.

4. Does degree of disclosure relate to life satisfaction?

In previous research, disclosure was positively related to life satisfaction (Ellis & Riggle, 1995). Increased openness about sexual orientation may result in less identity conflict, enhancing satisfaction with life outside of work (Krane & Barber, 2005). Additionally, higher degrees of disclosure might reflect a more tolerant work atmosphere, and considering the large occupational commitment required for intercollegiate coaches, it is reasonable to anticipate a relationship between disclosure and life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4. Degree of disclosure will be positively related to life satisfaction.

5. Does job satisfaction relate to life satisfaction?

Previous research in a variety of contexts has consistently shown strong positive relationships between job satisfaction and life satisfaction in sample populations of intercollegiate coaches and of lesbian and gay workers (Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Ellis & Riggle, 1995).

Hypothesis 5. Job satisfaction will be positively related to life satisfaction.

Implications

The current research adds to the existing body of knowledge, and through a quantitative examination of the relationships among psychological constructs, it offers a more complete picture of lesbian experiences in sport. The previous research on lesbian coaches has confirmed the existence of a hostile sport climate and the avoidance of complete disclosure of lesbian sexual orientation, and this study expands the sport psychology literature on lesbian coaches' perceptions and behaviors (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1996; Krane & Barber, 2005). By acknowledging the social issues present in the sport climate and increasing understanding of the effects of systemic intolerance for lesbians, this research will help to promote more healthy sport environments and societal change.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sport scholars have documented a lack of tolerance for diversity within sport, but

it is only in the last 15 years that the issues of homophobia, heterosexism and

homonegativism been addressed publicly (Griffin, 1998). Researchers in the field of sport

and physical activity have recently begun to address the experiences, behaviors, and

attitudes of lesbians. The purpose of this research project is to gain a better understanding

of the experiences of lesbian intercollegiate coaches. Specifically, this research focuses

on coaches' perceptions of support within their intercollegiate athletic departments,

degrees of disclosure in regard to their lesbian sexual orientations, job satisfaction, and

life satisfaction. In this chapter, a review of literature related to the experiences of lesbian

intercollegiate coaches is explored.

In the United States, sport upholds patriarchal and heterosexual culture and is

linked to masculinity (Harry, 1991). Sport scholars have stated that any athlete who does

not uphold the typical standards of their gender, race/ethnicity, social class, and/or sexual

orientation is seen as abnormal and poses a challenge to the ideology of sport from within

the hegemonic white male domain (Fusco, 1998; Harry, 1991). As the heterosexual

image of women in sports persists and is encouraged, female athletes are marginalized

and sexualized. Researchers acknowledge that sport ideology is associated with negative

attitudes toward gays and lesbians (Harry, 1991). Lesbians in sport must withstand overt and covert discrimination that reflects a systemic intolerance for homosexuality (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1996; Krane & Barber, 2005). Although lesbians have not been overtly denied access to participation in sports or physical activity, researchers have stated that the lesbian label is used to discourage all women, both lesbian and non-lesbian, from participating in sport altogether; from participating in certain sports; and from challenging the culturally constructed gender relations in sport (Fusco, 1998).

The existing body of literature on lesbians in sport documents heterosexism and homonegativism in sport, examines lesbians in traditional sport settings, and reviews the stigma attached to lesbians in sport (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1996). Heterosexism is defined as the "belief system that denigrates and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community" (Johnson & Buhrke, 2006, p. 91). In current literature, the term homonegativism specifically describes purposefully negative attitudes and behaviors towards homosexuals (Krane, 1996). The previous research has shown the sport environment to be overwhelmingly heterosexist, and this serves to reproduce and sustain the prevalence of homonegative attitudes (Krane, 1996; Krane, 1997; Krane & Barber, 2005; Vealey, 1997). Research suggests that all lesbians in sport will have encounter homonegativism in some way (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1996). Sports associations and governing bodies rarely address or acknowledge the existence of gay and lesbian athletes, coaches, and administrators. Gay and lesbian athletes who reveal their sexual orientations fear negative repercussions, including poor treatment from coaches and teammates, lack of playing time, lose of spots on teams, and loss of

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endorsement deals. Gay and lesbian administrators and coaches are concerned for their job security (Griffin, 1998; Krane & Barber, 2005). Fear of discrimination and prejudice causes many lesbians in sport to conceal their sexual orientations (Griffin, 1998). Scholars have stated that these factors lead to the invisibility of lesbians in sport, and this lack of visibility results in the continued prevalence of heterosexism and homonegativism in sport (Fusco, 1998).

Further, research acknowledges that the experiences of gays and lesbians in sport are concurrent with gay and lesbian experiences in the society as a whole. The promotion of heterosexuality as the only acceptable orientation in sport mirrors the dominant views of society (Griffin 1998). Homonegativism exists in society, and in the sport environment, prejudice against lesbians is also an acceptable perspective (Gill, Morrow, Collins, Lucey, & Schultz, 2006). This has formed a hostile environment that can have a damaging impact on lesbians in sport.

Lesbian Identity

A thorough examination of lesbian intercollegiate coaches' experiences requires knowledge about the complexity of lesbian identity. Vealey (1997) stated that researchers should focus on lesbian identity development in sport. This section describes theoretical frameworks of lesbian identity that have been proposed by psychological researchers. These frameworks provide a foundation for understanding how lesbians in sport manage their identities.

Theoretical Frameworks of Lesbian Identity

It was in the late 1970's and early 1980's that psychological researchers began to examine the experiences of homosexuals. This research marked a shift from prior psychological literature that viewed homosexuality as a mental disorder (Cox & Gallois, 1996). Instead of assuming negative outcomes, models from psychology began to illustrate the potential development of positive homosexual identities (Anderson & Mavis, 1996; Cass, 1984). These early models suggested lengthy, and often difficult, processes of individual identity development (Cox & Gallois, 1996; Fassinger, 1991).

Cass's (1984) breakthrough model conceptualized identity formation as a developmental process, marked by stages of change along which certain experiences could be structured. The model included six developmental stages characterized by cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. Cass believed that the acquisition of a homosexual identity involved a change from a heterosexual self-identity to a homosexual self-identity. She theorized that individuals contemplate homosexual identity at each stage, and view it as either positive or negative. Cass emphasized that individuals may need to use strategies, such as passing, or pretending to be heterosexual, to manage homosexual identity in daily life. The model stated that commitment and pride in an individual's homosexual identity would occur with emotional, sexual, and social support from homosexual friend networks. Cass theorized that disclosure of an individual's true identity and sexual orientation would eventually lead to enhanced self-esteem and self-acceptance (Cass, 1984).

Stage models, such as Cass', were once considered to be innovative and useful, and as they were tested, results validated the theories (Anderson & Mavis, 1996; Cass, 1984). However, criticisms of these models began to arise, and although concepts from stage models are still useful, they are now considered too linear and simplistic. One main reason is because stage models maintain an individualistic perspective of personal adjustment, and this largely excludes the massive influence of the social environment (Cox & Gallois, 1996). Stage models tend to be insensitive to diversity and do not take more fluid and flexible views of sexual orientation into account. It is also reported that they are too normative and do not account for or attempt to explain individual differences in processes (Fassinger, 1991). According to some critics, stage models come from an essentialist view, the belief that any group can be defined according to a definitive list of characteristics. As such, they ascribe value to specific types of individual behavior, attitudes, and accomplishments while demeaning those that stray from the norm (D'Augelli, 1994).

Environmental Influence on Lesbian Identity

Factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, social class, age, religion, and geographic location impact the coming out process and lead to considerable variation in lesbian behavior and perspectives on their social environment and experiences. Fassinger (1991) furthered understanding of lesbian identity by recognizing diversity within the gay and lesbian community. Fassinger discussed the process of lesbian identity management, which refers to simultaneous participation in two cultural realities, i.e. the public heterosexual environment and the private homosexual environment. Lesbians must

negotiate multiple identities, and the same variations that impact the coming out process must always be taken into account as part of an individual's self-image and identity. Lesbians live in marginality, and as such, experience much of their lives as outsiders, and this serves to shape self-identity (Fassinger, 1991).

D'Augelli (1994) introduced a social construction model to describe lesbian identity development within the social forces that shape it. According to D'Augelli, the development of a lesbian identification requires both the distancing from heterosexual personal, relational, and social norms and the creation of a new identity based around homosexual and homosocial dimensions. According to D'Augelli, lesbian identity development does not conclude when an individual views their sexual orientation positively, as stated in stage models. Instead, the human diversity model recognizes that the psychological, cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and physical changes that define lesbian identity development occur across the life span (D'Augelli, 1994).

Psychological researchers recognize that social forces play an important role in individualizing the dynamic and lifelong process of lesbian identity development. Therefore, research must address the issues of heterosexism and homophobia, which permeate culture and affect individuals in a variety of ways (D'Augelli, 1994). The reality is that a lesbian may feel daily stress as a result of simply being different and rejecting the norms of society. Therefore, a more complete understanding of lesbian experiences must include an examination of the environmental factors that influence individual psychological constructs.

In 2002, Garnets furthered understanding of sexual orientation by incorporating concepts from multicultural psychology. This new paradigm proposed that sexual orientation was flexible, complex, and multifaceted. She conceptualized sexual orientation as a location on a spectrum with two distinct dimensions: one dimension for degree and intensity of attraction to women, and the other dimension for degree and intensity of attraction to men. She stated that an individual's perception of his/her sexual orientation could be in contrast with their sexual behavior, self-identification, and emotional attachments. Thus, sexual orientation and identity development must be understood as fluid (Garnets, 2002).

Garnets (2002) emphasized the necessity of understanding the cultural and historical forces impacting lesbian development and experience. Heterosexism and homonegativism legitimize and encourage individual and institutional prejudice and discrimination. The development and experiences of homosexuals in the United States share commonalities with other minority groups. In order to develop their identity, lesbians must evaluate, confront, and ultimately reject the negative identity reinforced by prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination in their lives. The minority status of lesbians can have a powerful impact on daily life, as well as understanding and evaluation of experiences. Due to the impact of societal pressures, lesbian experience cannot be completely normalized. It is, therefore, necessary for researchers to examine lesbian identity as it relates to individualized environmental context (Garnets, 2002).

Recently, Fingerhut, Peplau, and Ghavami (2005), presented a dual-identity framework for conceptualizing the complexity of lesbian identity as it relates to the

heterosexual majority. Their dual-identity framework is rooted in the idea that similarities can be drawn from patterns of lesbian identity and those of ethnic minorities. As is true for other minority groups, lesbian identity is understood as both a social and personal identity, and lesbians must adapt to order integrate their personal minority (lesbian) identity with their connections to their social identity in the context of life amongst the larger heterosexual majority of society. Fingerhut and his colleagues (2005) stated that a lesbian can identify with the heterosexual majority while maintaining affiliated with the lesbian community, and individual differences exist in the ways that lesbians identify with either culture and negotiate the intersection of their dual-identities. They proposed four categories of identity to explain how the salience of lesbian identity and the level of affiliation with the lesbian community and mainstream society influence lesbians' lives and experiences: 1) assimilation (low lesbian identity, high mainstream identity); 2) lesbian-identified or separated (high lesbian identity, low mainstream identity); 3) integrated (high lesbian identity, high mainstream identity); and 4) marginalized (low lesbian identity, low mainstream identity). Additionally, it was proposed that lesbian identity is influenced by cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Fingerhut et al., 2005).

The work context is highly influential on lesbian identity (Fassinger, 1995; Mohr & Fassinger, 2003). This can be especially true for those working under oppressive conditions of heterosexism and homonegativism. Psychological lesbian identity development theories give insight into possible causes of behaviors relating to the

disclosure of sexual orientation and may help to understand work attitudes and perceptions. The next section will discuss lesbian identity in the context of sport.

Sport Context and Lesbian Identity

The greater social environment has a major influence on lesbian attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Cox & Gallois, 1996; D'Augelli, 1994; Fingerhut et al., 2005). Sport scholars have recognized that the sport context must be included in any investigation into the experiences of lesbians in sport (Vealey, 1997). Drawing upon both social psychological perspectives and individual development stage theories, sport scholars have proposed theories to understand the ways that lesbian identities develop within their sport environments and the ways that lesbians negotiate and persist in the face of institutionalized heterosexism in sport.

Krane (1996) was one of the first sport psychology researchers to detail a conceptual foundation for understanding and studying lesbian experiences in sport. She formulated a theoretical framework, steeped deeply in feminist perspectives, to provide a background for research. According to feminist perspectives, gender is socially constructed; therefore, beliefs about traditional gender roles are dictated by society. Krane gathered four assumptions from feminist sport literature that provide a structure for literature related to lesbian experiences in sport:

1. *Sport is a patriarchal institution and is considered a masculine domain in American society.*

2. *Negative perceptions of lesbians are perpetuated in the sport environment.*

3. *The institution of sport promotes compulsory heterosexuality. Heterosexuality is the only appropriate sexual orientation.*

4. *The previous conditions lead to the creation and maintenance of a hostile sport environment for lesbians. (Krane, 1996)*

Though analysis of existing literature about lesbians, and utilizing her assumptions about lesbian experiences in sport, Krane created a model for understanding lesbian experiences in sport (see Figure 2).

The model showed that socially sanctioned heterosexism and homonegativism influence the personal reactions of lesbian sportswomen. Krane attributed personal homonegative beliefs to socialization, the complicated process in which societal norms, values, and behaviors are transmitted to society's members. Through socialization, individuals learn and internalize the rules of their socializing agents, such as parents, peers, schools, religious institutions, and the mass media. Prejudiced beliefs and discrimination, such as heterosexism and homonegativism, are also learned through socialization (Krane, 1996).

Krane's model emphasized that homonegativism within the sport environment and within society at large influences individual lesbian experiences in sport. Krane suggested that all lesbians in sport encounter some form of homonegativism. Additionally, Krane described identity management strategies that lesbians use to cope with external homonegativism in the sport context. These behaviors, such as covering or passing, are used when lesbians attempt to hide their sexuality from others in order to avoid discrimination and prejudice (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1996). In pretending to be

heterosexual to those around them, Krane explained that lesbians almost live two separate

lives, and this constant negotiation of identity could be detrimental (Krane, 1996).
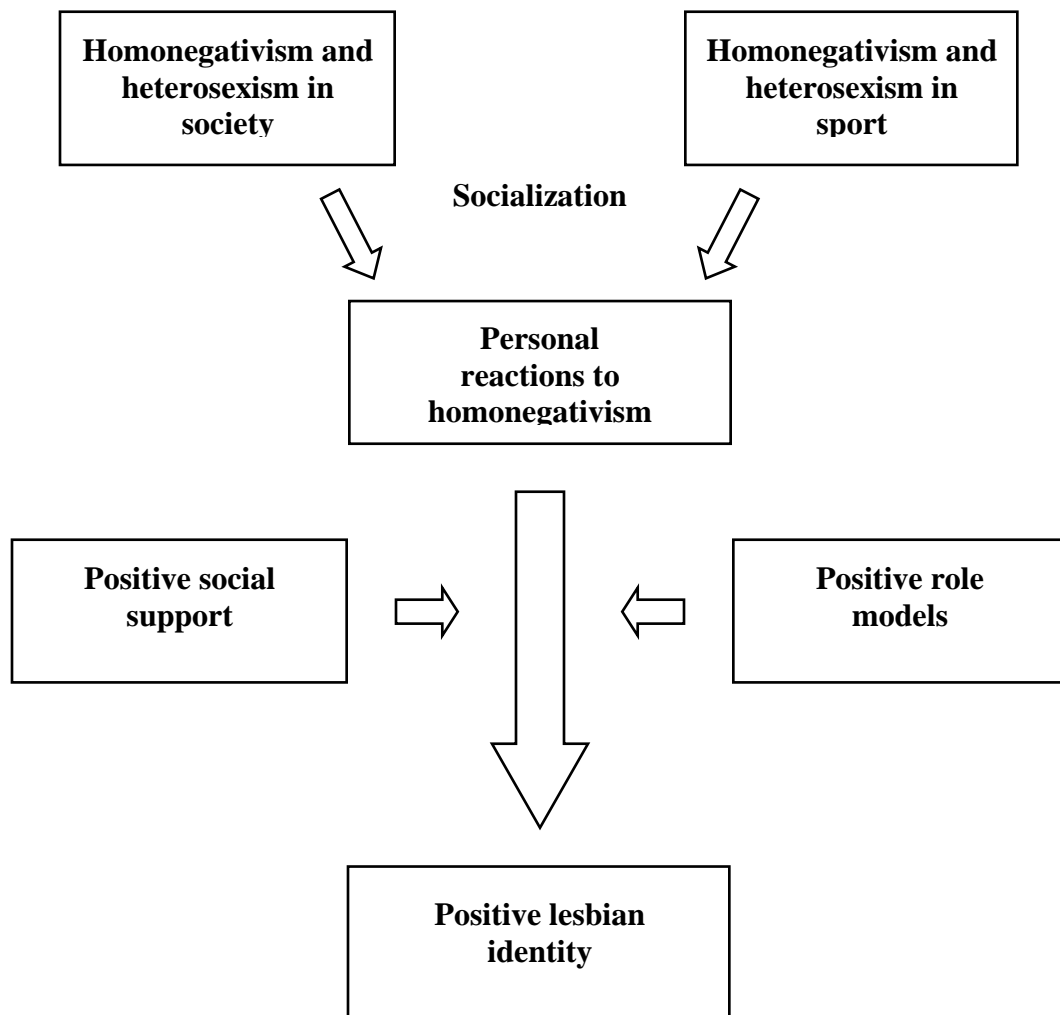
Figure 2. Krane's conceptual framework for studying lesbians in sport.

Further, Krane stated that the message given to lesbians in sport is one that

constantly enforces the unacceptability of their lifestyle. This message serves to oppress

and marginalize lesbians as a group and could lead to the formation of a negative self-

identity. However, Krane noted that lesbians do achieve positive self-identification. According to the model, lesbians who work through their personal reactions to homonegativism can adopt a positive lesbian identity. Referencing the work of Troiden (cited in Krane, 1996), Krane described this as an identity commitment. Identity commitment occurs when a lesbian decides that it is easier and more comfortable to live openly as a lesbian than to pass as heterosexual. Lesbian identity then becomes a part of her complete self-identity, and this is evident in all aspects of life rather than being exposed only in certain situations. Within her proposed framework, Krane stated that lesbians who encounter positive social support counter their negative personal reactions to homonegativism. Specifically, she stated that other lesbians and a positive lesbian community, as well as supportive heterosexuals, play important roles in the facilitation of the development of positive lesbian identity. Krane explained that sport could provide positive support, although acceptance and support might be difficult to find in homonegative climates. Teammates, coaches, and administrators who refuse to succumb to homonegative practices can help to foster the development of positive lesbian identities (Krane, 1996).

The final point of Krane's (1996) model discussed the disclosure of lesbian sexual orientation. According to Krane (1996), coming out can lead to an improved sense of self, self-confidence, self-pride, and self-understanding. However, in sport, disclosure of lesbian sexual orientation can be both empowering and threatening because it comes with a large vulnerability to discrimination and prejudice.

Though Krane's (1996) model offered a framework for understanding how lesbians experience an often-hostile sport context, it is limited as a research guide due to its broad framework of potential influences on lesbians in sport. In 1997, Krane conducted a study to examine homonegativism in sport environments. The research consisted of semi-structured interviews with twelve self-identified lesbian collegiate athletes. Participants were obtained through personal contacts. The interviews focused on athletes' experiences during their college careers, and athletes were asked to describe their sport experiences specific to being a lesbian. They were asked about the quality of their experiences, encounters with homonegativism, and relationships with coaches and teammates, as well as their disclosure behaviors. Krane attempted to allow for athletes to express themselves in supportive environments during the interviews and to see the world from the participants' unique perspectives during the data analysis process.

Krane (1997) reported that athletes described many examples of homonegativism. First, athletes were explicitly told they must exhibit a feminine image in order to preserve traditional gender roles. The participants illustrated this by explaining that coaches threatened athletes with dismissal from teams if they chose not to dress in customary feminine attire or wear make up. In addition, the participants reported that their coaches and teammates often labeled female athletes as lesbians, and this label was used in a derogatory manner and associated with stereotypes and negative comments. Krane found that the lesbian athletes dealt with the omnipresent homonegativism in their sport environments by distancing themselves from any association with lesbians. Krane concluded that the sport context was so ripe with homonegativism that lesbian athletes

expected it. This study confirmed that the sport environment could be hostile for lesbians. However, the consequences of this homonegative sport context need further examination.

Other sport psychology researchers continued to inquire into lesbian experiences. In 1997, Vealey used a social psychological approach to examine sexual orientation in sport. She proposed that three social forces should be taken into account when examining the experiences of lesbians in sport. These social forces were the social-cultural structure of the sport, the social-cultural structure of society, and the social organization of sexual orientation. Vealey emphasized the social context, and her model showed that the three social forces were in constant interaction, influencing individuals' identities, self-perceptions, behaviors, and attitudes. The impact of these social forces has been supported in studies of lesbian athletes and coaches. In research and in practice, the social environment is considered to be a critical component that must be understood in order to make any attempt to fully understand lesbian experiences in sport (Vealey, 1997).

Reimer (1997) proposed an additional model for understanding lesbian identity development in the sport environment. This model was not based on chronological age, so it offered a more fluid approach to lesbian identity. The model included five levels, each with sub-stages. Like Krane (1996), Reimer recognized the influence of negative dominant societal beliefs about lesbians. At level one, stage one; the model explained that a woman understands society's expectations for her behavior. At level one, stage two; a woman believes she is different from other women, but does not consciously think about the reasons why she might be different. According to Reimer, in order to progress and develop a positive lesbian identity, a woman must realize that stereotypes about lesbians

are false and proceed to form her own beliefs, a personal understanding of lesbians (level three). Receiving positive social support and finding lesbian role models were also important aspects of this model. Reimer explained that the sport environment is an arena that can offer such support and assist positive lesbian development. Finally, coming out, or disclosing lesbian identity to others, was recognized as an important, but not completely necessary, part of positive identity development

Griffin (1998) furthered understanding about lesbians in sport in her book, *Strong women, deep closets: Lesbians and homophobia in women's sport*. Griffin discussed findings from interviews with lesbian college coaches and reported on the ways that they managed their lesbian identities at work. She explained that college coaches are constantly considering how much of their lesbian identities to disclose or conceal. This decision-making process includes self-monitoring as well as careful analysis of the actions of others in the sport environment. Griffin stated that lesbian coaches expend a great deal of energy on the constant process of identity management, and this might occur at the expense of relationships with co-workers and student-athletes. Griffin is clear that the secrecy and hiding associated with concealing lesbian identity harms coaches' interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

As mentioned in the previous chapter of this document, Griffin proposed a continuum of six identity management strategies used by lesbian coaches (see Figure 3). This continuum ranges from completely closeted to publicly out, with most coaches concealing some, but not all, of their lesbian identities. Griffin stated that lesbian coaches who are passing as heterosexual will lie about their personal lives to intentionally mislead

others into believing they are straight. Other coaches cover their lesbian identities without outright lying but by evading any conversations or situations that might involve their personal lives and lesbian identities. Griffin reported that coaches who cover do not talk about their significant others and certainly do not bring them to work-sponsored events in the hope of protecting themselves from discrimination and prejudice. Being implicitly out means that a coach does not actually name herself as a lesbian, but she allows colleagues and student-athletes to infer her lesbian identity through other activities. According to Griffin, an implicitly out coach will discuss a significant other using the correct pronoun, will invite a significant other to work-related events, and does not mind if others know of her lesbian identity. However, since she does not openly self-identify as a lesbian, an implicitly out coach is still provided some protection from prejudice and discomfort at work. Conversely, coaches who are explicitly out will directly disclose their lesbian identities to selected others in the workplace. Griffin explained that explicitly out coaches are quite intentional in their decisions to disclose and will carefully consider many factors before coming out to a colleague. Most often, explicitly out coaches stated that they only discussed their lesbian identities with individuals they trusted and with other lesbian coaches. Griffin provides important insight into the ways that lesbian coaches manage their identities in the sport context. She confirmed that disclosure behaviors vary and that most coaches are not completely out or completely closeted, but her research did not attempt to link such behaviors to specific antecedents. It is evident that silence regarding lesbian identity is a norm for lesbian behavior in sport (Griffin, 1998).

Completely closed	Concealing lesbian identity from all in athletic context
Passing as heterosexual	Intentionally leading selected others in athletic context to see self as heterosexual
Covering lesbian identity	Concealing lesbian identity from selected others in athletic context
Implicitly out	Allowing selected others in athletic context to see self as lesbian without naming self
Explicitly out	Intentionally revealing lesbian identity to selected others in athletic context
Publicly out	Revealing lesbian identity to everyone in athletic context

Figure 3. Lesbian coaches' identity management strategies (Griffin, 1998, p. 135).

Most recently, sport psychology researchers used social identity perspective, derived from a social psychology theory, in to deepen understanding lesbian experiences in sport. The theoretical framework of social identity perspective incorporates the social context and its impact on individual psychological states (Krane & Barber, 2003). By emphasizing the importance of analyzing environmental influences on individual attitudes and behaviors, social identity perspective maintains flexibility and allows for the examination of a diversity of individual experiences. Therefore, researchers extended investigations beyond what was previously normalized in studies of sexual minorities, including a range of sexualities and multiple, differing identities (Cox & Gallois, 1996). Social identity perspective explains how the greater social world affects identity development at an individual level. According to social identity perspective, the

derivation of self-esteem is dependent upon the influence of social forces on individual self-concept. Self-concept is a composite of all of an individual's identities, fully describing how an individual views him/herself in relation to organizing principles, or the established groups, of their social world (Cox & Gallois, 1996). Social categorization describes the process by which individuals categorize themselves into socially constructed groups. Individuals typically categorize themselves in multiple social groups, depending upon historical and social contexts and individual perception of identity (Cox & Gallois, 1996).

According to this perspective, social identity is derived from group membership, and it serves as a guide for attitudes, values, and behaviors (Cox & Gallois, 1996; Krane & Barber, 2003). Members sharing common social identities adopt those characteristics and norms associated with their social groups (Krane & Barber, 2003). Social identity means more than self-knowledge of a particular social group membership. It includes the individual emotional significance and value placed on that membership. Krane and Barber (2003) stated that social identity could provide a sense of belonging. Through previous research, it might also be deducted that one's social identity can impose a sense of loneliness and/or alienation resulting from negative evaluations of group membership and/or the tangible and psychological costs associated with membership in a marginalized group (Halpin & Allen, 2004).

It has been contended that, specifically for marginalized groups such as lesbians, social identities serve as a schema or framework through which members perceive their world (Krane & Barber, 2003). In sport, the behavioral norm for managing lesbian

identity is typically identified as the decision to remain silent and stay closeted about sexual orientation. The existing literature has shown that the risks for revealing lesbian identity in athletics, whether perceived, real, or a combination of both, keep lesbians in the closet (Griffin, 1998). Social identity perspective predicts that when the norms and values of two social identities are incompatible, the result will be confusion and psychological distress for an individual (Cox & Gallois, 1996). This could be the situation for coaches who must manage their conflicting social identity as coach and as lesbian.

Social comparison, the process of distinguishing one's social group with other groups according to one's personal valued dimensions, is an integral part of social identity perspective (Krane & Barber, 2003). It is motivated by the need for positive social identity and illustrates how and why social groups claim themselves to be dominant (Cox & Gallois, 1996). Difficulty arises for marginalized groups, for their low social status places them in social competition with high status groups, and they maintain a need to establish high collective and self-esteem. This is important to consider in the study of sport, a culture in which male hegemony and is evident, and the ideologies of heterosexism and homonegativism prevail (Cox & Gallois, 1996).

Sport psychology researchers have used social identity perspective to explain how lesbians in sport manage their identities in an environment wherein they lack power and prestige (Krane & Barber, 2003). Social identity perspective describes two types of strategies utilized by marginalized, low status groups to acquire higher self-esteem: individual or social mobility and social change (Cox & Gallois, 1996). The use of

individual or social mobility strategies allows lesbians, as members of a marginalized

group, to manage their identity without as much of a costly impact in their social

environment. For lesbian coaches, this means being able to maintain multiple identities

without the loss of social status (Krane & Barber, 1993).

Cox and Gallois (1996) described four ways that individuals can undertake social

mobility. For the purposes of this research, the key individual mobility strategies are

passing, covering, and blending. Passing has been previously described as a way that

coaches conceal their homosexuality so it can be presumed they are heterosexual. Those

using passing as a strategy will not disclose homosexual identity, even if asked.

Covering, as described by Cox and Gallois (1996), entails imitation of heterosexuality to

ensure positive evaluation. However, individuals who utilize covering would likely

disclose their homosexuality identity if questioned. Finally, blending behavior is said to

be manifestation of the belief that homosexuality is a part of personal, not social identity.

Therefore, these individuals act in ways congruent with gendered ideals in order to avoid

any questioning of sexual orientation because they believe it is irrelevant to any other part

of their lives. For individuals who employ individual mobility strategies, the concern is

hiding a part of their identity from the dominant social world. They are not attempting to

actually move from a lower status group into a higher status group, as they have a self-

categorized homosexual identity (Cox & Gallois, 1996). It is important to note that the

relevance of particular identities is dependent upon the social context, meaning that

individuals may employ one, or all, of these techniques at times they perceive as critical

(Krane & Barber, 2003).

According to social identity perspective, the singular use social mobility strategies will not do enough to enhance the self-esteem of marginalized groups. When personal identity is incorporated into social identity, and an individual perceives this social identity as an important aspect of self-concept, they may realize that social mobility strategies do not work to alter group status (Cox & Gallois, 1996). To this end, social identity perspective describes methods of social change, in which members of stigmatized groups attempt to increase group status, power, and prestige in the social world. These strategies are also put to use when an individual realizes social mobility strategies are not an option, as is the case for visible minorities (Krane & Barber, 2003).

Social identity perspective also depicts two strategies for social change: social creativity and social competition. Social creativity involves the formation of new ways of social comparison so that one's own group is looked upon in a more positive manner. Krane and Barber (2003) stated that social creativity occurs when individuals in a marginalized group accentuate characteristics they believe will be held in high regard by dominant groups. This does not necessarily result in a change in social hierarchy, but does enable members of marginalized groups to increase collective, and therefore, self-esteem (Krane & Barber, 2003). Social competition occurs when members of a lower status group feel they are deserving of more power and status. Group members come together to take collective action by political lobbying, social justice activities, or rebellion. Social identity researchers have stated that social competition is most likely to occur when group members have high collective esteem and strong group identification (Krane & Barber, 2003). Homosexuals in sport who publicly disclose their sexual

orientations employ a form of social competition (Iannotta & Kane, 2002). Social identity perspective theorizes that lesbians involved in social creativity and social competition, instead of conforming to the normative code of silence, will increase the collective esteem of the group. Collective esteem of a marginalized group is then predicted to continue to empower individual members of that group and further social change (Krane & Barber, 2003). The choice to employ social mobility strategies versus social change strategies occurs on the individual level. Within research in sport psychology, social identity perspective provides a framework for understanding the experiences and behaviors of lesbians in sport. Studies have validated the constructs of social identity perspective as applicable for lesbian athletes and coaches. Researchers have used social identity perspective to predict consequences for the imposed silence of gays and lesbians in sport (Krane & Barber, 2003). These studies provide useful information about the sport context for lesbians.

Krane and Barber (2005) examined the behaviors and experiences of lesbian intercollegiate coaches using social identity perspective. This research investigated how coaches described the sport environment, how they negotiated their lesbian identities, and the kinds of social mobility or social change strategies they utilized. Through interviews with thirteen self-identified lesbian coaches, mostly from NCAA Division I universities, Krane and Barber provided evidence that homonegativism prevails in the sport context. Participants were obtained through personal contacts, and the study consisted of semi-structured interviews that focused on the sport environment, coach-athlete relationships,

relationships between coaches and their colleagues in athletic departments, potential discrimination, and strategies used to manage identities in the sport environment.

The findings confirmed that lesbian coaches faced unwelcoming atmospheres in sport. The participants explained that there was little or no acknowledgement of lesbian identities or issues related to lesbians in women's sport environments. Twelve of the participants in the study reported that they concealed their lesbian identities to some degree. The coaches reported fearing that disclosure of their lesbian identities would result in discrimination, such as job loss. A majority of participants also described a fear of negative recruiting, when coaches from schools attempt to convince a potential student-athlete (and their family) to attend their school by informing them that there are lesbians at rival schools (Griffin & Carroll, 2009). In order to protect themselves from the potentially harmful effects of homonegativism, coaches compartmentalized their lesbian identities. Krane and Barber (2005) explained that coaches separated their professional identities as coaches from their personal lesbian identities by emphasizing a focus on job performance and working hard in athletic settings. Coaches distanced themselves from colleagues, avoided discussions of their personal lives, and avoided situations and people that might hint at their sexual orientations. The participants in this study expressed both positive and negative consequences of concealing their lesbian identities. Constant behavior monitoring caused both tension and conflict, but ultimately, these coaches believed that their personal well-being was worth the sacrifice to their professional satisfaction.

The theoretical frameworks and research discussed in this section highlight the strength of social psychological perspectives as a foundation for the exploration of lesbian experience in sport. As discussed, the existing body of literature on lesbians in sport documents the homonegativism present in sport context. Understanding the nature of the sport climate is critical for understanding the experiences and perceptions of lesbian intercollegiate coaches. The next section explains the conceptual framework used in the present study and describes the research related to the variables of interest.

<div align="center">

Conceptual Framework

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The existing body of literature on lesbians in sport illustrates the hostile nature of the sport context (e.g. Griffin, 1998; Krane & Barber, 2005). The intent of the present study is to add to current knowledge through an investigation of lesbian coaches' perceptions of support within intercollegiate athletic departments, degrees of disclosure of lesbian identity, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. This section describes a conceptual framework for understanding the sport context for lesbian coaches. Then, a review of research on job satisfaction and life satisfaction are explored.

Multi-Level Framework

As previously discussed, sport scholars have acknowledged that the sport context is highly influential on the experiences of lesbian intercollegiate coaches (e.g. Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1996; Krane; 1997; Krane & Barber, 2005; Vealey, 1997). Therefore, it was important that the current research project determine a framework for explaining how the sport context is constructed and how social forces impact lesbian coaches. In the sport management literature, Dixon and Bruening (2005) proposed a multi-level framework to

emphasize the unique aspects of the sport context in relation to other work environments. Although this framework was intended to investigate work-family conflict for female coaches, its constructs are also helpful for understanding the experiences of lesbian coaches. In this model, the sport context is divided into three levels: 1) Socio-cultural level, 2) Organizational level, and 3) Individual level.

According to the framework, higher-level factors shape lower-level behaviors. The socio-cultural level consists of those social and cultural factors that have been thoroughly documented in the previous sport studies literature, including the dominant ideologies, gender norms, and values of male hegemony, patriarchy, and heterosexuality. In accordance with the framework, the context of sport is shaped by socio-cultural factors from a top-down perspective (Eitzen & Sage, 2003; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Griffin, 1998). Thus, socio-cultural level factors serve to influence organizational level factors within the sport context. The climate for lesbians in intercollegiate athletic departments is one aspect of the organizational level. Organizational support is included in the organizational level. The framework proposes that the organizational level factor of organizational support affects individual level factors for lesbian coaches, such degrees of disclosure, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction (Dixon & Bruening, 2007). Therefore, the framework helps to explain the experiences of lesbian intercollegiate coaches as they are shaped by the sport context.

Organizational Level and Individual Level Interaction

Job satisfaction, the positive emotional state resulting from attaining what one values from a job, is an individual level outcome of particular interest in the current

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research project. Job satisfaction has also been explained as a balance between work-role inputs, one's investment in a job, and work-role outcomes, the benefits obtained from a job (Zhang, DeMichele, & Connaughton, 2004). Although job performance and job satisfaction are positively linked in research in a variety of work environments, only a small amount of research has examined job satisfaction in coaching literature (Davies, Bloom, & Salmela, 2005). In coaching literature, job satisfaction is referred to as the affective condition which results from a complex evaluation of the coaching experience, involving the structures, processes, and outcomes of the coaching work-role (Kim & Cunningham, 2005). Research has shown that a multitude of factors influence job satisfaction for coaches, including achievement, recognition, professional growth, policy, administration, working conditions, status, job security, opportunity for advancement, interpersonal relations, and salary. Independence and feelings of job effectiveness and purpose also impact individual perceptions of job satisfaction. Research on job satisfaction has shown that satisfied employees commit more to their organizations and to their jobs, set higher performance goals, have better performance records, and accept more job responsibilities. Conversely, dissatisfied employees tend to feel frustrated, experience reduced ambition, decreased efforts, and may look to change jobs (Zhang et al., 2004). Coaching literature corresponds with job satisfaction literature, and shows that dissatisfied coaches do not perform as effectively as those who are satisfied (Davies et al., 2005).

Snyder (1990) examined the interaction between organizational level forces and individual level outcomes in an investigation of the effect of leader behavior and

organizational climate on the job satisfaction of male and female intercollegiate coaches. Snyder defined organizational climate as the result of the interaction between the coach and the coach's perceived work environment. Organizational climate is influenced by a coach's perceptions of the behavior of co-workers and leaders (administration). It has been shown to impact coaches' attitudes and performances. The study examined five components of job satisfaction: nature of the work, i.e. coaching and duties associated with coaching; amount of congruence between expected pay and actual pay; opportunities for promotion; satisfaction with supervision; and relationships with colleagues. Snyder reported that female coaches were more satisfied with athletic directors who were exhibited considerate and structured behavior, specifically if the structure was applied evenly to all coaches. Behavior of the athletic director was also directly linked to female coaches' satisfaction with co-workers. Consideration was the most important athletic director behavior for male coaches. It is important to realize that the behaviors of athletic directors impact collegiate coaches, and when those behaviors are not equitable between coaches, hindrance of satisfaction and job performance ensue. Though the impact of heterosexism and homonegativism were not discussed in Snyder's study, these attitudes thrive in athletic departments, and may influence both organizational climate and coaches' perceptions of athletic director behavior.

In a comparison of job satisfaction levels of male and female collegiate coaches, Pastore (1993) investigated the same five components of job satisfaction as Snyder (1990). The findings indicated that all components were similarly important for individual perceptions of both male and female coaches' job satisfaction (Pastore, 1993).

Davies et al. (2005) interviewed Canadian college basketball coaches, and while it should be noted that the Canadian intercollegiate athletic system values *student*-athlete development over winning, factors influencing job satisfaction for coaches were concurrent with those examined in the context of the United States system. Coach-athlete relationships were highlighted as being the most influential influence on job satisfaction. Interpersonal relationships, specifically relationships with athletic directors, in addition to maintaining balanced lifestyles and preserving personal philosophies while coaching were highlighted as critical factors affecting job satisfaction (Davies et al., 2005).

Kim and Cunningham (2005) indicated a strong relationship between positive work experiences and job satisfaction in the NCAA. They conducted a study to investigate the relationship between coaches' perceived organizational support (POS) and job satisfaction. POS are the global beliefs that employees form about the extent that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). According to Organizational Support Theory, employees form these perceptions through evaluations of actions by others in the workplace. Employees view favorable or unfavorable treatment from supervisors and co-workers as a sign of the quality of support from the organization itself (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The findings indicated that support from the organization (athletic department) was an important factor in coaches' job satisfaction, as POS was positively related to job satisfaction. Additionally, Kim and Cunningham (2005) suggested that job satisfaction was unrelated to personal demographics. However, their sample was constituted mainly of Caucasian male coaches and they reported no significant differences in ethnicity. They

did not report any information regarding the sexual orientation of the participants (Kim & Cunningham, 2005).

Research on minorities and coaching has also indicated a relationship between supervision and job satisfaction. Sagas and Cunningham (2004) focused on the forces impacting the job satisfaction of black collegiate assistant basketball coaches and found that discrimination can impede job satisfaction and perceptions of career success. In their analysis of discrimination, they examined the formation of in-group and out-group membership groups. These informal groupings, created by supervisors, impact the treatment of minority groups. In-groups, which are characterized by higher trust and support, lead to better interactions with supervisors. Out-groups are comprised of minority groups in cases where the supervisor is a member of the majority group. Though the actual impact of race in the formation of in-groups and out-groups did not become clear in the study, Sagas and Cunningham (2004) did highlight their impact on the trust, support, and interactions between coaches and administrators. More positive in-group member interactions lead to higher ratings of job satisfaction (Sagas & Cunningham, 2004). More research on the treatment of minority groups in coaching is necessary in order to better understand the impact of discrimination on job satisfaction.

Sexual orientation is recognized as a category of diversity within organizations; yet, it is under-researched in literature, partly due to the tendency of lesbians and gays to hide their sexual orientation (Ward & Winstanley, 2005). Lesbians who decide to remain closeted create a paradoxical situation in organizational literature and within workplace environments. It enables the perspective that sexual minorities are fully integrated into

organizations when, in reality, a large part of their identity is ignored (Ward &

Winstanley, 2005). Research examining the experiences of homosexuals in the workplace

shows that self-identification as a sexual minority has implications on work attitudes and

job satisfaction. Generally, lesbians and gays employed by companies with non-

discrimination policies in the workplace are more satisfied than those working in

companies with no legal protections against discrimination (Ellis & Riggle, 1995).

Few studies have investigated whether the job satisfaction of homosexuals related

to degree of openness in regard to sexual orientation. Ellis and Riggle (1995) indicated

that the job satisfaction of lesbians and gays is associated with openness at work. Further,

the results of their study showed that lesbians and gays who were out reported greater job

satisfaction than those who were closeted at work. The results suggested that the ability

to be open about sexual orientation in the workplace enhanced lesbians' and gays'

feelings of satisfaction with colleagues and supervisors. However, it should be

mentioned, that this finding is not causal. Additionally, the reverse is very likely to be

true, and in that case, more satisfaction and better relationships with colleagues and

supervisors may enable lesbians and gays to feel more comfortable being open in their

work environments (Ellis & Riggle, 1995). Lastly, this study found that job satisfaction

was positively related to life satisfaction, which is an important finding and related to the

current research (Ellis & Riggle, 1995).

In a comparison of the work attitudes of heterosexual, out homosexual, and

closeted homosexual employees, Day and Schoenrade (1997) concluded that more open

homosexuals showed higher job satisfaction than their closeted co-workers. Open

homosexuals also indicated higher positive commitment to the organization, better perceptions of supervision support, lower role ambiguity, and lower role conflict between work and home than closeted homosexuals. In comparison to heterosexuals in this study, all homosexuals reported significantly higher levels of job stress. Research suggests that the decision to come out is influenced by individual perceptions of the emotional costs of hiding one's sexual orientation as well as an assessment of nature of the work environment (Day & Schoenrade, 1997).

Griffith and Hebl (2002) examined the relationship between disclosure of sexual orientation at work and job satisfaction. This study specifically inquired about the degree to which gay and lesbian participants disclosed their sexual orientation at work. It was reported that participants who perceived their organizations to be more supportive of homosexuality were likely to be more "out" at work. This meant they exhibited more disclosure behaviors and fewer behaviors associated with concealment. Informal discrimination impacts an individual's decision to come out as a homosexual (Ward & Winstanley, 2005). In addition, disclosure of sexual orientation is reported to be associated with the type of work, work environment, and income (Anderson & Mavis, 1996). Coworkers' reactions to disclosure behaviors impacted gays' and lesbians' degrees of disclosure, and those who received supportive reactions from coworkers were more satisfied with work (Griffith & Hebl, 2002). Job satisfaction for sexual minorities is greatly affected by an individual's perception of how well they fit into their work environment (Anderson & Mavis, 1996). Griffith and Hebl (2002) reported that greater openness in regard to sexual orientation at work was positively related to job satisfaction.

Higher degrees of disclosure were related to lower job anxiety. Additionally, perceived support of gays and the enactment of supportive policies in the workplace were also positively related to job satisfaction.

Scholars have conjectured about the potential negative consequences for lesbians in sport, including the stress associated with concealing lesbian identity, the negative impact on self-esteem and confidence, and depression (Krane, 1996; Krane, 1997; Griffin, 1998). Although it has been stated that there are definite consequences to the continual exposure to discrimination and prejudice faced by lesbians in sport (Krane, 1996), sport psychology research has barely touched upon the impact of heterosexism and homonegativism on the well-being of lesbian coaches. In fact, there is a void in empirical research when it comes to investigating coaches' lives outside of work.

Life satisfaction is defined as a process of cognitive-appraisal which an individual assesses and evaluates his/her quality of life in accordance with a comparison to a self-imposed standard (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Life satisfaction refers to an individual's feelings about his/her life in general. The construct is a measure of psychological well-being. Diener et al. (1985) noted that life satisfaction measures should evaluate global cognitive judgments and, in order to do so, must leave the respondent free to weigh domains and feelings in order to gather an overall judgment of life. Thus, they created the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) to allow the respondent to evaluate their psychological well-being in accordance with their owned valued criterion as opposed to standards set forth by a researcher. The psychometric properties of the scale were initially tested on a population of undergraduate students and a population of elderly persons, and

results showed that the test correlated with personality indicators of well-being (i.e. self-esteem, neuroticism), but showed weaker correlations with affect. This showed, that though domain satisfaction and affect are related to the subjective well-being component that is life satisfaction, they are different constructs (Diener et al., 1985).

In 1993, Pavot and Diener further explained life satisfaction and presented the characteristics of the SWLS, information about its reliability and validity, normative data, and clinical applications. Continued examination showed that the stability of responses on the SWLS declined over longer periods of time, and life events predicted changes in life satisfaction. Research has suggested that life satisfaction does maintain some long-term consistency, which might be attributed to personality characteristics and unvarying circumstances. Additionally, Pavot and Diener (1993) identified overlap between the SWLS and affective measures of psychological well-being, but assert the difference between affective and cognitive factors. When measured in conjunction with affective scales, the SWLS correlated positively with positive affect and correlated negatively with negative affect, therefore, the SWLS measures a different construct that affective well-being measures. The SWLS has been tested on a diversity of populations, including, but not limited to, older adults, college students, prisoners, alcoholics, abused women, and psychotherapy clients (Pavot & Diener, 1993). The SWLS is used to assess the life satisfaction of lesbian coaches in this study.

Only more recently has research in the field of psychology begun to investigate the psychological well-being of homosexuals (Cox & Gallois, 1996). Information from both psychology research and practice has indicated that, in comparison to heterosexuals,

sexual minorities may be at a higher risk for some psychological disorders, such as major depression, anxiety, and substance abuse (Mays & Cochran, 2001). Research has suggested that exposure to discrimination and high-levels of social stress increase vulnerability to such psychiatric disorders as they are linked with affective distress. Mays and Cochran (2001) conducted an investigation into the social stigma of homosexuality and mental health consequences. In their study, homosexual and bisexuals reported more personal experiences with discrimination than heterosexuals in this research, and at least 40% of those discriminatory events were attributed at least partially to homosexuality. Discrimination at work and in social scenarios in this study caused sexual minorities to explain that homonegative attitudes and actions interfered with life and made their lives more difficult. Sexual minority status, due to the increased likelihood of encountering discrimination in daily life, was correlated with an increased risk of psychiatric disorders (Mays & Cochran, 2001). Mays and Cochran (2001) concluded that homosexual identity was linked to increased risk of poor psychological well-being and psychopathology.

Drakou, Kambitsis, Charachousou, and Tzetzis, (2006) conducted one of the only studies to investigate the life satisfaction of athletic coaches. The researchers explained that coaches' levels of life satisfaction are likely to influence their coaching behaviors, but they also noted that their study was the first of its kind. Drakou et al. (2006) utilized a reliable, multi-item measure to assess the levels of life satisfaction of 286 male and 115 female coaches of competitive Greek amateur sport teams. The researchers collected demographic information as well as information about professional issues, such as working hours, length of coaching experience, level and gender of athletes, and current

job description. The researchers conducted a one-way ANOVA with a post hoc to explore significant differences among coaches' levels of life satisfaction and their personal and professional descriptors. The findings showed that no statistical differences existed between female and male coaches. However, older coaches and those coaches who were married reported higher levels of life satisfaction than their younger and non-married colleagues. The researchers stated that this finding might be attributed to the emotional support coaches receive from their spouses. Coaches' levels of life satisfaction were not related to their professional characteristics. While this study did not assess the sexual orientation of the sample, it would seem reasonable to conjecture that lesbian coaches who are in stable relationships might also cope with their work-related stress better than single coaches. However, for lesbian coaches, it is probable that the reverse could be true in some cases. Lesbian coaches that conceal and compartmentalize their lesbian identities might also harm and strain their personal relationships with significant others.

Research focusing on workplace behaviors illustrates the impact of job satisfaction on life satisfaction. In an examination of literature, Rain, Lainer, and Steiner (1991) concluded the existence of a positive relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. This is usually attributed to the spillover hypothesis, which explains that satisfaction or dissatisfaction with job will "spill over," or correspond with a similar sentiment with life in general, and vice versa (Ellis & Riggle, 1995; Rain, Lainer, & Steiner, 1991). When the spillover hypothesis was examined for gays and lesbians, job satisfaction was positively related to life satisfaction (Ellis & Riggle, 1995). Similarly, Drakou et al. (2006) deduced that, due to the spillover hypothesis, findings about life

satisfaction were likely to be related to job satisfaction, but they did not investigate this assumption.

Dixon and Sagas (2007) extended the previous literature on coaches by examining the impact of POS on both work and non-work outcomes for university coaches. The researchers hypothesized that POS would be positively related to both job and life satisfaction. This investigation also examined the impact of POS on work-family conflict. Survey responses were collected from 253 coaches from all three NCAA divisions. Data analysis showed that POS influenced coaches' job and life satisfaction. In addition, the results also indicated a strong positive relationship between job and life satisfaction. Findings from this study suggest that the organizational climate and the support coaches receive impact both work and non-work lives. Further research is necessary in order to gain a more information about the life satisfaction of lesbian intercollegiate coaches.

Summary

This review of literature discussed the previous research regarding lesbians in sport. The sport studies research has illustrated that the sport environment is homonegative and heterosexist and can therefore become a hostile workplace for lesbian coaches. The nature of the sport environment is thought to be influential on the behaviors and experiences of lesbian coaches, but further research is needed to draw conclusions regarding both work and non-work outcomes. The current study adds to the previous literature by examining the relationships among lesbian intercollegiate coaches' perceptions of organizational support and their degrees of disclosure, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Overview of Study

Existing literature in sport psychology has documented a heterosexist and homonegative climate in intercollegiate athletic departments, but there is a lack of empirical research analyzing the impact of the sport environment on the perceptions, behaviors, and psychological consequences for lesbian coaches (Krane, 1996; Krane & Barber, 2003). Thus, this study was conducted to increase understanding of the experiences of lesbians in sport by examining the sport climate and investigating the influence of perceived organizational support on lesbian coaches' disclosure behaviors, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction.

Research Questions

The primary purpose of the study was to investigate whether lesbian intercollegiate coaches' perceptions of the organizational support within their intercollegiate athletic departments related to their degrees of disclosure, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. The following specific research questions were addressed.

1. Does perceived organizational support (POS) relate to degree of disclosure?

2. Does perceived organizational support (POS) relate to job and life satisfaction?

3. Does degree of disclosure relate to job satisfaction?

4. Does degree of disclosure relate to life satisfaction?

5. Does job satisfaction relate to life satisfaction?

The study was conducted using surveys, which addressed lesbian intercollegiate coaches' perceptions of organizational support from their intercollegiate athletic departments, degrees of workplace disclosure versus concealment, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Specifically, the goal of this study was to clarify the relationships among the variables previously mentioned. In addition, open-ended questions were used to give participants an opportunity to share information about their behaviors and perceptions, helping to deepen and clarify the findings and offer a more complete picture of their individual experiences.

Participants

Active intercollegiate coaches completed the online surveys and open-ended questions. Since the project focused on the experiences of lesbians, participants were asked to self-report their sexual orientation, and coaches who self-identified as heterosexual were excluded from the study. The total number of coaches who started the survey was 54. Total data from 2 participants was discarded prior to beginning analyses due to lack of completion. Thus, the number of participants in this study was 52 ($N = 52$).

The mean age of the participants was 30.7 years old ($SD = 4.92$; ranging from 24-43). Six participants did not provide their ages ($n = 46$). The majority of the sample was Caucasian/European American ($n = 46$, 88.5%) with 3 (5.8%) Hispanic, 1 (1.9%) African-American, 1 Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1 Native American.

The majority ($n = 31$, 59.6%) of coaches described their sexual orientation as "exclusively homosexual" on the Kinsey Scale, while 12 (23.1%) described their sexual

orientation as "predominantly homosexual, only incidentally heterosexual." Another 6 (11.5%) indicated they were "predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally heterosexual," with 1 (1.9%) describing herself as "equally homosexual and heterosexual," 1 (1.9%) as "predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally homosexual." Additionally, 1 (1.9%) participant described herself as "exclusively heterosexual," but did not complete the remainder of the survey.

Regarding their relationship status, 19 (36.5%) coaches indicated they were dating, 13 (25%) stated they were partnered/married/civil union, 13 (25%) were single, and 7 (13.5%) were cohabiting. The mean length of participants' relationships was 3 years and 6 months ($n = 30$; range from 2 months-21 years). The sample was well educated with half ($n = 26$, 50%) having earned a bachelor's degree and half ($n = 26$, 50%) having earned a master's degree. All, except for one, of the participants competed in intercollegiate athletics in college ($n = 51$, 98.1%). Coaches indicated that they competed in a variety of sports in college, including soccer ($n = 21$, 41.2%), softball ($n = 15$, 29.4%), basketball ($n = 5$, 9.8%), tennis ($n = 4$, 7.8%), cross country/track ($n = 2$, 3.9%), golf ($n = 1$, 1.96%), ice hockey ($n = 1$, 1.96%), and multiple sports ($n = 2$, 3.9%). The majority of participants competed at the NCAA Division I level in college ($n = 42$, 82.4%) with 7 (13.7%) at the NCAA Division III level, 2 (3.9%) at the NCAA Division II level, and 1 (1.96%) in the NAIA. See Table 1 for complete demographic information.

The sample was made up of 28 (53.8%) assistant coaches and 24 (46.2%) head coaches. Participants coached a variety of sports, including softball ($n = 14$, 38.9%), women's soccer ($n = 11$, 30.6%), tennis ($n = 3$, 8.3%), and women's basketball ($n = 3$,

8.3%). There were 2 ($n = 2$, 5.6%) cross country and track coaches, one of whom specifically indicated that she coached both men's and women's cross country and track, the only coach to do so. There were 16 (30.6%) participants who did not report the sport they coached.

The majority of participants had been employed in their current position from 1-5 years ($n = 34$, 65.4%; ranging from less than 1-23 years). There were 20 (38.5%) participants coaching at universities/colleges with student populations greater than 20,000, 12 (23.1%) with 10,000-20,000 students, 8 (15.4%) with 5,000-10,000 students, and 12 (23.1%) with less than 5,000 students. Universities/colleges were located in various geographic locations across the United States. There were 20 (38.5%) coaches working in the Midwest, 19 (36.5%) in the Northeast, 6 (11.5%) in the Southeast, 3 (5.8% in the West), 2 (3.8%) in the Southwest, 1 (1.9%) in the Mid-Atlantic, and 1 (1.9%) in the Mountains of Colorado. The majority of participants coached NCAA Division I sports ($n = 38$, 73.1%), while 1 (1.9%) coached in NCAA Division II, 9 (17.3%) coached NCAA Division III sports, 2 (3.8%) coached at the Junior College level, 1 (1.9%) in NAIA, and one coach reported that her school was at the NCAA Division III level, but her sport was NCAA Division I.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Survey Participants.

	n	*%*
Race/Ethnicity		
Caucasian/European American	46	88.5
Hispanic	3	5.8
African-American	1	1.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	1.9
Native American	1	1.9
Kinsey Scale		
Exclusively homosexual	31	59.6
Predominantly homosexual, only incidentally heterosexual	12	23.1
Predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally heterosexual	6	11.5
Equally homosexual and heterosexual	1	1.9
Predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally homosexual	1	1.9
Exclusively heterosexual	1	1.9
Relationship Status		
Partnered/Married/Civil Union	13	25
Cohabiting	7	13.5
Dating	19	36.5
Single	13	25
Children		
No	51	98.1
Yes	1	1.9
Highest Degree Earned		
Bachelor's Degree	26	50
Master's Degree	26	50
Area of Degree Focus		
Kinesiology/Physical Education/Exercise Science	15	27.8
Sport Management/Administration	11	20.4
Sociology/Women's Studies/Anthropology/Social Science	5	9.3
Business Administration/Marketing	4	7.4
Education	3	5.6
Communication	2	3.7

Counselor Education and Student Affairs/Social Work	2	3.7
Political Science/Government and Politics	2	3.7
Psychology	2	3.7
Sport Psychology	2	3.7
Art Education	1	1.9
Biology	1	1.9
English	1	1.9
Geology	1	1.9
Media Studies	1	1.9
Public Relations	1	1.9
Competed in Intercollegiate Athletics in College		
Yes	51	98.1
No	1	1.9
Collegiate Sports Played		
Soccer	21	41.2
Softball	15	29.4
Basketball	5	9.8
Tennis	4	7.8
Cross Country/Track	2	3.9
Golf	1	1.96
Ice Hockey	1	1.96
Soccer and Lacrosse	1	1.96
Soccer, Basketball, and Golf	1	1.96
Collegiate Athletics Division		
NCAA Division I	42	82.4
NCAA Division II	2	3.9
NCAA Division III	7	13.7
NAIA	1	1.96

Years of head coaching experience within the sample ranged from 0-21 years, and 32

(61.5%) participants had 1-5 years of assistant coaching experience. See Table 2 for

information regarding participants' coaching experience.

Table 2

Coaching Experience of Survey Participants.

	n	*%*
Current Coaching Position		
Assistant Coach	28	53.8
Head Coach	24	46.2
Sport(s) Coached		
Softball	14	38.9
Soccer	11	30.6
Tennis	3	8.3
Basketball	3	8.3
Cross Country and Track	2	5.6
Lacrosse	1	2.8
Ice Hockey	1	2.8
Ice Hockey and Golf	1	2.8
Missing	16	30.8
Years in Current Position		
Less than 1 year	5	9.6
1-5 years	34	65.4
6-10 years	10	19.2
More than 10 years	3	5.8
Size of University/College (Number of Students)		
More than 20,000	20	38.5
10,000-20,000	12	23.1
5,000-10,000	8	15.4
Less than 5,000	12	23.1
Geographic Location of University/College		
Midwest	20	38.5
Northeast	19	36.5
Southeast	6	11.5
West	3	5.8
Southwest	2	3.8
Mid-Atlantic	1	1.9
Mountains—Colorado	1	1.9
Division		
NCAA Division I	38	73.1
NCAA Division II	1	1.9
NCAA Division III	9	17.3

Junior College	2	3.8
NAIA	1	1.9
College is NCAA Division III, but Sport is Division I	1	1.9

Total Years of Head Coaching Experience

0 years	25	48
1-5 years	10	19.2
6-10 years	11	21.1
11-15 years	2	3.8
21 years	1	1.9

Total Years of Assistant Coaching Experience

0 years	1	1.9
1-5 years	32	61.5
6-10 years	16	30.8
11-15 years	3	5.8

Number of Male Coaches Employed for your Team

0	7	13.5
1	22	42.3
2	6	11.5
3	2	3.8
4	3	5.8
Missing	12	23.1

Number of Female Coaches Employed for your Team

0	2	3.8
1	16	30.8
2	20	38.5
3	11	21.2
4	2	3.8
29	1	1.9

Measures

Participants completed six short questionnaires to self-report demographic information and coaching experience, degree of workplace disclosure of lesbian identity, perceived organizational support, overall job satisfaction, and life satisfaction.

Results from the questionnaires that assessed demographics (Appendix A) and coaching experience (Appendix B) were discussed in the previous section. The demographics questionnaire obtained information such as age, race/ethnicity, relationship status, geographic locale, and educational background. To help clearly describe the sample, participants were asked to self-report sexual orientation using the Kinsey Scale, which uses a 0-7 rating scale with "0 = exclusively heterosexual," "4 = equally heterosexual and homosexual," and "7 = exclusively homosexual."

Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS)

The short version of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) was used to measure coaches' perceptions of support from their athletic administrations and assess the climate in their athletic departments (Appendix C). The multi-item survey was originally constructed by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, and Sowa (1986), and it measured employees' global beliefs about the degree to which employers value their work and care about their well-being. The measure consisted of 17 statements that could possibly refer to employees' judgments about their organization. Half of the statements were worded positively and half negatively to control for agreement response bias. An example of a positive statement is, "The organization values my contribution to its well-being," while an example of a negative statement is, "The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me." Responses were rated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree." Negatively worded items were reverse scored, and all items were summed to yield a total score for the measure.

The Cronbach alpha calculated from the original measure was .97 (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 503). The SPOS has been used in a variety of contexts, including both vocational and coaching literature, where it has proven to be a valid and reliable measure of POS (Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Griffith & Hebl, 2002). For this research, internal consistency was measured prior to data analyses and Cronbach alpha was .94.

Degree of Disclosure of Lesbian Identity

Coaches' degrees of disclosure of lesbian identity, or sexual orientation, were assessed by a multi-item measure consisting of two subscales. To more accurately gauge the disclosure tendencies of the participants, disclosure of lesbian identity was evaluated using two separate disclosure questionnaires originally developed and used in vocational literature (Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Driscoll, Kelly, & Fassinger, 1996).

Subscale I. The first disclosure subscale (Appendix D) was a 16-item measure that assessed both workplace ("Section 1: At work") and non-workplace disclosure ("Section 2: Outside of work"). The measure was modified from a workplace disclosure scale developed by Day and Schoenrade (1997). The original measure was constructed using information from a focus group of employed gay men and lesbians, who indicated that homosexuals choose to disclose their sexual orientation to some workplace personnel but not to others. Therefore, the measure examines the extent to which an individual keeps their sexual orientation hidden from other persons at work.

The original measure instructed participants to answer the question, "In general, how hard do you try to keep your sexual orientation secret from these people at work?" For this study, in order to evaluate coaches' openness regarding their sexual orientation

both at work and outside of work, the measure was modified and participants were asked

to answer, "In general, how hard do you try to keep your sexual orientation secret from

these people?" This inquiry was followed by a list of 12 workplace personnel and 4

people with whom coaches might interact outside of the workplace. The instructions

directed participants to respond to each item according to the following Likert scale

(entitled "Degree of Disclosure Scale"): "1 = I try very hard to keep it secret," "2 = I try

somewhat hard to keep it secret," "3 = I don't try to keep it secret," and "4 = I actively

talk about it." Item scores were summed to yield a total score for the measure.

Section 1. The first section of the measure examined workplace disclosure, and its

first two items remained identical to the original scale. The personnel were listed as

follows: "co-workers" and "immediate supervisor." To make the scale more relevant for

the study's population of interest, titles of personnel specific to athletic departments were

added because of their possible relevance to this research, including: "athletic trainers,"

"other athletic staff (e.g. sports information)," "current players on your team," "student-

athletes not on your team," "coaches of your sport at other universities/colleges,"

"parents/guardians/families of prospective student-athletes (recruits)," "prospective

student-athletes (recruits)," "former players from your program," "University (non-

athletic) administrators," and "University (non-athletic) faculty/staff." The original

measure included personnel from non-specific workplaces that might result in less

consistent responses from intercollegiate coaches. The original items were: "other

supervisors," "subordinates," "middle management," and "top management." The

modified items were chosen because they represented workplace personnel found in a

majority of university athletic departments. The items were intentionally broad in order to maintain the integrity of the original measure.

 Section 2. The second section assessed disclosure outside the workplace and consisted of four items. The items referred to individuals with whom coaches might interact outside of work and were listed as follows: "your family members," "your friends outside of work," "people in your neighborhood," and "people you meet in daily activities outside of work."

 Day and Schoenrade (1997) reported that the Cronbach alpha obtained for the original measure was .97. Its construct validity was assessed as the correlation of the scale with the proportion of people in his or her work group to whom the worker reported having directly told about his or her sexual orientation. Day and Schoenrade reported that the correlation was high and significant ($r = .41$, $p < .001$, $n = 522$). Prior to data analysis for this research, the entire disclosure subscale I was examined for internal consistency ($\alpha = .95$). All items were included in the total score because they were determined to be appropriate (i.e., item-total correlations were positive, and they did not detract from internal consistency). Internal consistencies were also high for each section of the disclosure subscale I (Section 1: $\alpha = .954$; Section 2: $\alpha = .758$) Total scores on the first disclosure subscale, as well as the totals from each section and the frequencies for all items, are reported in the Results chapter.

 Subscale II. The second disclosure subscale (Appendix E) was a five-item measure that was developed by Driscoll et al. (1996) and was originally used to assess levels of workplace disclosure in a sample of "employed lesbians" (p. 235). The first item

asked, "How out are you at work?" and participants were directed to indicate their responses according to the following options on a Likert-type scale: 0 = "Out to nobody at work," 1 = "Out to one co-worker," 2 = "Out to two co-workers," 3 = "Out to three co-workers," 4 = "Out to immediate supervisor," 4 = Out to five co-workers," and 5 = "Out to all co-workers/supervisors." The authors noted that "Out to immediate supervisor" and "Out to five co-workers" were both anchored as 4 because, they stated, "telling one's immediate supervisor may be equivalent to telling several other colleagues" (p. 235).

The remaining four items of the disclosure subscale II were arranged on the following Likert scale: 3 = "always," 2 = "sometimes," 1 = "never." These items were "Is your workplace somewhere you feel comfortable being yourself?" "Are you involved in any lesbian or gay-related activities at work?" "Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to work-sponsored events?" "Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to off-job parties or events given by employees and personnel from your workplace?" Items scores were summed to yield a total score for the measure.

The Cronbach alpha obtained for the original measure was .52, and the authors reported that analyses showed the items were both appropriate and psychometrically consistent for evaluating disclosure (Driscoll et al., 1996, p. 235). Item analysis conducted for this study showed an adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .75$). Total scores, frequencies, and descriptives for the disclosure subscale II are discussed in the Results chapter.

Overall Job Satisfaction

Overall job satisfaction was assessed using a three-item scale (Appendix F) that was developed and validated by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1983). The measure consisted of three items intended to describe employees' subjective feelings about their work. Responses were rated according to a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree." The first and third items were positively worded. The second item was negatively worded and reverse scored. Scores from the three items were summed to yield a total score for the measure.

For this study, modification on the overall job satisfaction scale consisted of substituting the athletically appropriate words "university or college" for the more general word "organization" in the instructions and in the third item.

The job satisfaction scale has previously been used in athletic and sport settings (Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Kim & Cunningham, 2005). In past studies, coefficient alpha values for the overall job satisfaction scale have ranged from .67 to .95 (Fields, 2002, p. 5). When examined for this study, internal consistency was high (α = .91).

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)

Developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985), the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was used to assess life satisfaction (Appendix G). The SWLS is a five-item measure consisting of possible judgment statements an individual might make about her life. Responses were indicated according to a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree." Items were summed to yield a total score for the measure. Previous research in a variety of contexts has shown this measure to be

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valid and reliable (Diener, et al., 1985). Likewise, its internal consistency for this study was high and Cronbach alpha was .90.

Open-Ended Items

Participants were asked to respond to ten open-ended questions in order to obtain information to further clarify their unique experiences (Appendix H). Only three questions were analyzed for use in this study. Question 1 was a two-part question that asked participants to describe the climate for lesbians within their workplaces. Question 1a asked, "How would you describe the prevailing attitudes about lesbians within your athletic department?" Participants indicated responses of either "Negative," "Neutral," or "Positive." Question 1b asked participants to explain their responses to 1a. Questions 2 and 3 inquired about the participants' degrees of disclosure of lesbian identity both in and outside of the workplace. Question 2a asked, "How open are you about your lesbian identity at work?" Question 3a asked, "How open are you about your lesbian identity outside of work?" For Questions 2a and 3a, participants were instructed to indicate one of the following four options: "Not at all," "Slightly open," Mostly open," or "Completely open." Questions 2b and 3b asked participants to explain their responses to 2a and 3a, respectively.

Survey Instrument

Participants completed all surveys through the web-based program, Surveymonkey.com. Intercollegiate coaches represent a population with high access to the Internet and familiarity with web browsing; therefore, web-based surveys allowed for ease of use for participants and higher return rates (Solomon, 2001). Questionnaires

maintained exact wording and structure in web-based format. Participants were able to

monitor their progress through the web-based program and did not have to complete all

surveys at one time. All survey data were anonymous and the web-based program did not

track IP addresses.

Procedures

Participant Recruitment

Due to the homonegative nature of intercollegiate athletics and the tendency for

lesbian coaches to conceal their sexual orientations, researchers have noted that

identifying willing participants could be difficult (Krane & Barber, 2005). In order to

recruit participants for this study, the researcher initially identified 8 lesbian coaches

known through personal social networks and, by phone or email, initiated conversations

with these individuals. The initial conversations were directed toward a discussion about

the nature and purpose of the study. Consistent with previous research, personal contacts

were asked to participate in the study (Iannotta & Kane, 2002). Subsequently, personal

contacts were asked if they felt comfortable recruiting other lesbian coaches to participate

in the study. Those interested in assisting were sent an email with an attached formal

invitation to the research that gave the study's background information and also included

its purpose and procedures (Appendix I). Personal contacts were instructed to use the

invitation to help explain the nature of the research. Additionally, the personal contacts

were encouraged to disclose the researcher's athletic background and sexual orientation.

This was expected to allow potential participants to feel more comfortable participating

in the study.

The researcher obtained preferred email addresses or other contact information for approximately 30 other coaches. After identifying potential participants, the researcher made initial contact by sending an email to each coach, inviting them to participate in the investigation. The email clarified the purpose and procedures of the research, explained that the investigation was completely voluntary, and assured confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were also notified that their consent for participation was given by completing the online surveys (Appendix J). Participants were asked to complete the surveys through the web-based program, Surveymonkey.com. To increase sample size, the researcher asked all participants for contact information of other lesbian coaches who might want to participate in the study. Emails included a customized URL link to the questionnaires. All coaches contacted about this study were assured confidentiality and anonymity throughout the length of the research study and thereafter.

Emails were personally sent to 36 coaches and one coach was contacted by phone. Sixteen of those coaches that were personally contacted responded positively via email about the survey (i.e., said they would complete the survey). Coaches also used email to forward information about the study and the survey link to their acquaintances and colleagues, which aided in participant recruitment.

Throughout the data collection phase, responses were tracked to monitor sample size. The web-based survey program collected responses as surveys were completed. When data collection phase was complete, the survey data was exported to an Excel spreadsheet, downloaded, and modified for data analyses in SPSS.

Analyses

Descriptive analyses (means and standard deviations) and frequencies were

computed on the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support, the two degree of

disclosure subscales, the overall job satisfaction measure, and the Satisfaction With Life

Scale. As detailed previously, the responses to demographic and coaching experience

questionnaires were used to describe the sample. A series of bivariate correlations were

used to explore relationships among variables and address each of the following research

questions.

1. Does POS relate to degree of disclosure?

2. Does POS relate to job and life satisfaction?

3. Does degree of disclosure relate to job satisfaction?

4. Does degree of disclosure relate to life satisfaction?

5. Does job satisfaction relate to life satisfaction?

For the open-ended questions, frequencies for the first part (part a) were reported

for the sample. The second part (part b) of each item, coaches' explanations, were read

literally (Mason, 2002). Responses were first carefully read for their literal content. Then,

all responses were re-read and the researcher identified the main topic of each. Since the

open-ended questions were fairly narrow in scope, responses tended to discuss very

similar subject matter. Thus, main topics were identified by assessing the intended

emphasis of the response. Topics discussed first, repeatedly, and/or in greater detail were

given greater weight by participants and were therefore considered main topics.

Responses were classified based on their main topics and were then grouped into

categories based on similarities among responses. These categories were then grouped

into a small number of larger-order themes to help provide a more in-depth understanding

of participants' responses and explain their experiences (Creswell, 2008). These major

themes are reported with examples from diverse perspectives in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The central aim of this research project was to better understand the experiences of lesbians in sport by investigating the impact of the sport environment on the behaviors and attitudes of intercollegiate coaches. Self-report questionnaires were used to address the study's research questions and open-ended items gave coaches an opportunity to further explain their experiences.

Survey Findings

Fifty-two active intercollegiate coaches completed online surveys that gathered information about their demographics and coaching experiences, assessed perceptions of organizational support (POS), disclosure of lesbian identity, job satisfaction, and satisfaction with life. Participants' demographics and coaching experience information were summarized in the Methods section of this document. The following section summarizes descriptive findings from the two subscales that measured degree of disclosure of lesbian identity, the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS), the overall job satisfaction scale, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). Results of the correlations are presented and explained in regard to the research questions and hypotheses. This last section in this chapter summarizes responses on the open-ended items.

<center>**Descriptive Findings on Main Variables**</center>

This section summarizes the descriptive findings on the main variables of interest in this study: disclosure, POS, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction.

Degree of Disclosure of Lesbian Identity

The participants' degrees of disclosure were assessed using two separate subscales that measured coaches' levels of openness versus concealment regarding their lesbian identities. Further, the first disclosure subscale was split into two sections. Section 1 addressed degree of disclosure at work, while Section 2 examined disclosure outside of work. The second disclosure subscale solely measured disclosure behaviors in the workplace. Four disclosure scores were tallied for each participant.

Subscale I. The first disclosure subscale was a 16-item measure with two sections that assessed the extent to which participants communicated their lesbian identity at work and outside of work. The mean score for the disclosure subscale I was 2.55, which demonstrates that, on average, coaches in this sample were not completely open regarding their lesbian identities. No coaches in the sample reported that they were completely open at work. Additionally, the standard deviations on the disclosure subscale I suggest much variability associated with disclosure among coaches in the sample. Varying degrees of disclosure were reported both in and out of the workplace, and total scores for subscale I ranged from 21 to 61. The mean score for Section 1, "At work," was 2.38, and the mean for Section 2, "Outside of work," was 3.06.

When items were examined separately, the disclosure scores in Section 1 of the first disclosure scale showed differences in the ways that coaches communicated about

their sexual orientations at work. Table 3 presents the frequencies and descriptives for each item of the first disclosure subscale. The findings presented in Table 3 show that coaches chose to disclose their lesbian identities along a continuum, speaking more openly to some workplace personnel about their sexual orientations than to others. The results demonstrated that coaches were most open with their immediate supervisors and the mean of 3.00 (SD = 1.010) indicated they did not try to hide their sexual orientation from those persons at work. Further, 40.4% (n = 21) coaches indicated that they "actively" spoke about their lesbian identity to their immediate supervisors. Coaches were also more open to coaches of their sport at other universities/colleges (M = 2.67, SD = .760), former players (M = 2.66, SD = .895), co-workers (M = 2.63, SD = .908), and athletic trainers (M = 2.60, SD = .891). Conversely, the sample reported they were least open about their sexual orientation to parents/guardians/families of prospective athletes (recruits) (M = 1.88, SD = 1.88) and to recruits themselves (M = 1.90, SD = .799). About one-third (34.6%, n = 18) of coaches stated that they tried "very hard" to keep their lesbian identity "secret" from both recruits and their families. The findings also suggest that coaches were less open to student athletes not on their team (M = 2.19, SD = .886) and to their current players (M = 2.25, SD = .905).

Regarding their degrees of disclosure outside of the workplace, Table 3 shows that coaches' were most open to their friends outside of work (M = 3.60, SD = .603). Thirty-four (65.4%) indicated they were completely open to friends, while no one stated that they completely concealed their sexual orientation. Coaches were also fairly open

with family members (M = 3.06, SD = .998), and 44.2% (n = 23) actively talked about

their lesbian identities with their families.

Table 3

Item Frequencies, Means and Standard Deviations on Degree of Disclosure: Subscale I.
Section 1 (At work)

	Secret			Open		
	1	2	3	4	M	SD
1. Co-workers	6	16	21	9	2.63	.908
2. Immediate supervisor	5	11	15	21	3.00	1.010
3. Athletic trainers	6	17	21	8	2.60	.891
4. Other athletic staff (e.g. sports information)	8	18	24	2	2.38	.796
5. Current players on your team	13	16	20	3	2.25	.905
6. Student-athletes not on your team	14	16	20	2	2.19	.886
7. Coaches of your sport at other universities/colleges	4	14	29	5	2.67	.760
8. Parents/guardians/families of prospective athletes (recruits)	18	22	12	0	1.88	.758
9. Prospective student athletes (recruits)	18	22	11	1	1.90	.799
10. Former players from your program	6	13	23	8	2.66	.895
11. University (non-athletic) administrators	11	16	21	4	2.35	.905
12. University (non-athletic) faculty/staff	10	16	24	2	2.35	.837
Total for Section I	119	197	241	65	28.58	8.49
Section I1 (Outside of work)						
13. Your family members	2	12	13	23	3.06	.998
14. Your friends outside of work	0	3	15	34	3.60	.603

15. People in your neighborhood	3	9	30	10	2.90	.774
16. People you meet in daily activities outside of work	5	10	34	3	2.67	.734
Total for Section II	10	34	92	70	12.23	2.41

Note. Response format for the items above: 1 = I try very hard to keep it secret, 2 = I try somewhat hard to keep it secret, 3 = I don't try to keep it secret, 4 = I actively talk about it.

Subscale II. The second disclosure subscale consisted of 5 items that assessed degree of workplace disclosure. The mean score for disclosure subscale II was 2.13. Consistent with the first disclosure subscale, this showed that the sample was not completely open about their sexual orientations at work. Response totals for the disclosure subscale II ranged from 4 to 17 ($n = 49$).

Frequencies and descriptives for each item of disclosure subscale II are presented in Table 4. With a mean of 3.61 ($SD = 1.372$), coaches' responses to the first item indicated that, on average, participants were out to at least 3 co-workers. Almost one-third (30.8%, $n = 16$) of the sample stated they were "out to all co-workers/supervisors," and one-quarter (25.5%, $n = 13$) reported they were "out to 4 or 5 co-workers." Eight (15.4%) coaches reported they were "out to 3 co-workers," 7 (13.5%) were "out to 2 co-workers," and 2 (3.8%) were "out to 1 co-worker." Only 3 (5.9%) participants stated they were "out" to their immediate supervisors, and 2 (3.8%) coaches indicated they were "out to nobody at work." Table 4 shows the frequencies and descriptives for each item of the second disclosure subscale. As presented in Table 4, findings from the second disclosure subscale suggested that the sample did not always feel comfortable being themselves in

their workplaces (M = 2.45, SD = .577), were rarely involved in lesbian-related activities at work (M = 1.19, SD = .445), and seldom brought female dates to work-sponsored events (M = 1.67, SD = .589) or to functions with other workplace personnel (M = 1.80, SD = .633).

Table 4

Item Frequencies, Means and Standard Deviations on Degree of Disclosure: Subscale II.

	0	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*M*	*SD*
1. How out are you at work?	2	2	7	8	16	16	3.61	1.372

Note. 3 respondents out to immediate supervisor and 13 out to 4 or 5 co-workers. Response format for item 1: 0 = Out to nobody at work, 1 = Out to 1 co-worker, 2 = Out to 2 co-workers, 3 = Out to 3 co-workers, 4 = Out to immediate supervisor, 4 = Out to 4 or 5 co-workers, 5 = Out to all co-workers/supervisors.

	1	*2*	*3*	*M*	*SD*
2. Is your workplace somewhere you feel comfortable being yourself?	2	24	25	2.45	.577
3. Are you involved in any lesbian or gay-related activities at work?	43	8	1	1.19	.445
4. Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to work-sponsored events?	20	28	3	1.67	.589
5. Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to off-job parties or events given by employees and personnel from your workplace?	16	29	6	1.80	.633

Note. Response format for items 2 - 5: 1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Always.

Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS)

The short version of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) was used to measure coaches' perceptions of the organizational support (POS) they received from their athletic administrations. The highest possible score on the SPOS was 119.

Coaches reported fairly high POS at their institutions. The mean on the SPOS was 5.53. However, scores ranged greatly, from 61 as a minimum to 119 as a maximum. These findings suggested that coaches' perceptions of the supportiveness from their athletic administrations were varied; however, positive levels of affective support within the sport climate were indicated across the sample.

Overall Job Satisfaction

Coaches' overall job satisfaction was measured using a three-item scale that consisted of statements regarding employees' subjective feelings about their work. The highest possible score on the scale was 21. The sample indicated high overall job satisfaction in their current coaching positions. The mean of overall job satisfaction was 6.07. Total scores ranged from 9 to 21. Over half of the sample (52%) reported high job satisfaction totals of 18 or more.

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)

The variable of life satisfaction was assessed using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), on which the highest possible score was 35. The mean on the SWLS was 5.3, and participants' scores ranged from 5 to 35. About one-third (32%, $n = 16$) of the sample indicated high levels of life satisfaction, with scores of 30 or more on the SWLS, 54% ($n = 27$) of scores were moderate, between 23 and 29, and 7 (14%) were low. While their scores indicated much variability across the sample, the findings also suggested that coaches were fairly satisfied with their lives.

Relationships Among Main Variables

The primary purpose of the study was to investigate whether lesbian intercollegiate coaches' perceptions of the organizational support within their intercollegiate athletic departments related to their degrees of disclosure, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. A series of bivariate correlations were conducted to address this study's research questions and to test the hypotheses proposed in the Introduction chapter of this document. Descriptives and relationships among the main variables are presented in Table 5. In the following section, the results are explained according to the research questions.

Research Questions

1. Does perceived organizational support (POS) relate to degree of disclosure?

Hypothesis 1. The first research question addressed the relationship between POS and coaches' degrees of disclosure, and it was hypothesized that POS would be positively related to disclosure for lesbian intercollegiate coaches. As the findings in Table 5 demonstrate, POS was not significantly related to the first disclosure subscale. A moderate, significant positive relationship was found between POS and disclosure subscale II ($r = .347$, $p < .05$). This finding indicated partial support for hypothesis 1 and suggested that POS is positively related to disclosure for this sample of intercollegiate coaches.

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations on Main Variables.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	SD
1. Survey of Perceived Organizational Support	—							94.07	14.62
2. Disclosure: Subscale I	.166							40.82	10.41
3. Disclosure: Subscale I, Section 1	.158	.987**						28.58	8.49
4. Disclosure: Subscale I, Section 2	.153	.829**	.727**					12.23	2.41
5. Disclosure: Subscale II	.347*	.816**	.838**	.569**				10.65	2.85
6. Overall Job Satisfaction	.632**	.227	.227	.175	.282			18.22	2.60
7. Satisfaction With Life Scale	.437**	.267	.241	.293*	.303*	.752**	—	26.50	5.68

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

2. Does POS relate to job and life satisfaction?

Hypothesis 2a. The second research question examined the relationship between POS and job and life satisfaction. Based on previous research, hypothesis 2a proposed that POS would be positively related to job satisfaction. As expected, the correlation analysis established a strong, significant positive relationship between POS and job satisfaction ($r = .632, p < .01$), supporting hypothesis 2a.

Hypothesis 2b. In congruence with hypothesis 2b, findings provided evidence of a positive relationship between POS and satisfaction with life. The correlation between POS and life satisfaction was significant ($r = .437, p < .01$) for the lesbian intercollegiate coaches that made up this sample.

3. **Does degree of disclosure relate to job satisfaction?**

   Hypothesis 3. The third research question aimed to clarify the relationship between coaches' disclosure and job satisfaction. Hypothesis 3 anticipated a positive relationship between the two variables. Correlations performed between job satisfaction and both disclosure subscales did not result in significant relationships. The findings showed a weak and non-significant correlation between disclosure subscale I and job satisfaction ($r = .227$). The correlation ($r = .282$) between disclosure subscale II and job satisfaction was not significant, but was higher. These results suggest the existence of a positive relationship between disclosure and job satisfaction; however, hypothesis 3 was not supported.

4. **Does degree of disclosure relate to life satisfaction?**

   Hypothesis 4. The fourth research question addressed the relationship between coaches' disclosure of sexual orientation and their levels of life satisfaction, and hypothesis 4 proposed that a correlation analysis would find a positive relationship between the two variables. The findings in Table 5 present support for hypothesis 4 and indicate a positive correlation between disclosure and life satisfaction. Disclosure subscale II was significantly related to life satisfaction ($r = .303$, $p < .05$). Although disclosure subscale I did not exhibit a significant relationship with life satisfaction ($r = .267$), when analyzed separately, section 2 of the first disclosure subscale, which assessed disclosure outside of work, was significantly correlated with life satisfaction ($r = .293$, $p < .05$). The results supported hypothesis 4, but also suggested a complex relationship between disclosure of sexual orientation and satisfaction with life.

5. **Does job satisfaction relate to life satisfaction?**

Hypothesis 5. The final research question inquired about the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Previous research provided evidence of a positive relationship between the two variables, and hypothesis 5 proposed that the findings of this study would indicate the same for lesbian coaches. As expected, job satisfaction and life satisfaction were significantly correlated ($r = .752$, $p < .01$), thus supporting hypothesis 5.

In summary, the findings described demonstrated relationships among the main variables of interest in this research project. The results suggested lesbian coaches' perceptions of organizational support were positively related to their degrees of disclosure, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Additionally, job and life satisfaction were strongly related. A positive relationship between disclosure and life satisfaction was found, but the relationship between disclosure and job satisfaction was not confirmed by statistical analysis. These findings are further examined in relation to the research questions in the Discussion chapter of this document. The next section summarizes coaches' responses to the open-ended items on the survey.

<div align="center">

Open-Ended Responses

</div>

Participants were asked to complete three open-ended items to provide more insight about the climate for lesbian in intercollegiate athletic departments and to more directly assess lesbian coaches' degrees of disclosure of sexual orientation.

Open-Ended Item 1

The first part (part a) of open-ended item 1 asked coaches to describe the prevailing attitudes about lesbians within their intercollegiate athletic departments as "positive," "negative," or "neutral." Forty-eight participants answered open-ended item 1a, and their responses suggested these coaches perceived attitudes about lesbians within their athletic departments to be mainly neutral to positive. The mean on the first item was 2.29 (SD = .617). Further, 54.2% (n = 26) of respondents indicated that neutral attitudes about lesbians prevailed in their athletic departments, 37.5% (n = 18) indicated attitudes were positive, and only 8.3% (n = 4) said attitudes were negative.

For the second part (part b) of open-ended item 1, coaches were asked to give examples and/or explain their perceptions of the attitudes within their athletics departments. Forty-three coaches explained their perceptions, and these responses were analyzed for themes independent of whether coaches indicated positive, negative, or neutral attitudes. Responses indicated that the type and quality of support coaches received were most influential on their perceptions of the prevailing attitudes about lesbians in their workplaces. Major themes on open-ended 1b are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Prevailing Attitudes About Lesbians Within Athletic Departments.

		Responses on item 1a		
Themes in item 1b	*n* = 43	*Negative*	*Neutral*	*Positive*
Informal support	32 (74.4)	2	16	14
Formal support	6 (14.0)	0	4	2
Length of time on job	5 (11.6)	1	4	0

Note. Frequencies are listed with percentages in parenthesis.

Informal support. Informal support, described by social interactions in the workplace, was cited most often ($n = 32$, 74.4%) in coaches' explanations of the prevailing attitudes in their athletic departments. In these responses, coaches often referenced the explicit or implicit attitudes of their co-workers and administrators. Coaches also depicted differences in the quality of informal support within their athletic departments. Table 7 provides more detailed breakdown of informal support, and a more detailed description of the responses follows.

Table 7

Informal Support.

		Response to item 1a		
Total in Sample	*n = 32*	*Negative*	*Neutral*	*Positive*
Acceptance	14 (43.8)	0	3	11
Support from non-lesbian co-workers/administrators/ athletes	8 (25)	0	2	6
Support from lesbian co-workers/administrators/ athletes	6 (17.6)	0	1	5
Avoidance	12 (37.5)	0	9	3
No discussion of sexuality	9 (21.9)	0	7	2
Job performance	2 (6.3)	0	1	1
Separation of professional and personal lives	1 (3.2)	0	1	0
Perceived tolerance	6 (18.8)	2	4	0
Absence of discrimination	3 (9.4)	0	3	0
Subtle discrimination	2 (6.3)	1	1	0
Geographic location	1 (3.2)	1	0	0

Note. Major theme of informal support is split into three categories: avoidance, perceived tolerance, and acceptance. Frequencies of responses are listed with percentages in parenthesis.

Coaches' explanations of the informal support they received in their workplaces

fell into three categories: acceptance of lesbians ($n = 14$, 43.8%), avoidance of issues

related to sexual orientation ($n = 12$, 37.5%), and perceived tolerance ($n = 6$, 18.8%).

Responses that indicated the greatest quality and amount of informal support illustrated

acceptance of lesbians in athletic departments. They described perceptions of support

from both non-lesbian and lesbian co-workers, administrators, and athletes and depicted

"open-minded" and "diverse" athletic departments. The following are examples that

illustrate coaches' perceptions of acceptance and represent the theme of informal support:

> Social support from non-lesbian co-workers, administrators, and athletes:
> "Everyone that I have come in contact with in my work environment has been
> extremely open-minded and positive about my sexual orientation."
> (Division I head soccer coach)
>
> "Our department is very open and accepting of everyone. We have a very diverse
> department and no one judges anyone else."
> (Division I head softball coach)
>
> Social support from lesbian co-workers, administrators, and athletes:
> "Everyone in our department that is gay is very open about it. And the
> heterosexuals in our department are very comfortable with the fact that we are
> open about it."
> (Division III head basketball coach)
>
> "Our Athletic Director is out and her partner and their children are constantly
> present at events. Our college is all women and very diverse."
> (Division III head soccer coach)

Other coaches explained lesser degrees of informal support by depicting athletic

departments that tended to avoid acknowledgment of lesbians. These coaches stated that

sexuality was not discussed or that sexuality is kept separate from their professional role

as a coach. Others explained their job performance was of utmost importance, indicating

that differences in sexual orientation are not recognized within their athletic departments.

The following are examples related to avoidance as a category of informal support:

No discussion of sexuality:
"I do not think homosexuality is talked about. If it is it is amongst friends/and or co-workers the "out" people are friends with. I think if you are not over the top about it, you are accepted. I have seen no one talk about it explicitly. I think if it's not talked about its accepted."
(Division I assistant softball coach)

Separation of personal and professional lives:
"I don't really make my personal life part of my workplace."
(Division I head softball coach)

Job performance:
"Where I work, it's all about winning. If you're winning, you can do whatever you want. If you're losing, you need to toe the line and drink the university cool-aid."
(Division I assistant tennis coach)

Coaches also described their perceptions of tolerance as a way to explain the

prevailing attitudes toward lesbians within their athletic departments. Tolerance was

described through accounts of amount and quality of informal support coaches received

in the workplace. Whether coaches felt an absence or presence of discrimination within

their athletic departments was based upon their social interactions, again indicating the

importance of informal support in coaches' perceptions of the climate toward lesbians.

The following are examples related to perceptions of tolerance:

Absence of discrimination:
"I have never heard anything negative surrounding sexual orientation."
(Division I head tennis coach)

Subtle discrimination:
"I wouldn't necessarily say I would be ostracized if I was "out" in the workplace. I would say, however, I would face difficulty initially. I think those staff members with whom I have contact think they are open to most things, but, because of the stereotypical things they say from day-to-day, they are not quite so open. My natural assumption is not that they would openly criticize, but rather that they would make me feel uncomfortable enough to leave my job. Again, I think it would be subtle. It would not be them obviously turning their backs, but rather just treating me more and more poorly."
(Division I assistant soccer coach)

Geographic location:
"Life in the Midwest is tough. It's still very much an older way of thinking. People meet in college here, get married at age 21 and have 2 kids by age 25. There are very little support networks here. Life here is about all FOOTBALL and boys being boys…" (Division I assistant soccer coach)

Formal support. The second largest theme (6 responses, 14.0%) in the participants' explanations of the prevailing attitudes about lesbians was categorized as such due to coaches' references to institutional policies or diversity/sensitivity training within athletic departments. Two coaches stated their schools held a sexual diversity training or workshop, one stated their school had policies related to sexual orientation, such as same-sex partner benefits, one stated there was a lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender athlete liaison program, and two cited a lack of formal support. Out of the six coaches who referred to formal support, four stated attitudes about lesbians were neutral and two stated they were positive on item 1a. The following are examples related to formal support:

Existence of formal support:
"Liberal campus, opportunities for partner support in medical, etc for employment and benefits. Student athlete counsel brings in homosexual panel of coaches, faculty and students to talk to captain's of teams during leadership conference each end of year...."
(Division III head soccer coach)

Lack of formal support:
"There is no bias towards sexual orientation, race, religion etc....but there is no communication about this either, meaning sensitivity training or an active connection between the athletic department or a member and the gay/lesbian organization on campus."
(Division I assistant soccer coach)

Length of time on job. Five coaches (11.6%) stated that they had not been employed in their current coaching position long enough to accurately gauge the prevailing attitudes about lesbians within their athletic departments. Four out of these participants rated attitudes as neutral and one as negative, indicating that it may take these lesbian coaches a period of time to evaluate their workplace climates. The following are examples of this theme:

"I am new at this job. I really enjoy the people I work with although outside of my staff and my immediate supervisor I have had no conversations about my personal life. I was fairly open with my co-workers and my team in my last position but I was there for six years. I think I will get there in time at my new job."
(Division I head softball coach)

"I don't think I have been here long enough to get a true feel for attitudes toward lesbians…" (Division I assistant softball coach)

Open-Ended Item 2

Open-ended item 2 asked coaches to report how open they are about their lesbian identities at work. Forty-six participants submitted answers to the first part (part a) of the question, choosing from the following responses: "not at all," "slightly open," "mostly open," or "completely open." The mean for item 2a was 2.6 (*SD* = .83), indicating that on average, the sample of intercollegiate coaches were "slightly" to "mostly open" at work. Twenty-four (52.3%) coaches reported they were "slightly open," 12 (26.1%) stated they were "mostly open," 8 (17.4%) noted "completely open," and 2 (4.3%) were "not at all" open about their lesbian identities at work.

The second part (part b) of open-ended item 2 asked coaches to explain their responses on item 2a, and themes arose in the 39 explanations provided by participants. As expected, the main theme evident in participants' explanations of their degrees of disclosure in the workplace was the indication of a disclosure continuum for lesbian coaches. Previous research stated that lesbian intercollegiate coaches monitor their behaviors in order to avoid complete disclosure of their sexual orientations (Griffin, 1998; Krane & Barber, 2005). In this study, coaches described varying degrees of openness at work, ranging from complete concealment to complete disclosure. The major themes are presented in Table 8 and followed by an explanation of each.

Implicitly Out. The largest number of coaches explained that they allowed others to see themselves as lesbians without explicitly disclosing their sexual orientations. This manner of identity management has been specifically termed "implicitly out" in previous research (Griffin, 1998). Fifteen (38.5%) coaches described being implicitly out in the

Table 8

Openness About Lesbian Identity at Work.

		Response to item 6a			
Themes	*n = 39 **	*Not at all*	*Slightly*	*Mostly*	*Completely*
Closeted	1 (2.6)	1	0	0	0
Implicitly out	15 (38.5)	0	5	7	2
Explicitly out	14 (35.9)	0	9	5	0
Publicly out	5 (12.8)	0	0	0	5
Rationale for disclosure	4 (10.3)	1	3	0	0

Note. Frequencies are listed with percentages in parenthesis.
* One coach did not respond to 2a and is not in frequency count.

workplace, explaining that they did not "actively discuss" their lesbian identities, but did not "actively hide" or "actively deny" their sexual orientation either. As described in their responses, the lack of overt discussion about their lesbian identities meant that they permitted others to "assume" their lesbian identities. While some coaches explained that they did not "flaunt" their sexual orientations, many stated they would disclose when asked. Table 9 presents the categories evident in the theme of implicitly out.

It is interesting to note that the coaches who described themselves as implicitly out also reported varying degrees of disclosure on item 2a. Of those whose responses fit into the theme of implicitly out, 7 indicated they were "mostly open," 5 stated they were "slightly open," and 2 rated themselves as "completely open" at work. One participant did not respond to item 2a.

Table 9

Implicitly Out.

		Response to item 6a			
Total in Sample	*n = 15 **	*Not at all*	*Slightly*	*Mostly*	*Completely*
Do not actively discuss, but do not hide lesbian identity	9 (60)	0	2	6	1
Do not "flaunt" lesbian identity	3 (2.0)	0	1	0	1
Disclose when asked	2 (13.3)	0	2	0	0
Bring partner to events so lesbian identity is understood	1 (6.6)	0	0	1	0

Note. Frequencies are listed with percentages in parenthesis.
* One coach did not respond to 2a and is not in frequency count.

The following examples illustrate responses that explained coaches were

implicitly out at work:

Disclose if asked:
"If you ask, I will tell you. Otherwise, I just do my thing."
(Division I head softball coach)

Do not "flaunt" lesbian identity:
 "Don't talk about things although some players come to me for advice. I don't flaunt who I am."
(Junior college head basketball coach)

Do not actively discuss; do not actively hide:
"I don't walk around telling people, but I don't actively hide it. I'm just me. People can assume I'm gay, I don't care."
(Division I assistant soccer coach)

Lesbian identity is understood:
"I bring my partner around for all events and it's an understanding who she is to me."
(Division I assistant softball coach)

Explicitly Out. In 14 (35.9%) responses, coaches stated that they revealed their lesbian identities only to selected and trusted individuals at work. According to previous research, coaches that intentionally disclose to a few, carefully chosen individuals can be described as explicitly out (Griffin, 1998). Coaches that described themselves as explicitly out explained that they discuss their lesbian identities with some individuals in the workplace, but not with others. Their responses suggest that comfort and closeness are reasons for disclosure of sexual orientation at work.

Further, coaches who described themselves as explicitly out also reported differing degrees of disclosure on item 2a. Nine coaches indicated they were "slightly open," and 5 stated they were "mostly open" at work. In an interesting finding, coaches who described themselves as implicitly out generally rated themselves as more open than those who described themselves as explicitly out. The following responses are related to the theme of explicitly out:

"I have my confidants at work. My immediate boss knows about me, but we really don't talk much about our personal lives to begin with. I have a very close friend that is a trainer…"
(Division I assistant soccer coach)

"I am out to my co-workers. I keep my personal life private from my student athletes and from recruits. If I am ever asked a direct question, I am honest with my response."
(Division I assistant softball coach)

"I have several co-workers who I am out to- I pick and choose who needs to know- I do not hide it but I only actively speak about it to those that I am most comfortable with."
(Division I assistant coach)

Publicly Out. Five (12.8%) coaches explained that they were completely open about their lesbian identities at work and are therefore described as publicly out in accordance with previous research (Griffin, 1998). In these responses, coaches emphasized they were "completely open in casual conversation" and introduced their partners as such to all co-workers. In addition, many mentioned supportive administrators and co-workers and a work environment where being a lesbian (and presumably being open about it) "is the norm." These responses suggest that supportive work environments encourage disclosure of lesbian identity. Each coach also reported herself to be "completely open" on item 2a. The following responses exemplify the theme of publicly out:

> "I am very fortunate to work in an institution where many of the highest members of the administration are gay. Every time there is a university function, all invitations say "spouse/partner" on them."
> (Division III head basketball coach)

> "I talk about my partner just as much as anyone else at work. I don't feel like I have to hide because I happen to be married to a woman. My supervisors are very supportive."
> (Division III head tennis coach)

Closeted. One (2.6%) coach's response explained that she concealed her lesbian identity from all others at work, described as closeted in previous research (Griffin, 1998)

Rationale for Disclosure. Four (10.3%) coaches explained their rationale for revealing and/or concealing their lesbian identities. Coaches brought up length of time on the job, potential job risk, trust, and personality as rationale for disclosure.

Open-ended Item 3

Open-ended item 3 asked coaches to report how open they are about their lesbian

identities outside of work. Forty participants submitted answers to the first part (part a) of

the question, choosing from the following responses: "not at all," "slightly open,"

"mostly open," or "completely open." The mean for item 3a was 3.0 (*SD* = .75),

indicating that the sample of intercollegiate coaches were "mostly open" outside of work.

Fourteen (35%) coaches reported they were "completely open," 14 (35%) stated they

were "mostly open," and 12 (30%) noted they were "slightly open" about their lesbian

identities outside work. These results suggest that coaches are more open outside of work

than at the workplace.

The second part (part b) of open-ended item 3 asked coaches to explain their

responses on item 3a, and themes arose in the 39 explanations provided by participants.

Consistent with the themes that arose in item 2b, the main theme evident in participants'

explanations of their degrees of disclosure outside of work was the indication of a similar

disclosure continuum. Participants' responses suggested that lesbians also employ

identity management strategies outside of their workplaces as they conveyed a range of

openness. The major themes are presented in Table 10 and followed by an explanation of

each.

Table 10

Openness About Lesbian Identity Outside of Work.

Themes	N = 39 *	Response to item 7a			
		Not at all	*Slightly*	*Mostly*	*Completely*
Implicitly out	11 (28.2)	0	1	6	3
Explicitly out	12 (30.8)	0	4	8	0
Publicly out	9 (23.1)	0	0	2	7
Disclosure related to job	3 (7.7)	0	1	2	0
Same as above	4 (10.3)	0	2	1	1

Note. Frequencies are listed with percentages in parenthesis.
* One coach did not respond to 3a and is not in frequency count.

Explicitly Out. Twelve (30.8%) coaches explained that they revealed their

lesbian identity only to selected individuals, including close friends and selected family

members. As noted in previous research, lesbian coaches who are explicitly out at work

carefully consider to whom they disclose their sexual orientation. This research suggests

that some lesbian coaches are similarly deliberate in their disclosure outside of the

workplace, as illustrated in the following examples:

"I am open to everyone now except for my dad, brother and some other family
members, unfortunately."
(NAIA assistant basketball coach)

"Depends upon the circle of friends I am with at any given time. Very trusting in
certain settings, while completely guarded and closed off in other settings."
(Division I head softball coach)

"I am open in all situations unless I feel that I may be physically or verbally
threatened and I find that particular situation not worth it."
(Division III head ice hockey and golf coach)

Implicitly Out. Eleven (28.2%) coaches explained that they allowed others to see

themselves as lesbians without explicitly revealing their sexual orientations, and thereby

describing themselves as implicitly out. These responses were similar to those provided

in response to question 2b. Participants stated that they did not "actively hide" their

lesbian identities and described being a lesbian as part of their self-identity. A couple said

that they would disclose if an interested party asked about their sexual orientation, but

they felt unprovoked disclosure constituted pushing their "views" onto others. Finally,

one coach discussed her affiliation with lesbian culture and playing in a lesbian softball

league. The following examples illustrate responses related to the theme of implicitly out:

> "I make no effort to hide it."
> (Division I assistant men's and women's cross country and track and field)

> "I am who I am. I don't wave a flag or have bumper stickers but everyone who
> knows me as a friend knows I am just me and a part of that is being gay. I don't
> have a professional boundary with these people, they are all part of my personal
> life so when we interact we share stories, personal experiences etc…"
> (Division I assistant soccer coach)

> "I am very comfortable with myself but other people are not always comfortable
> so I try to make sure to not push any of my views onto people unless they bring it
> up."
> (Division I head softball coach)

> "We play on a lesbian softball league. A lot of our friends are lesbians."
> (Division III head tennis coach)

Publicly Out. Nine (23.1%) described themselves as publicly out in their lives

outside of work. These coaches emphasized that the individuals they spent time with

outside of the workplace were "good friends" and "people they care about;" therefore,

they completely reveal their lesbian identities. While these coaches all described themselves as being completely out in their open-ended explanations, only 7 out of 9 reported they were "completely open" on item 3a. This furthers points to the complexity of identity in relation to sexual orientation. The following examples illustrate the theme of publicly out:

> "The people I hang with outside of work are friends and/or good friends. They know me better and sincerely interested in my life."
> (Division I assistant softball coach)

> "I'm very open - it's a big part of who I am. I try to verbalize as much as I can - and I allow people the space to work through their stuff. I make a point to say things - even if it gets people a bit off balance ... I think its really important to have a presence, to be out, and to be yourself (as much as possible!!)."
> (Division I head tennis coach)

> "When I have time off I choose to spend it with people I care about. Everyone knows who I am and what is important to me."
> (Junior college head basketball coach)

Disclosure Related to Job. Illustrating the large role that careers play in coaches' lives, 3 (7.7%) coaches explained that their jobs impact their degrees of disclosure outside of work. These coaches emphasized that they constantly monitor their lesbian identities outside of work, specifically in geographical areas when they might "run into players or co-workers." One coach stated that she is more open at work where she does not fear public scrutiny or unexpected interactions with prospective student-athletes. The other two coaches indicated they were more open outside of work. The following is an example of this theme:

"I am more open outside of work than inside the workplace. The unfortunate thing is that I live very close to the university and I could, at any moment, run into a student, parent, staff member or even recruit anywhere. My job security is always at the back of my mind. The coaching world is tiny and I am not established enough as a talented coach to have what would, at this point, be considered a negative reputation."
(Division I assistant soccer coach)

Four (10.3%) indicated that their responses to 3b were the "same as above," suggesting that their openness out of the workplace is the same as it is at work.

Summary of Findings

The participants' responses to this survey's open-ended items provided deeper understanding of the experiences of lesbians in sport. These coaches indicated the existence of a mainly neutral to positive climate for lesbians in intercollegiate athletics. Perceptions of support, formed through social interactions with co-workers and administrators, informed coaches' descriptions of their work environments. Coaches indicated they were less open about their lesbian identities at work than outside of the workplace. When asked to explain their degrees of disclosure, the responses suggested that a disclosure continuum exists for lesbian coaches, both in and out of work. Few coaches reported that they were completely out or completely closeted. At work, most coaches indicated they were implicitly out, allowing others to see them as lesbians without explicitly disclosing their sexual orientations, while more were explicitly and publicly open about their lesbian identities outside of work.

In summary, the survey results described in this chapter revealed relationships among the main variables of interest in this research project. The results indicated that

POS is related to lesbian intercollegiate coaches' disclosure behaviors, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Statistical analysis verified a positive relationship between disclosure and life satisfaction but did not confirm a relationship between disclosure and job satisfaction. These findings are investigated in relation to the research questions in the Discussion chapter of this document.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this research was to improve understanding of the experiences of lesbians in sport, examining the social forces within athletic departments and their influence on the experiences of lesbian intercollegiate coaches. The findings add to the existing body of literature through a quantitative examination of the relationships among psychological constructs, and in doing so, offer a more complete picture of lesbian experiences in sport. Previous research on lesbian coaches has confirmed the existence of a hostile sport climate and the avoidance of complete disclosure of lesbian sexual orientation, and this study expanded sport psychology literature on lesbian coaches' perceptions and behaviors (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1996; Krane & Barber, 2005). This research focused on the relationships among lesbian intercollegiate coaches' perceptions of organizational support within their athletic departments, disclosure, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. The study investigated attitudes towards lesbians within intercollegiate athletic departments and explored coaches' disclosure behaviors. This chapter discusses the findings presented earlier in an attempt to draw conclusions related to the original research questions. A summary of the research, limitations, and possibilities for future research are provided.

Sport Context

Sport scholars have concluded that an examination of the sport context is needed in order to understand the experiences of lesbian intercollegiate coaches (Krane, 1996; Krane & Barber, 2003; Vealey, 1997). Much of the previous research in this area focused on illuminating the existence of a homonegative and heterosexist climate within intercollegiate athletics, and within sport altogether (Krane, 1996; Griffin, 1998; Vealey, 1997). This project utilized a multi-level framework to help conceptualize the sport context. The framework divides the sport context into three levels: 1) socio-cultural level, 2) organizational level, and 3) individual level (Dixon & Bruening, 2005). This multi-level framework, which was explained in previous chapters, showed how society influences organizational climates in intercollegiate athletic departments and helps to clarify how these climates could affect the experiences of individual coaches. According to the framework, social forces have an effect on lesbian intercollegiate coaches from the top-down. Therefore, the socio-cultural level influences the organizational level, which in turn, affects coaches' individual level attitudes and behaviors. The previous literature in sport studies has discussed factors at the socio-cultural level that influence the experiences of lesbians (Krane, 1996; Vealey, 1997).

Climate of Intercollegiate Athletic Departments

The specific focus of this study was an examination of the interface between organizational level climates of intercollegiate athletic departments and lesbian coaches' attitudes and behaviors at the individual level. It was therefore necessary to acquire coaches' assessments of the organizational climates at their institutions. Coaches'

perceptions of organizational climate are influenced by the behaviors of their supervisors and co-workers (Snyder, 1990). For this study, climate was evaluated quantitatively using the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS), a measure of affective support. The average score on the SPOS was fairly high, indicating that overall, coaches' perceived that their administrators valued their work and exhibited concern for their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The scores suggested that coaches received favorable treatment at work; however, there was also a large range in the scores, suggesting that coaches' perceptions of supportiveness varied across the sample (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

The previous research with coaches and with gay and lesbian populations has indicated that POS could be an appraisal of those same organizational characteristics that help coaches to formulate their perceptions of attitudes towards lesbians (Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Kim & Cunningham, 2005). Since POS is a global measurement of support, coaches' assessments of the predominant attitudes toward lesbians within their athletic departments could factor into their scores on the scale. However, POS does not directly assess these attitudes. In order to obtain more concrete insight about the climate within intercollegiate athletics as it specifically relates to lesbians, coaches were also asked to describe the attitudes towards lesbians in their athletic departments. A majority of coaches who responded indicated that neutral to positive attitudes prevailed within their workplaces. These responses corresponded with the fairly high scores on the SPOS and suggested that the sample was employed in work environments that offered sufficient support for lesbian coaches.

As discussed in previous chapters, the limited body of literature on lesbian intercollegiate coaches has consistently depicted athletic environments that are intolerant of lesbians (e.g. Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1996; Krane & Barber, 2005; Vealey, 1997). Coaches' open-ended responses on this survey conveyed more positive climates than those depicted previously. Over two-thirds of these coaches explained that they felt supported by their lesbian and non-lesbian co-workers, administrators, and athletes. These coaches described "open" and "accepting" work environments in which positive attitudes towards lesbians were commonplace. Many stated that lesbians in their athletic departments were not judged or treated differently by non-lesbians. Further, many of these coaches explained that they felt accepted and supported at work due to the openness and visibility of other lesbian coaches and administrators in their athletic departments. The previous literature described threatening athletic climates that caused lesbians to believe that discovery of a lesbian sexual orientation could result in job loss or lessened support from administrators and co-workers (Griffin, 1998; Iannotta & Kane, 2002). These findings are important, as they suggested that a positive shift in attitudes towards lesbians has occurred in some athletic departments.

Generally, coaches described more positive and supportive climates than expected based on the previous research, but their descriptions varied, and a high number noted that attitudes towards lesbians in their athletic departments were neural. These coaches depicted workplaces in which lesbian identities or issues related to lesbians were not acknowledged. Such responses were more consistent with the previous research, which has depicted a culture of silence regarding lesbians in women's sport (Krane & Barber,

2005; Vealey, 1997). These coaches explained that sexual orientation was not discussed at work or work-related events. Many indicated that lesbians within their athletic departments were not explicitly open about their sexual orientations to those that were not also lesbians or close friends. Some coaches' responses showed that they perceived this silence, the avoidance of lesbians and sexuality as a topic of open conversation, as indicative of positive attitudes toward lesbians. Additionally, no coaches in the sample stated that they had personally experienced discrimination, and some coaches explained that this was a sign of a generally accepting atmosphere for lesbians within their athletic departments. These responses implied that coaches were aware of the traditional hostility towards lesbians within the culture of women's sport. Further, some coaches specifically stated that they felt fortunate to have found acceptance and/or tolerance. Many explained that the fairly positive attitudes towards lesbians in their current work environments were more accepting than many other intercollegiate athletic departments. This type of description suggested that homonegative attitudes within intercollegiate athletics persist, but are not encountered by every lesbian. Again, these responses indicated that attitudes towards lesbians have become more positive than those presented in the previous literature.

These findings offered additional understanding about the atmosphere for lesbians within intercollegiate athletics. In particular, the open-ended responses added to the existing body of literature by providing insight into the ways that lesbian coaches construct perceptions of their work environments. Informal support, such as social interactions with key organizational agents, including head coaches or athletic

administrators, helped coaches to develop subjective opinions regarding the prevailing attitudes about lesbians within their athletic departments. This finding is consistent with the previous research, which has stated that the actions of key individuals personify an entire organization and lead employees to develop global perceptions of organizational support based on their behaviors (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Kim & Cunningham, 2005; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Formal support, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender- (LGBT) inclusive diversity training or employment benefits for same-sex partners were also cited as indicators of positive environments by some coaches. Such formal institutional policies and programs are not required at all colleges and universities, so it is difficult to evaluate their impact on the organizational climate for lesbian coaches. It is important to note that the few coaches who mentioned that their employers subscribed to such formalized policies did not unanimously rate their department's prevailing attitudes towards lesbians as wholly positive. This would seem to corroborate findings from previous studies and demonstrate that perceptions of supportiveness established through informal personal interactions, and the affective form assessed by the SPOS, are most salient in shaping coaches' perceptions of climate (Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Kim & Cunningham, 2005: Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Overall, this sample of lesbian coaches indicated that the climates within their athletic departments were more positive for lesbians than those described by the previous research. The results on the SPOS showed that the coaches perceived fairly high affective support from the athletic administrations at their colleges/universities. Attitudes towards

lesbians were also perceived as neutral to positive by these coaches, and many coaches described work environments populated by accepting and supportive co-workers, administrators, and athletes. These responses suggested that the work environments for lesbians at some institutions has grown more positive than those discussed in the previous research (Griffin, 1998; Krane & Barber, 2005; Vealey, 1997). However, the "don't ask, don't tell" environments that were also described by numerous coaches were more consistent with the previous literature (Krane & Barber, 2005, p. 72). Many coaches explained that they worked in conditionally tolerant environments in which they were expected to act "professionally" by performing the duties of their jobs and publicly keeping their lesbian identities concealed (Griffin, 2008). These responses indicated that there are institutions and athletic departments that remain unwelcoming to open lesbian coaches. Nevertheless, the supporting and accepting athletic climates noted by this sample of coaches certainly indicated a positive shift regarding attitudes towards lesbians within the culture of women's sport.

Research Questions

This study was structured to answer five specific research questions, and this section will discuss the findings as they are connected to those questions. The first research question investigated the relationship between lesbian intercollegiate coaches' perceptions of organizational support and their disclosure behaviors. Based upon the previous research, it was predicted that the two constructs would be related (Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Griffith & Hebl, 2002). Results of the correlational analysis suggested a relationship between POS and disclosure; however, this finding was only significant for

the second disclosure subscale. The correlational analysis failed to show a significant relationship between POS and the first disclosure subscale. The discrepancies between the disclosure subscales will be addressed in a subsequent section of this chapter. These results are consistent with studies of populations of lesbian and gay male workers (Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Driscoll et al., 1996; Griffith & Hebl, 2002). Additionally, these statistically significant findings confirmed what was previously understood only through anecdotal evidence in sport studies (Griffin, 1998; Krane & Barber, 2005; Vealey, 1997). Lesbian intercollegiate coaches' perceptions of affective support, generally based upon the positive and negative actions of individuals in their workplaces, did influence their choice of disclosure behaviors.

The second research question examined the relationship among POS and job and life satisfaction. The findings were consistent with the previous research as the data analyses showed that POS was strongly related to both constructs (Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Kim & Cunningham, 2005). The relationship was statistically stronger for job satisfaction than for life satisfaction, but the results showed that a supportive work environment was related to satisfaction outside of work. These results add to the previous research by clarifying the impact of organizational level factors, such as POS, on individual level outcomes, such as satisfaction, for lesbian coaches. Coaches' non-work lives have been under-researched in the sport literature; therefore, by examining life satisfaction, this study added to existing knowledge of lesbian coaches. Because life satisfaction is composed of many factors, including those from one's

professional life, work environments can have far reaching impact (Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Griffith & Hebl, 2002).

The third research question considered the relationship between disclosure and job satisfaction for lesbian intercollegiate coaches. As also described in the existing literature, these findings indicated a complicated relationship between the two constructs (Driscoll et al., 1996). Data analysis showed that disclosure did not relate to job satisfaction, but the results established the existence of a non-significant positive relationship between the two variables. Previous research has also noted that while disclosure does not predict job satisfaction, among samples of gay and lesbian workers, more disclosure at work was associated with higher levels of job satisfaction (Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Driscoll et al., 1996; Ellis & Riggle, 1995; Griffith & Hebl, 2002). Consistent with the existing literature, the findings from the current sample of lesbian intercollegiate coaches suggested that at-work satisfaction associated with higher degrees of disclosure was more reflective of other important factors, specifically more supportive co-workers and administrators (Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Driscoll et al., 1996; Ellis & Riggle, 1996).

The fourth research question inquired about the relationship between disclosure and life satisfaction for lesbian coaches, and as postulated, the current findings confirmed a positive relationship between the two constructs (Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Ellis & Riggle, 1995). For this sample of coaches, more openness correlated with higher levels of life satisfaction. It is important to mention that there was a discrepancy between results from the correlational analysis for the two disclosure measures. Only the second disclosure

subscale and section 2 of the first disclosure subscale, which assessed disclosure outside of work, were significantly related to life satisfaction. The discrepancy between the disclosure subscales will be discussed further in this chapter.

Finally, addressing the fifth research question, a strong relationship between job and life satisfaction was found in this sample of lesbian coaches. Previous research has explained that life satisfaction is made up of feelings of satisfaction from multiple aspects of life, including job satisfaction. Thus, it was expected that job satisfaction would spill over to their lives outside of the workplace (Dixon & Sagas; Ellis & Riggle, 1995; Rain, Lainer, & Steiner, 1991).

<div align="center">**Disclosure**</div>

The disclosure behaviors of lesbian intercollegiate coaches were a focal point of this research. Since there has been little use of quantitative disclosure measures in the previous research, the levels of disclosure for these coaches was assessed using two separate questionnaires. Although the subscales resulted in slightly different findings in the correlational analysis that examined the relationships among variables, they provided a profile of this sample of lesbian coaches. Overall, the findings were consistent with Griffin (1998) and Krane and Barber (2005), as the sample indicated that they were not completely open about their lesbian identities at work. Instead, coaches' degrees of disclosure ranged along a continuum, with most coaches reporting that they revealed their sexual orientations to some, but not all, individuals in their workplaces (Griffin, 1998).

The first disclosure subscale evaluated coaches' disclosure behaviors by inquiring about the degree to which they openly spoke about their lesbian identities to select

individuals at work and outside of work. The findings showed that coaches were generally more open outside of the workplace. The results also indicated that no coach was completely open to other workplace personnel. Although disclosure levels varied across the sample, on average, these coaches were most open with their immediate supervisors, same-sport coaches at other universities/colleges, former players, co-workers, and athletic training personnel. Coaches reported that they kept their lesbian identities most hidden from prospective student-athletes and their families, as well as current student-athletes. In fact, almost as many coaches reported that they actively spoke about their sexual orientations to their immediate supervisors as those who noted that they tried very hard to keep it secret from recruits.

Differing from the first subscale, the second disclosure subscale only considered coaches at-work disclosure behaviors. The first question of this measure asked coaches to indicate the number of co-workers and/or supervisors that they were out to at work. Consistent with the first subscale, the scores showed that coaches' disclosure levels were varied across the sample. On average, coaches considered themselves to be partially out at work, meaning they were out to at least three co-workers according to the scale. The findings additionally suggested that the sample sometimes, but not always, felt comfortable being themselves at work. Coaches reported that they very were rarely involved in lesbian-related activities at work and seldom brought female dates to work-sponsored events or to functions with workplace personnel.

Overall, the second disclosure subscale seemed to be a better measure of workplace disclosure in this study. Scores from the second disclosure subscale correlated

with POS and life satisfaction, and although the finding was not statistically significant, scores from the second disclosure scale were more highly related to job satisfaction than scores from the first disclosure subscale.

Given the importance of disclosure in understanding the experiences of lesbian coaches and the shortcomings of the disclosure measures, open-ended questions were used to more directly assess coaches' levels of disclosure. Showing consistency with the quantitative measures, the sample reported that, on average, they were more open about their lesbian identities outside of work. The largest number of coaches stated that they were only "slightly open" at work.

A disclosure continuum, ranging from completely closeted to publicly out in the previous research, was also evident in coaches' open-ended explanations (Griffin, 1998). This continuum was true for coaches at work and outside of work. Most coaches indicated they were implicitly out at work, explaining that they allowed others to see them as lesbians without explicitly disclosing their sexual orientations. These coaches explained that they did not mind if individuals in their athletic departments assumed they were lesbians, but they did not actively discuss their sexuality or personal lives in the workplace. A number of coaches emphasized the importance of separating their personal and professional lives. Being implicitly out might allow lesbian coaches to maintain their professional standing and offer some protection from prejudice, without placing high stress on concealing their lesbian identities (Griffin, 1998). Other coaches explained that they discussed their lesbian identities with carefully selected and trusted individuals at work. Some of these coaches stated that they openly spoke to confidants or friends but

kept their private lives concealed from current student-athletes and recruits. These coaches were labeled explicitly out, in accordance with the previous research (Griffin, 1998). Griffin's (1998) disclosure continuum showed that being explicitly out was closer to being publicly out or completely open. It is interesting to note that overall, coaches whose responses categorized them as implicitly out rated themselves as more open on the open-ended numerical scale than those who described themselves as explicitly out. It seemed that, for these coaches, disclosure meant more than the act of intentionally discussing one's sexual orientation. Additionally, a number of coaches reported they were "completely open" at work, a differing from results on the questionnaires.

Findings from the quantitative disclosure measures and from the open-ended responses confirmed that this sample of coaches relied heavily on various identity management strategies in order to determine how much of their lesbian identities to reveal or conceal in and out of work (Griffin, 1998). The results indicated that the choice to disclose or conceal lesbian identity is complex and is both a situational and social behavior.

<div align="center">

Limitations

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One of the limitations of this study is that the participants may have been more open regarding their lesbian identities than the majority of lesbian intercollegiate coaches. Previous researchers have noted the difficulty in identifying an adequate sample of lesbian coaches for academic research (Krane & Barber, 2005). Participants for this study were recruited using the snowball technique in which coaches helped to recruit others by passing information about the survey along to known lesbian colleagues. Thus, the

potential participants were somewhat open about their lesbian identities (to colleagues at the very least) in order to initially receive an invitation to participate. Coupled with the higher levels of disclosure for this study's participants is the possibility that this sample of coaches worked in more supportive climates than is the norm in intercollegiate athletics. In addition, the participants were fairly young, with the majority only having between one and five years of coaching experience. Considering that a positive shift in attitudes towards lesbians seemed to have occurred, an older sample of coaches, more entrenched in the culture of women's sport and intercollegiate athletics might have reported slightly different experiences. The ability to generalize the research findings to all lesbian intercollegiate coaches is less than what would have been obtained through a random sampling of all female coaches. Another limitation of this study involves the measures used for assessing disclosure. Due to the limited research on lesbian coaches, there are few valid and consistent measures for examining disclosure in this population. The discrepancies between the quantitative subscales and the open-ended responses were noted in the prior section of this chapter.

Future Research

This investigation has provided increased understanding about the experiences of lesbians in sport. This research has confirmed that the sport context, which is composed of socio-cultural level and organizational level factors, influences individual level perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of lesbian coaches. These findings helped to clarify the important role that administrators, co-workers, and other athletic department personnel play in the lives of lesbian coaches, both in and outside of the workplace.

Colleges and universities should promulgate clear policies related to LGBT issues and should institute LGBT-inclusive diversity training in order to educate administrators, coaches, athletic department staff, and student-athletes and promote more positive sport environments. Academic researchers should conduct further investigations into the individual level perceptions, behaviors, and attitudes of all female coaches. In order to truly conceptualize the experiences of lesbians in sport, additional research is needed on the experiences of lesbian coaches, administrators, and student-athletes, and this research should identify more reliable measures of disclosure. Although many coaches indicated improvement in the climate for lesbians within intercollegiate athletics, most partially concealed their lesbian identities in the workplace. This is indicative of a continued fear of discrimination based on sexual orientation. Future research should continue to shed light on social issues in sport, confront discriminatory practices and unjust beliefs, and provide a voice for those who still may not feel it is safe to raise their own.

Summary

This study added to the existing literature and provided an updated depiction of the experiences of lesbians in sport. The results indicated that attitudes towards lesbians within intercollegiate athletics have grown more positive, and work environments for lesbian coaches have become more tolerant than the hostile climates described in the previous research. However, the majority of coaches partially concealed their lesbian sexual orientations at work, indicating that coaches remain conscious of homonegativism within intercollegiate athletics and the potential for facing discrimination due to sexual orientation. The results suggest the organizational support is related to disclosure, job

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satisfaction, and life satisfaction, and that has implications for coach well-being and effectiveness. Coaches' explanations of their at-work disclosure behaviors indicated that identity management strategies and the careful decision-making processes associated with revealing one's lesbian sexual orientation remain relevant in their work environments. Until the atmosphere within all intercollegiate athletic departments allows for a diversity of sexual orientations to freely and openly exist, and the pervasive heterosexism and homonegativism in our society continues ceases to permeate the context of sport, it is important that sport scholars continue to examine the sport environment and the experiences of lesbians.

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Appendix A

Demographics Questionnaire

Age: _____ (please fill in)

Race/Ethnicity: □ African-American   □ Asian/Pacific Islander   □ Hispanic

□ Caucasian/European American   □ Native American

□ Other _____ (please list)

How do you describe your sexual orientation? (please check one box)

□   Exclusively homosexual

□   Exclusively homosexual

□   Predominantly homosexual, only incidentally heterosexual

□   Predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally heterosexual

□   Equally heterosexual and homosexual

□   Predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally homosexual

□   Predominantly heterosexual, only incidentally homosexual

□   Exclusively heterosexual

What is your relationship status? (please check one box)

□   Partnered/Married/Civil Union

□   Cohabiting

□   Separated

□   Dating

□   Single

☐ Other _____ (please list)

     If currently in a relationship, please indicate its length. _____ years _____ months

     Do you have children? (please check one box and fill in if appropriate)

☐ Yes How many? _____   Number living with you: _____   Ages: _____
☐ No

Education: Please list the highest degree you've attained.

(e.g. bachelors, masters, doctorate, etc.) _____

What was your area of focus (e.g. major or specialization)? _____

Did you compete in intercollegiate athletics in college?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

     If so, what sports? _____

     Indicate the level (Division I, II, III): _____

Appendix B

Coaching Experience Questionnaire

<u>Current Primary Coaching Position</u>

☐ Head coach   ☐ Assistant coach   Total years in current position: _____

      Sport(s): _____

Size of university/college (number of students):

☐ Less than 5,000   ☐ 5,000-10,000   ☐ 10,000-20,000   ☐ More than 20,000

Geographic location of your university/college (U.S. region):

☐ Northeast   ☐ Midwest   ☐ Southeast

☐ Southwest   ☐ West   ☐ Other _____ (please list)

Division:

☐ NCAA Division I   ☐ NCAA Division II   ☐ NCAA Division III

☐ NAIA   ☐ Junior College   ☐ Other _____

TOTAL years of <u>head college coaching experience</u>: _____ years

List all sports coached as a head coach._____

If you are currently a head coach, how many male and female assistants are employed for

your team?   _____ Male   _____ Female   ☐ Not currently a head coach

TOTAL years of <u>assistant college coaching experience</u>: _____ years

List all sports coached as an assistant. _____

If you are currently an assistant coach, how many male and female assistant coaches are employed for your team?   _____ Male   _____ Female

☐ Not currently an assistant coach

Appendix C

Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Short Version)

Measure developed by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa (1986)

Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the particular organization for which you are now working—your university or college—please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling one of the seven alternatives next to each statement.

		Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**
1.	The organization values my contribution to its well-being.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	If the organization could hire someone to replace me at a lower salary it would do so. (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me. (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	The organization strongly considers my goals and values.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	The organization would ignore any complaint from me. (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	The organization disregards my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me. (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	Help is available from the organization when I have a problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	The organization really cares about my well-being.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	The organization is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	Even if I did the best job possible, the organization would fail to notice. (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

| 11. | The organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

		Strongly Disagree					**Strongly Agree**	
12.	The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	If given the opportunity, the organization would take advantage of me. (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	The organization shows very little concern for me. (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	The organization cares about my opinions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	The organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	The organization tries to make my job as interesting as possible.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Note. (R) indicates the item is reverse scored.

Appendix D

Degree of Disclosure Subscale I

Modified from Day & Schoenrade (1997)

Listed below are individuals with whom intercollegiate athletic coaches might interact at work and outside of work. Please use the Degree of Disclosure Scale (below) to answer the following question:

In general, how hard do you try to keep your sexual orientation secret from these people?

Please circle the number corresponding to the response that most closely applies to you for each individual listed below.

Degree of Disclosure Scale (1 to 4)
1 = I try very hard to keep it secret.
2 = I try somewhat hard to keep it secret.
3 = I don't try to keep it secret.
4 = I actively talk about it.

Section 1: At work

1.	Co-workers	1	2	3	4
2.	Immediate supervisor	1	2	3	4
3.	Athletic trainers	1	2	3	4
4.	Other athletic staff (e.g. sports information)	1	2	3	4
5.	Current players on your team	1	2	3	4
6.	Student-athletes not on your team	1	2	3	4
7.	Coaches of your sport at other universities/colleges	1	2	3	4
8.	Parents/guardians/families of prospective student-athletes (recruits)	1	2	3	4
9.	Prospective student-athletes (recruits)	1	2	3	4
10.	Former players from your program	1	2	3	4

11. University (non-athletic) administrators	1	2	3	4

12. University (non-athletic faculty/staff)   1   2   3   4

Degree of Disclosure Scale (1 to 4)
1 = I try very hard to keep it secret.
2 = I try somewhat hard to keep it secret.
3 = I don't try to keep it secret.
4 = I actively talk about it.

Section 2: Outside of work

13. Your family members	1	2	3	4

14. Your friends outside of work   1   2   3   4

15. People in your neighborhood	1	2	3	4

16. People you meet in daily activities outside of work   1   2   3   4

Appendix E

Degree of Disclosure Subscale II

Measure developed by Driscoll, Kelly, & Fassinger (1996)

Please answer the first question by check the box adjacent to the response that most closely applies to you.

1. How out are you at work?

☐ Out to nobody at work

☐ Out to one co-worker

☐ Out to two co-workers

☐ Out to three co-workers

☐ Out to immediate supervisor

☐ Out to four or five co-workers

☐ Out to all co-workers/supervisors

Please answer questions 2-5 by circling the response that most closely applies to you.

2.	Is your workplace somewhere you feel comfortable being yourself?	Never	Sometimes	Always
3.	Are you involved in any lesbian or gay-related activities at work?	Never	Sometimes	Always
4.	Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to work-sponsored events?	Never	Sometimes	Always
5.	Do you bring your same-sex partner or date to off-job parties or events given by employees and personnel from your workplace?	Never	Sometimes	Always

Appendix F

Overall Job Satisfaction Scale

Measure developed by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh (1983)

With respect to your feelings of your overall satisfaction with your job at your university or college, please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statements below by circling one of the seven alternatives.

		Strongly disagree						**Strongly agree**
1.	All in all, I am satisfied with my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	In general, I don't like my job. (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	In general, I like working at my university/college.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Note. (R) indicates the item is reverse scored.

Appendix G

Satisfaction With Life Scale

Measure developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin (1985)

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each item by circling the appropriate number next to each statement.

		Strongly disagree						**Strongly agree**
1.	In most ways my life is close to ideal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	The conditions of my life are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I am satisfied with my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix H

Open-Ended Items

The following questions are intended to give you an opportunity to clarify your responses and discuss your experiences as an intercollegiate athletic coach. Please add comments in as much detail as you wish.

1. a. How would you describe the prevailing attitudes about lesbians within your athletic department? (Please circle your response.)

    Negative   Neutral   Positive

    b. Please explain your response and/or give examples.

2. a. How open are you about your lesbian identity at work?

    Not at all   Slightly open   Mostly open   Completely open

    b. Please explain your response and/or give examples.

3. a. How open are you about your lesbian identity outside of work?

    Not at all   Slightly open   Mostly open   Completely open

    b. Please explain your response and/or give examples.

Appendix I

Formal Invitation Letter

Dear Coach,

Hello. My name is Melissa Schreibstein, and I am a graduate student studying sport psychology at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the Exercise and Sport Science department. I am currently conducting a thesis as a part of my Master's degree requirements. My study is an exploration of the experiences of lesbian intercollegiate coaches, and its purpose is to increase understanding about the work environment for lesbians in intercollegiate athletics, as well as the beliefs and attitudes of active coaches.

It is my hope that the study will benefit intercollegiate coaches by providing information that can improve the work environment in athletic departments and the experiences of coaches. To do so, I am writing to request the participation of active lesbian intercollegiate coaches. If you wish to participate in this study, you will be sent a URL link and asked to complete a confidential and anonymous survey regarding your experiences as an intercollegiate coach. The survey will take approximately 30 to 60 minutes.

Please note that this letter is not intended to suggest or confirm your sexual orientation. I am solely writing to request the participation of active lesbian intercollegiate coaches in order to complete my research. I apologize if you have received this correspondence in error. Please be assured that your name, contact information, or any identifiable personal information will remain confidential and used only for the purpose of this research project.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you are free to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate at any time without penalty or prejudice. Your privacy will be protected because you will not be identified by name as a participant in this project. There is no risk associated with this project. By completing the questionnaires, you agree that you understand the procedures and any risks and benefits involved in this research. All electronic data will be password protected and transmission of data will be security encrypted. All paper data will be stored in a locket cabinet in my home office and will be shredded and disposed of after 3 years.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research. If you wish to participate, please contact me by phone, (202) 441-4611 or by email, schreibstein@gmail.com so that I may send you a URL link to the web-based survey. Or, if you would prefer to complete a hard copy of the survey, please contact me. If you have any questions regarding the research itself, please feel free to contact me by phone or by email.

Thank you,
Melissa Schreibstein

P.S. I want to try to reach as many women as possible. If you know of any active lesbian intercollegiate coaches (head or assistant coaches, any division, any sport) who may be interested in participating in this project, please let me know. You may forward this letter or ask them to contact me by phone, (202) 441-4611 or by email, schreibstein@gmail.com. This research would not be possible without your help. Thank you for your support!

Appendix J

Informed Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT: LONG FORM

Project Title: Understanding the experiences of lesbian intercollegiate coaches.

Project Director: Melissa A. Schreibstein

DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION OF PURPOSE AND PROCEDURES: The purpose of this study is to increase understanding about the experiences of lesbian coaches in intercollegiate athletics and will offer more information about the work environment in intercollegiate athletic departments. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete questionnaires that will take approximately 20-30 minutes and will address your beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, demographic information, and coaching experiences. You will also be asked to answer open-ended questions about your experiences, and the length of time for these questions depends on the amount you wish to write. The total study will take approximately 30-60 minutes to complete.

Participants must be at least age 18 to participate. Participants and survey responses will remain anonymous to everyone except the researcher. Data without any identifying information will be kept for 3 years and stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office. After 3 years, any paper data will be destroyed by shredding and electronic data will be deleted.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: This study may benefit intercollegiate coaches (specifically lesbian coaches) and athletic programs by providing information that may improve the work environment in intercollegiate athletic departments.

POTENTIAL RISKS: There is no risk for participants by participating in this study.

CONSENT: By reading this page, completing and submitting the surveys, you agree that you understand the procedures and any risks and benefits involved in this research. You are free to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate in this research at any time without penalty or prejudice; your participation is entirely voluntary. Your privacy will be protected because you will not be identified by name as a participant in this project. Configuration settings for this survey are set so that IP and email addresses will not be tracked or visible when results are collected and analyzed.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research involving people follows federal regulations, has approved the research and this consent form. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Mr. Eric Allen at (336) 256-1482. Questions regarding the research itself will be answered by Melissa Schreibstein by calling (202) 441-4611 or email to maschrei@uncg.edu. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided to you if the information might affect your willingness to continue participation in the project.

By completing and submitting the surveys, you are affirming that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in the project described to you by this consent form.

Responses on Open-Ended Item 1

Open-ended Item 1: Prevailing attitudes towards lesbians

Informal Institutional Support

<u>Avoidance: No discussion of sexuality</u>

I don't perceive it to be something people talk about or avoid just the same. I know other members of the department who are gay. They don't talk openly about it, but I don't perceive them to hide it. It's not something that comes up at work. (13)

I know a few other coaches that are lesbians but it is never talked about in a work setting. Lesbians are not discriminated against but not embraced either. Especially in the upper administration positions. You wouldn't necessarily go down the hallway talking to just anyone about you partner situation. (19)

I think people go about there business here. Your sexuality doesn't seem to matter- as it shouldn't. (23)

I do not think homosexuality is talked about. If it is it is amongst friends/and or co-workers the "out" people are friends with. I think if you are not over the top about it, you are accepted. I have seen no one talk about it explicitly. I think if its not talked about its accepted. (30)

It is not talked about they are good ol boys and don't want to think about it as long as we don't flaunt it they don't say anything. (34)

It's "don't ask, don't tell" which may or may not be the right way to do things. I don't think the administration would care if more of us were "out" but they don't offer a whole lot in terms of programs for student-athletes or coaches who may be dealing with sexual orientation "issues." (43)

I am not sure about their attitudes about lesbians. Many coaches that are gay are not openly gay at work. (54)

It's really not a big deal. We don't discuss things at all but they know who I am. (4)

Actual sexual orientation is not spoken of but is fully acceptable. (36)

Avoidance: Separation of Personal and Professional Lives

I don't really make my personal life part of my workplace. But, I think this workplace environment is one of the most professional yet also accepting of diverse lifestyles. (35)

Avoidance: Job Performance

Where I work, it's all about winning. If you're winning, you can do whatever you want. If you're losing, you need to toe the line and drink the university cool-aid. (53)

It does not seem to matter as long as you are a professional and perform your duties successfully. (26)

Perceived Tolerance: Geographic Location

Life in the Midwest is tough. It's still very much an older way of thinking. People meet in college here, get married at age 21 and have 2 kids by age 25. There are very little support networks here. Life here is about all FOOTBALL and boys being boys. I am very good at my job and know this is a short stop on my way to becoming a head coach, so it's not a "life sentence" for me right now. I took the job with the understanding that life for me would be put on hold. Bottom line is...there are not many gay people out and about in the small Midwest city I live. (31)

Perceived Tolerance: Subtle Discrimination

I wouldn't necessarily say I would be ostracized if I was "out" in the workplace. I would say, however, I would face difficulty initially. I think those staff members with whom I have contact think they are open to most things, but, because of the stereotypical things they say from day-to-day, they are not quite so open. My natural assumption is not that they would openly criticize, but rather that they would make me feel uncomfortable enough to leave my job. Again, I think it would be subtle. It would not be them obviously turning their backs, but rather just treating me more and more poorly. (14)

I work at a women's university, so the situation is unique. The department administrators quietly recognizes that it is part of women's athletics, but there are still some male coaches that are very chauvinistic and will often elude to the fact that it is not acceptable to them. (55)

Perceived Tolerance: Absence of Discrimination

I have never heard anything negative surrounding sexual orientation. (52)

It seems as if lesbians are welcomed and treated as any other employee. I have not found there to be issues of discrimination surrounding my sexual orientation. (11)

I am someone that is very secure in who I am both professionally and personally. Although I do not go around openly telling people about my sexuality, I do not hide it if it comes up. I have probably told a handful of people in my University both fellow faculty/staff and athletes. I feel it is important for me to be honest about who I am if it comes up. I would be shocked if the majority of my co-workers do not know. A lot of my answers to the previous questions were not based by any means by what my sexuality is as opposed to what sport I coach. I have other friends in the Athletic Dept. that are both extremely openly gay and bring their significant others to events and I also have others that are very much so in the closet. I have never run into an issue with my sexuality in the work place and I suppose that is why I answered neutral. (8)

Acceptance: Social support from non-lesbian co-workers/administrators/athletes

Everyone seems to not judge anyone one way or another. Whether you are heterosexual or homosexual you are free to bring around your significant other. Within my coaching staff, my head coach is married (hetero) with children and so is the other assistant. We are out and open about everything. (7)

The head coach, who is male, is very open-minded and accepting in regards to my sexual orientation, which makes it very easy to be myself as an assistant coach for him. We have student-athletes who are open about their sexual orientation and even the other student-athletes who are heterosexual are accepting of their teammates as lesbians. It is very comforting to know that I am not being judged by my boss or my student-athletes in regards to my knowledge of the game, my work ethic that I bring to our program, or about just who I am in general as a human being. One of the other assistant coaches is also a lesbian, although she prefers to keep it more confidential, I believe she is comfortable in the environment he has created. I am currently trying to get another job at this same institution I coach, but my sexual orientation will unfortunately have to be kept a secret from what I have been told. It is really disappointing being 28 years old and already coming from years of secrecy, to coming out and just being myself to having to hide it again, but I do what I need to do and I accept it because I don't have a choice. (2)

My current situation is quite different than my experience at the other institution where I coached. Although I was somewhat "out" at my previous job as well, it was not "normalized" and I didn't feel comfortable referring to my "real" life to anyone other than other lesbians within the Athletic Dept. or university. I also hid it from various supporters and others involved with the Athletic Dept. when out at functions. (17)

I am very fortunate to work for an athletic department that provides a positive work environment regarding sexual orientation. I believe that all employees are treated the same. I believe this has a direct impact on the quality of my life and I will most likely choose to stay at this institution, regardless of career advancement, to maintain this work environment. I will not accept a head coaching position in an athletic department that would not support my sexual orientation. (24)

Everyone that I have come in contact with in my work environment has been extremely open minded and positive about my sexual orientation. (28)

I have never experienced discrimination or felt uncomfortable in my workplace. My boss is super cool with gays (he is not gay - he is actually married to our other assistant coach and she is super cool with gays too). There are other gay employees in our department that I know of and hang out with. There are some rainbow stickers up in places around the athletic department that say safe zone. There are student athletes that come to talk to me about gay issues. Our academic adviser can be seen at times wearing a shirt that says "gay? ok by me" (she is not gay either) so I think in our department... people are mostly viewed based on their character... not their sexual orientation. Just as an FYI -- I am not totally out at work... I am out to my friends... but not to everyone --mostly because I don't see a need to announce my sexual orientation... I mean... straight people don't announce that they're straight when you meet them do they?? In most cases- no...so I'm not sure how things would be different if I was out to everyone - like our senior women's administrator or our AD... but overall my experiences in our department lead me to believe the attitude is a positive and accepting one :) (32)

The college I work for is in a very progressive town with a variety of people from different backgrounds. Diversity is celebrated and people are treated fairly in most instances. Lesbian coaches in our department are not afraid show who they are. I don't think they are overly talkative about their partners but no one is discouraged from doing so. I have never heard a negative comment about another lesbian coach relating to their lifestyle. (42)

Our department is very open and accepting of everyone. We have a very diverse department and no one judges anyone else. (3)

Acceptance: Social support from lesbian co-workers/administrators/athletes

Our Athletic Director is out and her partner and their children are constantly present at events. Our college is all women and very diverse. (16)

There are several lesbian coaches and it's very clear that they work here, but it's not as if there is a pride parade every day. On the other hand, I've heard no negative talk about lesbians. It's just a pretty open and accepting campus in general. (12)

We have a head coach who is out - it's listed in her bio on our website - that is a rarity as I've not seen it any of the other places where I have worked. We also have a gay athlete group on campus run by some of our coaches. (15)

I have several lesbian co-workers, and my boss has been great. My supervising AD is a lesbian, and she and the other lesbian coaches have been clear in making me feel welcome.   I work in the state of Michigan, so it is a fairly conservative area...but the campus climate is liberal as usual. Having come from the east coast, it has been a bit of a change. Where I had many lapsed Catholics on my teams in the east, I have many

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fundamentalist Christians on the team here. I am not trying to hide anything, but I'm not talking about it with the team either!!! (18)

Everyone in our department that is gay is very open about it. And the heterosexuals in our department are very comfortable with the fact that we are open about it. (22)

It's an all women's school so students, faculty, staff and upper administration are all very supportive of all alternative lifestyles. In fact, the majority of the athletic department is homosexual and we're all supportive of each other. (29)

Formal Institutional Support

Our department does not partake in any sort of diversity training throughout the course of the year, however, I do not feel like people are judged for their sexual orientation within the department. (50)

There is no bias towards sexual orientation, race, religion etc......but there is no communication about this either, meaning sensitivity training or an active connection between the athletic department or a member and the gay/lesbian organization on campus. It isn't discussed or brought to attention because it is not an issue, however there could be a safe outlet for athletes in the dept. to be aware of so if an issue did come up they knew of a place or person they could use as a sounding board for advice and confidentiality. (38)

This is a hard question to answer. I don't think we sit around and talk about attitudes towards lesbians, per se. But last year we did have an LGBT training that all the coaches had to attend. Basically we did case studies that revolved around students coming out to the team, etc. It was very well-received. Everyone took it seriously and no one seemed to have a problem with it. This made me feel good that coaches saw this as a valuable training and that no one had a problem with it. Everyone (of our 41 sport coaches) I know of was in agreement that it was an important exercise. (41)

There is a mix - many people are very open and comfortable with the lesbians in our department - but then there are a few people who aren't. in general the climate is very good - we also do a sexuality diversity workshop once per year to discuss gay coaches as well as gay athletes. it is really amazing on the part of our AD and it has been important in allowing me to feel comfortable being gay on this campus. (46)

We had a situation where a coach was "asked to resign" because of possible negative recruiting and homophobia. The athletic department has stepped up to create a LGBTA Liaison Program in the ICA department to show support for athletes and staff in the LGBTA community. (51)

Liberal campus, opportunities for partner support in medical, etc for employment and benefits. Student athlete counsel brings in homosexual panel of coaches, faculty and

students to talk to captains of teams during leadership conference each end of year…etc. (39)

Length of Time on Job

It's hard for me to answer this question because I am a new employee of this University. I have only been here for 8 months so it's hard to gauge what the overall consensus would be. However, we are located in the South in a very conservative Christian area, which leads me to believe people would not be the most accepting of gays and lesbians down here. It's also hard for me to answer because I have only come out to one person at work, my boss (whom I have known for 7 years), and he is MORE than accepting of me. He's met my girlfriend, had dinner with us, and asks about her frequently. He and his wife are extremely supportive of me. (40)

I am new at this job. I really enjoy the people I work with although outside of my staff and my immediate supervisor I have had no conversations about my personal life. I was fairly open with my co-workers and my team in my last position but I was there for six years. I think I will get there in time at my new job. (1)

I don't think I have been here long enough to get a true feel for attitudes toward lesbians. As a staff, we have only been here for about 3 months. I would say that there is not a strong sense either way...I don't feel like it is necessary welcomed but I also haven't felt any sort of discrimination or judgment. (33)

I haven't been at this college long enough to know the main attitude toward lesbian coaches. The previous head coach here was gay and the current softball head coach is gay and I haven't seen any outward repercussions from it. (47)

I have been there for less than a year. I have avoided conversations involving gay/lesbian topics. I don't mention it around the office because you never know how people feel. So I just avoid the situation. My head coach knows and is completely ok with it, but I don't discuss things outside of her. (48)

Responses on Open-Ended Item 2

Open-ended Item 2: Openness about lesbian identity at work

Implicitly Out

<u>Do not actively discuss, but do not hide it</u>

I haven't brought it up here but I haven't specifically hide it either. I think I'm just at a new place in my life where looking to date isn't what I want so there isn't much to discuss. I don't want to be labeled as anything right now. At my former 3 jobs as an assistant my head coaches all knew that I was in relationships with women and were very welcoming to my girlfriends. (47)

I'm very private in general and not talking about my personal life comes with who I am. I would never lie about it to my athletes or anyone else. (53)

I don't walk around telling people, but I don't actively hide it. I'm just me. People can assume I'm gay. I don't care. (13)

My partner coaches in another state right now, so I am rarely put in a position to even consider hiding something. In my last position I was extremely open at work. I have only been here a month, so information is titrating out as the questions arise. It won't be long before everyone knows. I also made a conscious decision to not hide it from colleagues, which is a very heterosexual and male cohort. So far, so good. (18)

I am open, but it is not something that I discuss with my staff or my co/workers. I do not walk around telling the world I am gay, at the same time I do not hide from it either. (28)

I don't talk about it but don't hide it either. Very open with my AD and close coaches. (36)

I don't actively talk about it, but I don't actively deny it either. It has not come up with most co-workers, but most of my players know (it's pretty obvious). I don't try to lead people astray, but I also don't talk about my personal life at work. (55)

I'm not out and shouting it from the rooftops, but I don't hide it at all. When it comes up - I am open about it. (39)

I have found that the more uncomfortable you are with your life the more others will be as well. I don't wear rainbows to work everyday, but I don't hide my wife or our life.   I thought that people in the Midwest would treat me different than those on the west coast. However, they have all been very supportive and seem to welcome the fact that I don't try

to hide who I am. Doesn't make much sense to hide in the closet when it's got a glass door. (23)

<u>Do not "flaunt" lesbian identity</u>

Don't talk about things although some players come to me for advice. I don't flaunt who I am. (4)

To those who ask or I want to know I just don't flaunt it or tell everyone. (34)

I willingly talk about my partner and do not hide my identity but I do not flaunt it if I feel it is inappropriate or if it will make someone uncomfortable. (11)

<u>Disclose when asked</u>

If you ask, I will tell you. Otherwise, I just do my thing. (35)

If people ask, I'll tell. But other than that I don't talk about my personal life that much, unless I'm friends with people. (30)

<u>Bring partner to events so lesbian identity is understood</u>

I bring my partner around for all events and it's an understanding who she is to me. (7)

Explicitly Out

My bosses all know and my assistants and many colleagues. I don't try to hide it as I bring my partner around a lot. (3)

I have my confidants at work. My immediate boss knows about me, but we really don't talk much about our personal lives to begin with. I have a very close friend that is a trainer.   Like I have said before, I do not hide it, but I do not go around announcing it. If anyone ever asks, I will always answer honestly. I have nothing to hide! (8)

I am out to my co-workers. I keep my personal life private from my student athletes and from recruits. If I am ever asked a direct question, I am honest with my response. (24)

My immediate coworkers know and support my lifestyle. I say mostly because they are the only ones I am out to. I don't keep it a secret but I don't offer it up either. (33)

I have several co-workers who I am out to – I pick and choose who needs to know – I do not hide it but I only actively speak about it to those that I am most comfortable with. (51)

Only to my boss and other assistant coach. (21)

Slightly because I have open discussion about me with my fellow co-worker I coach with and other athletic dept. personnel who are married and have children together. I don't hide who I am but I believe gay or straight or a-sexual, doesn't matter, just do your job well. (38)

I am open to my boss and at the moment that is all. I wouldn't mind being open to my players, I don't think it would make them look at me differently...but this is a small town, and once I am open to my players, I will be open to the entire administration and community, because word travels fast here. (40)

The head coach that I am working with knows that I date a girl and I talk with her about things going on in my life. (42)

Just a few friends, colleagues. Not with my kids or administration at all. (43)

Just with head coach. (48)

Only immediate co-workers are aware of my sexual orientation. (54)

If a coworker becomes a friend... like someone that I hang out with in my spare time... then they'll probably find out I'm gay... I'll probably start talking about my girlfriend and our dogs because that is my family and is very important to me... but I think it's weird to just announce that you're gay... like what does it really have to do with anyone's life at all except for when you become a friend of mine and then I would want you to know that I have a girlfriend and 2 dogs and like coffee and all sorts of other things... so I don't go around waving my flag... but will show it to you if I think you're someone I want to be my friend and know me :) (32)

There are only 2 people at my work that know about my lifestyle. I am a very private person to begin with, but I chose not to let people know because geographically where I live I don't think there have been many steps forward for gay rights. (31)

Publicly Out

Before accepting the job offer I had my partner meet the AD and I have introduced her as my partner to everyone as I have met them. I also speak openly about her in casual conversation as would a heterosexual person speak about his/her partner...nothing more and nothing less. (17)

I am very fortunate to work in an institution where many of the highest members of the administration at gay. Every time there is a university function, all invitations say "spouse/partner" on them. (22)

There's no need to hide it because it's the norm. (29)

I talk about my partner just as much as anyone else at work. I don't feel like I have to hide because I happen to be married to a woman. My supervisors are very supportive. (41)

I work 3 jobs, 1 of which is being an assistant basketball coach and I am completely open about my relationship with my girlfriend, at all 3. If I get this other position at the college I coach at, as of right now I would not be as open about my sexual orientation because I do not think it is supported, but I do need to confirm that still. (2)

Closeted

On a regular basis, there is nothing that I do or say to let people in to my personal life. (50)

Rationale for Disclosure

New job so it will take time but eventually I believe everyone will know. (1)

Again, this is just more of a reflection of my personality. I'm not a loud attention getting person. I identify as a lesbian as much as another person would identify as a hetero. It's not like I'm leading two lives. (15)

I am not at the point career-wise that I feel I can risk my job for my sexual orientation. (14)

If I get to a point where I know that what I say and what I disclose will not be used against me and will be taken in confidence, I will share and I will love to share. (19)

Appendix M

Responses on Open-Ended Item 3

Open-ended Item 3: Openness about lesbian identity outside of work

Explicitly Out

Certain friends and family members (7)

Just family and friends. (21)

My immediate family knows and very close friends know. Other than that not many people know. (42)

More so now than before. All my newer friends know, but my family and some older friends do not know. (43)

I am open to everyone now except for my dad, brother and some other family members, unfortunately. (2)

All my friends know and some of my family. I live away from my family and don't see them too much. My parent's know that I am a lesbian but it doesn't go outside my immediate family. All my friends know and I discuss it openly. (19)

Most of the people in my life know about my dating life and past relationships and I feel very relaxed being able to talk about my feelings towards women or on the rare occasion men. I came out at age 21 and have not exclusively said I was a lesbian although most of my dating preferences have been with women. It was easy experience with my friends because they were all very supportive, from my high school friends to my college and post college friends. My family is the only area that has been extremely difficult. (47)

Open with some friends, not open with family at all, and with other friends. (48)

Depends upon the circle of friends I am with at any given time. Very trusting in certain settings, while completely guarded and closed off in other settings. (50)

Totally open to friends and family and eventually to individuals that I trust. (53)

I am open in all situations unless I feel that I may be physically or verbally threatened and I find that particular situation not worth it. (17)

Sometimes different situations allot for different circumstances. Anyone that asks me and everyone that is a friend or acquaintance knows about my lifestyle and who my partner is. (7)

My partner lives in another state and I am completely open in that environment. (54)

Implicitly Out

I'm just myself. (15)

I am open, but it is not something that I discuss with my friends or family all the time. I do not walk around telling the world I am gay, at the same time I do not hide from it either. I will openly discuss issues or make jokes with my friends and family. (28)

Same, I do not hide. (36)

I am very open to my friends. All of my friends, gay or straight, know me and who I am. But again, I am somewhat private about my personal life and I don't feel the need to let every person I meet know I'm gay. However, I have no problem walking down a street (outside of my work community) holding hands with my girlfriend or being somewhat affectionate in public, appropriately of course! I am pretty open outside of work. (40)

I make no effort to hide it. (18)

I am who I am. I don't wave a flag or have bumper stickers but everyone who knows me as a friend knows I am just me and a part of that is being gay. I don't have a professional boundary with these people, they are all part of my personal life so when we interact we share stories, personal experiences etc… (38)

I have the same philosophy as at work...don't hide it but don't go around waving the rainbow flag. I hold hands on the street, I kiss on the street. I won't not be me. (8)

Comfortable with who I am around straight people. (4)

I am very comfortable with myself but other people are not always comfortable so I try to make sure to not push any of my views onto people unless they bring it up. (3)

If people ask, I'll tell them, or if it comes up, I'll discuss it but I don't want to throw it in people's faces. I usually wait until I have a personal relationship with somebody before explaining. (29)

We play on a lesbian softball league. A lot of our friends are lesbians. (41)

Publicly Out

I'm open to all my friends and my family (except my grandfather who is like 100 and really conservative and like what's the point?). (32)

The people I hang with outside of work are friends and/or good friends. They know me better and sincerely interested in my life. (30)

I'm very open - it's a big part of who I am. I try to verbalize as much as I can - and I allow people the space to work through their stuff. I make a point to say things - even if it gets people a bit off balance ... I think its really important to have a presence, to be out, and to be yourself (as much as possible!!). (46)

My friends and family all know. (13)

I am out to my family and friends. (24)

Family knows, friends know, neighbors know. (33)

I surround myself with people that accept me. My family has known since I was 17. It is not an issue for me. (51)

When I have time off I choose to spend it with people I care about. Everyone knows who I am and what is important to me. (1)

All my friends are aware. They love for me for what I offer them and who I am as a person. I surround myself with some pretty amazing people. I have both hetero and homosexual friends, all except me 100%. (31)

Disclosure Related to Job

I am more open outside of work than inside the workplace. The unfortunate thing is that I live very close to the university and I could, at any moment, run into a student, parent, staff member, or even recruit anywhere. My job security is always at the back of my mind. The coaching world is tiny and I am not established enough as a talented coach to have what would, at this point, be considered a negative reputation. (14)

I don't wear rainbow t-shirts around, but I don't try too hard to hide it either. I'm somewhat conservative in certain areas when I may run into players or co-workers. I don't feel it is any of their business whom I am involved with. I think that is more of a personal privacy issue than a lesbian issue. (55)

It's easy to be open in the workplace when you have great support. I'm not in the closet in the public eye, but you really never know if you will run into a parent or prospective student-athlete. Again, I believe it's all about how you brand yourself and how individuals perceive you, so I'm not as open outside of work. (22)